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# FACE TO FACE

Black-Jewish Campus Dialogues

Cherie R. Brown



*Every time it happens it hurts, yet it keeps on happening"*



*Talking about the Holocaust and slavery helps build bridges to each other"*

# **FACE TO FACE**

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**Cherie R. Brown**

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## Acknowledgments

**T**HERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHOSE COMMITMENT to Black Jewish relations made this manual possible. I would like particularly to acknowledge the efforts of Linda Kramer, Toni Fanon, and Rabbi Alan Flamm at Brown University; the chaplains and Afro American centers at Temple, Tufts, and Columbia universities; and Irving M. Levine and Joseph Giordano of the American Jewish Committee. Joyce Duncan and Arlene Allen, my two Black co-trainers, brought their insights and love to the project. Amy Sales worked to develop quantifiable measures to test the effectiveness of the workshops. Ellen Stone edited the material with a unique understanding of Black Jewish issues. Most importantly, I'd like to thank the Black and Jewish students who were so willing to open up and share their deepest feelings and concerns with one another.

C R B

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## Foreword

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**A**T A TIME WHEN WE APPEAR to be entering a new stage of ethnic and racial tensions with evidence that the college campus is one of the hot spots it is encouraging that the work outlined in this report effectively answers the plea Don't just stand there do something about the problem

It has been a great source of pride for the American Jewish Committee's Institute for American Pluralism to have sponsored and funded the magnificent work done by Cherie Brown and her associates at the National Coalition Building Institute

Dealing initially with Black Jewish tensions that were exacerbated during the 1984 Presidential election the National Coalition Building Institute with our cooperation has been active on some fifty American campuses in carrying out intergroup relations and prejudice reduction training

While we may have to realistically accept the fact that tensions between racial ethnic and religious groups are normal in a pluralistic society we don't have to sit idly by and watch sparks ignite into fires that are difficult to extinguish

Training an intelligent cadre of young Americans to be secure and positive about their own group identity as well as appreciative of the norms of cultural differences of others is becoming an essential service for our society Healthy advocacy for one's own group in the future will call for less separatism and ethnocentrism and more dialogue ethnic sharing and mastery of the art and science of coalition building This report shows you how to do it

Irving M. Levine  
Director  
Institute for American Pluralism  
The American Jewish Committee

## Introduction

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**T**HE SCENE IS A DORMITORY LOUNGE at a prestigious New England university Almost a hundred Black and Jewish students have filed in dripping wet from a spring rain for the fourth in a series of dialogues Now their faces are turned to the front of the room registering thoughtfulness and compassion as they listen intently to the speakers stories A young Jewish woman the daughter of Holocaust survivors tells of the impact of her parents wartime experiences A Black man talks about the time just a few years ago when his high school basketball team's bus was overturned by the opposing team in order to keep him the lone black player out of the game Another student speaks and then another each story unique each conveying a special strength or sensitivity that touches every listener Although the words are painful when the session is over there is buoyancy and hope in this room a sense of growing solidarity and trust between two groups who have discovered common ground

The history of solidarity between Blacks and Jews in the United States goes back well before these students were born They don't remember Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel marching arm in arm with the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma Alabama or the Jews who boarded buses headed South to help register Blacks to vote twenty five years ago They have come of age during a different set of social tensions when the fact that Jewish votes are crucial to electing Black big city mayors is less likely to make headlines than the anti-Semitic remarks of Minister Louis Farrakhan Yet if their experience includes tension between Blacks and Jews on campus over Jesse Jackson and the Middle East it also embraces friendship and an unexplained yet undeniable sense of connection To quote one Black student whose comment was not unusual I don't know why but whenever I make friends with whites on campus they almost always turn out to be Jewish

The Black Jewish dialogue program was developed by the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) an organization committed to train

ing ethnic and community leaders in intergroup conflict resolution and coalition building. Based on the principle that honest dialogue is the only way to build lasting and genuine alliances, the program was adopted by the American Jewish Committee during the breach between the Black and Jewish communities caused by the Jesse Jackson presidential campaign. That crisis inspired both Black and Jewish leaders to take a fresh look at a long standing relationship that could no longer be taken for granted. Wounds needed healing in an atmosphere that allowed each group to stand up for its needs while affirming the common goals and experiences that brought them together in the first place. For the more thoughtful members of each community, the breach became an opportunity to forge a new level of understanding and cooperation on both sides.

The American Jewish Committee chose college students as an important target of its efforts at Black Jewish reconciliation for several reasons. Several incidents had made it clear not only that racism and anti-Semitism still existed on campuses but that tensions between Black and Jewish students often mirrored those in the country at large. At Brown University, for example, both the Third World Center and the sukkah at Hillel were vandalized during the 1982-83 academic year. Shortly thereafter, the student newspaper at the University of Pennsylvania became the forum for a heated exchange between Black and Jewish students after it published an article defending Nation of Islam Minister Louis Farrakhan's anti-Jewish views. Jesse Jackson's candidacy for president, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and the anti-apartheid movement, all hot topics on campuses over the past few years, often became sources of misunderstanding between Black and Jewish students. Meanwhile, occurrences like the vandalism at Brown indicated the need for a strong Black Jewish alliance against racism and anti-Semitism.

The situation presented an exciting opportunity to work with what would likely be the next generation of leaders in the Black and Jewish communities. The AJC commissioned the NCBI to design and conduct a pilot series of workshops on five college campuses: Boston University, Brandeis University, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Temple University, and Brown University. Initial contact was made with directors of Hillel programs and Third World centers, as well as other administrators and faculty who would be able to recruit participants. Before long, a core of Black and Jewish students on each campus was meeting to share some very personal feelings and experiences and to explore the broader social context that had shaped their lives as Blacks and as Jews.

The Black Jewish dialogue program has a great deal to teach people of all ages and backgrounds. With the arrival of new groups of immigrants and rising concern among some segments of the population, the United States is being challenged to develop a new level of awareness of what it means to be a multiethnic society, a home for people of different histories and belief systems, races and cultures. The program offers a prototype not

only for intervening in intergroup conflicts but for building coalitions between groups that are far better off working together than going it alone.

This manual is designed for three groups of readers: those interested in sponsoring a Black Jewish dialogue program on their campuses; those interested in using the campus program as a model for other kinds of intergroup relations work; and those who want to learn more about Black Jewish relations, as well as some underlying principles of intergroup relations in general, whether or not they are in a position to initiate a program. It is divided into five sections. An outline of the basic workshop model is followed by a case study of the program's implementation in one university. The next section takes a closer look at some of the issues dealt with at the workshops. A short section on the impact of the workshops is followed by guidelines for workshop sponsors.

## The Workshop Model



**T**HE BLACK JEWISH DIALOGUE WORKSHOPS are designed to empower students. Based on a model that combines information sharing, problem solving, and emotional healing, the four-hour workshops help participants to recognize and unlearn their own prejudices, reach out to other participants, and use the knowledge and skills they have gained to combat racism and anti-Semitism in the world around them. Recognizing that personal experiences and politics are equally important in intergroup relations, the model leaves room for the examination of relevant political issues at every stage of the dialogue process.

What follows is a basic workshop outline, structured to encourage free-flowing discussion in an atmosphere of gradually increasing trust.

### Introductions

At the start of the workshop, each student shares his or her name, place of birth, ethnic, religious, and class identities, and something he or she is proud of about being Black or Jewish. This demonstrates at the very beginning that the students are there for themselves as well as each other and that expressing pride in one's own identity is an essential element of any intergroup dialogue.

### First Thoughts

Blacks and Jews pair up with members of their own groups. Each member of a pair takes a turn repeating the word "Jew" (for the Blacks) or "Black" (for the Jews) while the other person shares, with as little censorship as possible, the first thought that comes to mind at each repetition of the term. This is a way of bringing to the surface attitudes and misinformation—ethnic slurs and stereotypes—the students have absorbed from their environment but know better than to say out loud or believe. Letting the students know that this is a place for frank discussion. When the group gets back together, some of the students share their responses for each term, and participants are encouraged to discuss what it's like to listen to the other group's first thoughts. These reactions often lead to some powerful exchanges.

### Caucuses

To be an effective ally to members of another group, one needs to feel positively about one's own identity. For this reason, students divide into separate Black and Jewish caucuses, where each shares what has been good and what has been difficult about being Black or Jewish. Meeting together with others of similar backgrounds enhances the students' feelings of security. In addition, students seem better able to empathize with the other group's experience after they've had the chance to speak about their own lives.

### Speak Outs

When the caucuses return, individual students share their stories with the entire workshop. The others listen carefully without interruption, discussion, or questions. The stories are often accompanied by tears, shaking, and expressions of anger. For many students, this is the most moving and transforming part of the workshop, giving them a firsthand look at the effects of prejudice. For the speakers, telling their stories to a roomful of respectful listeners can be a powerful experience, especially if they have never before had a chance to share their experiences with racism or anti-Semitism.

### Scanning

Barriers between groups begin early in life, with incidents and images that build up over time and continually affect feelings and relationships. To help get at the roots of any prejudicial attitudes, students work together in pairs, taking turns sharing every memory that has to do with Blacks or Jews. As one student scans, the other listens attentively. When the stu-

dents think they have exhausted their memories they repeat the process beginning with their earliest recollections seeking new memories and more vivid details of those already shared As students scan they are encouraged to express their emotions an important part of the healing process

#### **Four Steps to Empowerment**

At this point in the workshop students are ready to examine their feelings of powerlessness in the face of racism and anti-Semitism and to discover how directly these are linked to their early experiences To encourage this process students are asked to respond to a series of instructions (a) Describe a time when you were mistreated growing up (b) Describe a time when you stood up and interrupted prejudicial statements or actions about Blacks or Jews (c) Describe a time when you did not and examine the similarities between the situation in which you were mistreated and the one in which you were unable to stand up to prejudice It is important that students share their success stories before they talk about their difficulties fighting prejudice so they don't start out feeling guilty or discouraged In addition sharing their successful attempts at combating anti-Semitism and racism inspires students to act powerfully in the future

#### **Role Playing**

This is one of the students favorite exercises Blacks and Jews briefly caucus and choose several stereotypes about their own group that they want their counterparts to learn to interrupt Then in mixed Black and Jewish teams the students role play situations that give them opportunities to interrupt the stereotypes The students are encouraged to interrupt the prejudicial remarks in a way that challenges the statement while respecting the person who makes it This practice session gives each student effective tools for fighting racism and anti-Semitism they may encounter at any time

#### **Dealing with Political and Economic Realities**

Once again Blacks and Jews caucus separately this time to choose one important issue they want the other group to better understand Each group reports its choice to the whole workshop taking time to explain its viewpoint on the issue carefully After each report the other group has ten minutes to ask questions and have them answered During that time students aren't allowed to refute the answers or provoke discussion rather they must repeat each answer they hear in their own words to make sure they understand it clearly This pushes the students to concentrate less on

their own biases and preconceptions about the issue and more on comprehending the other group's viewpoint and experience After each question answer period a free flowing discussion of the issue can proceed

#### **Developing New Policies and Programs**

Every workshop needs to include some time for students to translate what they've learned into concrete goals and programs to effect change on their campus Toward the end of their time together students brainstorm all the possible programs that might be implemented on their campus to continue the work begun in the dialogue and these are written on large sheets of newsprint taped to the wall The students then break into smaller groups to develop specific plans and each group reports back to the whole workshop Sometimes these ideas are actually implemented but even if they are not it's important for the students to see themselves as powerful and skilled enough to effect change on a broad scale

#### **Closure and Evaluation**

It's important to be able to measure the impact of any workshop or series of workshops on those who participated as well as to give students a chance to reflect on their experience No workshop should end without a time for each student to share a highlight of the event or something he or she had learned from the dialogue

In addition workshop sponsors and trainers are encouraged to conduct a more extensive evaluation by having students fill out questionnaires distributed at the beginning and several weeks after each workshop Questions should be designed to measure such factors as shifts in students attitudes toward the other group the relationships between each student's level of Black or Jewish identity and the impact of the dialogue and the relative effectiveness of each part of the workshop Students should also be asked to share concrete ways in which they implemented what they learned from their participation Have they been better able to interrupt ethnic slurs and jokes? Have their relationships with Blacks or Jews on campus changed? While such surveys need not pretend to be scientific they are necessary to document the achievement of the event and for planning future workshops and related programs

## One School's Experience Black-Jewish Dialogue at Brown University



**T**HE FAILURE OF A STUDENT DINNER led to what became an extremely successful series of Black Jewish dialogues at Brown University. When the quiet Ivy League campus in Providence, Rhode Island, was disturbed by racial and anti-Semitic vandalism in the fall of 1982, a few administrators decided it was time to increase communication between some of the major student groups. They invited students involved with the Brown Resource Center, the Third World Center, the Sarah Doyle Women's Center, and Hillel to a potluck dinner to discuss cooperative approaches to the tensions on campus. But when Black students refused to sit down with Hillel, giving as their reasons the Jewish group's support of Israel in the invasion of Lebanon and Israeli trade with South Africa, the plan fizzled. Instead, the incident touched off a concerted effort to deal with tensions between Blacks and Jews on campus.

Brown is a small, prestigious school in a medium-sized urban area. Its history of student activism includes a major student takeover in 1975 that resulted in expanded financial aid for minority students. Known as the most innovative of the Ivy Leagues, Brown has instituted an alternative curriculum that attracts students interested in flexibility and independent learning. The Resource Center, a major catalyst behind the Black Jewish workshops, is a clearinghouse for educational alternatives on and off

campus, encouraging independent study and community involvement on the part of students.

Former Resource Center coordinator Linda Kramer and then Hillel chaplain Rabbi Cathy Felix provided the impetus for the initial workshop held in the spring of 1983. After the incident with the dinner, we talked around and heard from faculty and students that there were tensions between Blacks and Jews in the classrooms. Kramer notes, "We felt it was important to open up communication and offer a place where students could confront tensions constructively." Contact was made with the National Coalition Building Institute, known internationally as the creator and facilitator of programs on coalition building and combating prejudice. Two NCBI human relations professionals, one Jewish and one Black, agreed to lead the first workshop in a series that would become part of the Black Jewish dialogue program of the American Jewish Committee and NCBI.

The next step was to attract students. The Resource Center sent a letter to all Black and Jewish sophomores at Brown, inviting them to build a bridge of understanding between two groups on campus. At first, the Jewish students responded more readily than the Blacks. Later discussions with participants revealed that the Black students had feared that a dialogue would distract attention from their primary concern with racism, something they felt happened historically in joint efforts with whites. Jews, on the other hand, felt a more immediate need to build alliances with other groups as a response to the sense of isolation and vulnerability that is a product of anti-Semitism. As it turned out, phone calls from Black staff members of the Resource Center were enough to reassure a number of Black students that their issue wouldn't be diluted, and they decided to attend. In all, 19 Black and Jewish students accepted the Resource Center's invitation, enough for a good-sized gathering.

When the first workshop began in April 1983, the Jewish and Black students sat on opposite sides of the room. (Several Black and Jewish administrators and faculty members also attended.) For the first half of the four-hour gathering, tensions ran high.

The workshop's turning point came when individuals were invited to speak out from the heart before the entire group about their life experiences. Two Jewish students spoke of anti-Semitic attacks on their families; a Black woman told of a racist incident from her childhood, powerfully expressing her long-pent-up indignation. The tension that had previously electrified the atmosphere gave way to feelings of compassion and respect. In the discussion that followed, the participants listened to each other with new openness. Their parting comments indicated that they left with a better understanding of racism and anti-Semitism and of the importance of being allies to one another.

The next fall, a core of Black and Jewish alumni of the first workshop decided to organize a second. This time, a letter of invitation was

drafted by the students themselves and as before staff members of the Resource Center made follow up calls. By the day of the workshop 17 Black and 19 Jewish students had signed up eight of whom had attended the first dialogue.

High energy and enthusiasm marked the tone of the second workshop. Tension again built in the early stages with heated discussion concerning stereotypes Blacks' skepticism about a common bond with Jews and the degree to which Jews can pass in white society.

It was the last part of the session designed to help participants interrupt expressions of racism and anti-Semitism they encounter in their daily lives that really brought students together. Two Jewish students participated in role playing one making racist remarks the other attempting to challenge them. Then two Black students did a similar exercise one attempting to convince the other that Jews have experienced oppression as well as Blacks. Yeah but man the Jews have never experienced slavery said the first student. The other shot back Haven't you ever heard of Moses? Amid a great deal of laughter and participation the role playing gave Blacks and Jews a chance to transcend their differences and go out on a limb for each other.

At this writing there have been six more Black Jewish workshops at Brown with attendance growing from 40 to 60 to 100 as word spread throughout the campus that interesting things were happening says Kramer.

Besides their role in building stronger relationships between the two groups both Kramer and current Resource Center coordinator Toni Fannin stress that the workshops increased students awareness of their own heritages. Within their own groups people began to notice commonalities and differences. Fannin says Black students discovered the diversity within the Black experience. Kramer notes that many participants now feel a new pride in their identity and observes that quite a few have emerged as leaders on campus since the workshops began.

The workshops have had other ripple effects at Brown as well. Fannin stresses that students felt it was essential to share what they'd learned with their families and friends. A group of six participants went even further forming a Black Jewish team to make presentations for synagogues churches and other community groups. And on campus says Kramer the idea of dialogue as a way of resolving tensions has become increasingly popular inspiring workshops for white women and women of color Black women and Black men and feminists and fraternity members. Perhaps most significantly the workshop series has been credited as a major force behind student actions protesting racial incidents on campus and demanding changes in Brown's policies toward minority students. Much of the leadership of these actions came from Black students who had attended the workshops and the Jewish students gave them consistent support. Their efforts led to the formation of a national committee

to study the situation of minorities at Brown which in turn led to some major institutional changes at the school.

At a potluck dinner following one of the workshops participants talked together about families friendships dating and their postworkshop experiences. All the participants reported talking at great length about the experience to roommates and friends staying up late into the night. A Black student and a Jewish student had attended a party together upon hearing an anti-Semitic comment the Black student thumbs up said to his friend. Want me to handle this one? I know people who need this it's not like other workshops—it was mean said one student. Commented another. It's never left me.

## When Black and Jewish Students Talk Together



**J**EWISH PRIDE AND BLACK PRIDE—two themes that ran through every dialogue among the first things students spoke about and the touchstones that kept them going while exploring painful experiences later on. Sharing their reasons for their pride with the other group was a rare opportunity for most students and they took it on with enthusiasm. Our sense of social justice and the strong families we've built in spite of years of oppression makes me proud to be Black, said one young man. I'm amazed that we've been a group so long longer than maybe any other group that's around today and that makes me proud, said a Jewish student. Each group wanted very much for the other to realize the depth of its commitment. I'm not sure Blacks understand how important it is for me to be Jewish and how much I feel a connection to Jews all over the world, one Jewish student stated. The Blacks were similarly anxious for Jews to understand the importance of their Black identity.

### Black Pride Jewish Pride

Jews have an incredible strength. I feel I can do almost anything. I've been taught that I have a base and I have people who love me. And every where I go if I find someone who is Jewish I feel good about that. —A Jewish student

I went to do some interviews for an anthropology class I'm taking. We interviewed these two older Black people. And while we were talking about different things about how they grew up and about their neighborhoods I just realized how much they'd gone through and the strength of character they must have had. And it makes me feel so proud. When I look at my parents I think the same thing—they went through so much so I could be here. —A Black student

Many of the students' reasons for being proud applied to both groups: the strength of families, the ability to endure and overcome hardship, a deep commitment to social justice. Realizing how many sources of pride they had in common brought the two groups closer together. They shared the knowledge that pride in the face of oppression is a promise that one will not only survive but triumph.

At the same time both Blacks and Jews talked about what happens when oppression undercuts their pride, making them doubt themselves and feel alienated from their own people.

For Blacks the issue was particularly alive as they grappled with the importance of being Black and in college. That often meant having to refute frequent assumptions that they made it to college on the strength of affirmative action rather than their own abilities. One student told how a former teacher had met his mother in the supermarket and expressed surprise that he had gotten into college. I know she assumes I only got in because of affirmative action, he said. Everyone automatically assumes that's the only reason Blacks can be at an Ivy League school. Another bluntly summed up the common frustration with a question: How do you expect me to achieve anything when my best is always your worst?

Being labeled an affirmative action beneficiary is especially painful for Black students who have already internalized racist messages of inferiority like the Black man who spoke candidly about his need to put up a defense mechanism when he was around white people. I always felt like oh my God I'm from a public high school, he said. I wasn't even in the top ten percent. I don't belong here. I'm always so afraid. Just let me pass my classes.

For Jewish students often pressured by the assumption that they would automatically excel such comments were a window to experiences very different from their own. They shared self-doubts of another kind: having less to do with their abilities than with the legitimacy of their experience of oppression. Confronted with the strength of Black pride and some harrowing stories of discrimination experienced by the Black students, some Jews felt as if they had no right to speak up for themselves.

My experience is small potatoes compared to yours, remarked one Jewish participant to the Blacks. How can I ever expect you to listen to my insignificant difficulties about being Jewish after what you've just shared with me? said another. One Jewish student diagnosed the problem accurately when she observed: Because Jews don't see themselves as

facing difficulty every day they do not recognize themselves as being oppressed. Therefore they have a hard time seeing themselves as equal to Blacks. There is a political dimension to her explanation as well. Discrimination against Jews is largely unacknowledged as an issue on the public agenda. It's no wonder that the students should have trouble looking at a concern that the world at large gives them so little reason to examine.

It took separate caucuses and some discussion on the part of the whole group for the Jewish students to see that they had indeed been strongly affected by anti-Semitism. Born twenty years after the Holocaust into a largely upwardly mobile Jewish community they intuitively sensed that life in the United States is not as secure for Jews as it may seem. One student expressed the dilemma eloquently: I find it so frustrating to try and explain to someone when they ask me, "Why do you feel so insecure?" I mean, nobody's ever done anything to you. I know that's not true, but I find it so hard to convince people that anti-Semitism is a legitimate concern or that my feelings are real. I'm not manufacturing them. It's not just paranoia. I get the feeling that other people wouldn't understand. The safety of the workshop allowed the Jewish students to explore the effects of anti-Semitism on their lives and gave the Black students new information about the Jewish experience.

#### Who Has Suffered More?

I think there's a great similarity between Blacks and Jews. We're both strong and loving peoples. We've both suffered. —A Jewish student

I think I now see one of the problems between Blacks and Jews. They somehow qualitatively try and measure the struggles they've gone through and it becomes a battle: Who's gone through more and who's achieved more. And yet I don't think that's very important. Because both had to go through a lot. And to try and measure it doesn't do any good. —A Black student

People often come to workshops trying to compare their oppressions. Which was worse: the Holocaust or slavery? Which hurt the most: my pain as a Black or yours as a Jew? If my family is well off and yours is poor, does that mean prejudice against us doesn't count? These are all variations on a single theme when the two groups get together: Who has suffered more?

When the Black Jewish dialogues began, many students were trying to answer that question. While some Jews had a hard time seeing that their experience of oppression counted, others seeing the Holocaust as the ultimate horror thought their people had suffered the most. Blacks, on the other hand, often found it hard to imagine that someone with white skin could have experienced oppression to the same degree that they had. Jews can pass, they said, as one student asserted: I can never take off my

skin, but you can take off that yarmulke any time. The Jews agreed that there was a difference. Nevertheless, replied one young man: I can take off this yarmulke, but they could still get me as a Jew.

I could pretend I wasn't Jewish, said another student in a long discussion about passing. But I don't want to pretend that I'm not Jewish. Just because we don't have to face it every day because of the color of our skin, the feelings that we do have aren't seen as legitimate because we could escape them, but I don't want to escape them, and I don't know that I really could.

Later in that same conversation, a Black student came to a new realization about the Jewish experience in the United States. I can see how, for a Jewish person, it might be frustrating to be told, "Yeah, yeah, you're white, you're one of us, you have the same privileges." But at the same time there's also a line that you can't cross. And it's kind of like for Black people, we know that we can't cross that line. But you can jump back and forth, or maybe not jump back and forth, but absolutely be pushed back and forth. You can taste the luxuries of being white, but at the same time certain things are taken away from you. And I could see how there could be a kind of frustration, a pull from that. Because you can be okay some of the time, but we know we're never gonna be okay.

For many Blacks, the fact that Jews feel insecure about their status in the United States was a startling revelation. As their awareness grew, they came to realize that Jews are not just part of the white majority in the United States but a distinct group with a history of discrimination and hardship not entirely unlike their own. Some Blacks found this realization disconcerting at first.

Wait a minute—are you Jewish or are you white? one Black student asked a close friend at the workshop. There are many Jews who aren't white but I'm white and I'm Jewish, replied her friend. But do I treat you as a white person or as a Jew? I think what you're asking me is: Can I trust you?

While Blacks were getting a new look at what life is like for Jews, the Jews were learning face to face about racism. For some, the workshops were a chance to acknowledge some of their own unaware prejudices. A particularly striking example occurred when, toward the end of a speak-out about her fears and insecurity as a Jew, a young woman spoke of her dislike for people who act in ways that reinforce ethnic and racial stereotypes. As an example, she spoke of a Black gas station attendant she had encountered who, she said, was acting lazy, slow, and dumb. I was angry at him, she said, because I didn't want my friend in the back seat to think the stereotype about Blacks being lazy is true. No one responded until an hour later, when a young Black woman spoke up indignantly.

Didn't any of you think to say anything? she asked the group. How could she have known in one minute that he was lazy and dumb unless she already had that same stereotype about Blacks inside? Besides, why

should he have to conform or not conform to a set of criteria and who makes up those criteria anyway?

Afterward several Black students shared some of their own painful experiences with similar racist assumptions on the part of whites and the Jews saw another facet of racism. Always in such discussions it was essential for both groups to recognize that Jews had learned prejudicial attitudes not specifically because they were Jewish but because they were whites growing up in a racist society.

In general simply hearing the magnitude of racial oppression firsthand was enough to move the Jews to a whole new understanding of the Black experience. Most of their prior knowledge came from textbooks and the media hearing their fellow students often friends talk honestly about what it's like to be Black in the United States was a profoundly affecting experience. At no time was this more the case than during discussions about the Jesse Jackson campaign. As Blacks expressed the hope that Jackson's presidential bid had given their communities Jews put their fears of anti-Semitism aside in an attempt to understand the meaning of such a phenomenon for Black Americans. One Black student's declaration

Every Black vote for Jesse Jackson is a tear cut through all the arguments and gave the Jewish students a glimpse of the level of suffering many members of the Black community face every day.

Before the discussion of the campaign or any other political issue however came the stories from both Blacks and Jews of growing up under the shadow of racism or anti-Semitism. Full of courage and sensitivity these accounts brought the students closer together than any abstract discussion of racial politics ever could.

While their stories differed widely one couldn't help but be struck by the underlying similarities between the two groups' experiences. Both Blacks and Jews for example were acutely conscious of the scars of history. Jews spoke often of the emotional legacy of the Holocaust. One Jewish student told of his visit to Yad Vashem the Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem where he saw pictures of dead bodies all lined up. It's made me terrified to be a Jew he said I don't know if there will ever be a place I know completely as home.

For Black students the experience of slavery had similar resonance. One young woman felt a tremendous rush of emotion when she simply tried to tell the group her name. I don't know why I'm crying when I say my name right now she said I guess it's because of the name Eaton. I feel ties with it because I love my family but I also have the knowledge that it probably came from some slavemaster years ago. I hate to pronounce my last name. I just feel like the descendant of a slavemaster.

Other students related incidents from their childhoods that revealed how similar the experiences of racism and anti-Semitism can be. A Jewish student's father's car was firebombed in the temple parking lot a Black student's family had rocks thrown through the windows of their

home in a primarily white neighborhood. A Black woman recalled a letter she had written in the fifth grade to her best friend's father who wouldn't let his daughter play with her because of her race. I never had the courage to mail it she revealed. The regret in her voice matched that of the Jewish student who had been unable to speak out against the anti-Semitism in her workplace. And the tales of ridicule and teasing rock throwing and beatings knew no boundary between those who were the only Blacks or one of a few Jews in their neighborhoods.

Both Blacks and Jews had long kept many of their emotions buried and for most the workshops were among the first opportunities they'd ever had to share with another group the trauma of anti-Semitism and racism. As they opened up they moved closer—literally as well as figuratively. At most schools the workshops began with Black and Jewish students sitting separately on opposite sides of the room. But as they spoke out they began to sit together sometimes with their arms around each other's shoulders offering quiet support to one another as they listened and learned.

### **Togetherness and Trust**

Here on campus I see that Blacks and Jews or maybe even more so Blacks tend to be one group to themselves. I don't think that's bad because I also see that when you're a minority and discriminated against sometimes it makes you that way. But there should be an opportunity for Blacks and Jews who want to talk to each other to be able to. —A Jewish student.

I want to be proud of my heritage but at the same time I'm saying Why can't I be just a person? —A Black student.

As they grew closer the students found that they had common issues in the present as well as the past. As members of minorities on the threshold of adulthood they faced similar decisions about identity and assimilation. Some grappled with the influence of parents who felt less able to be openly proud of their heritage. One young Black woman for example felt betrayed by her father's objections when she stopped straightening her hair. The father I'd always look up to and respected who had been so active in the civil rights movement was now telling me something was ugly about my own natural hair she said. It really hurt and confused me. Another student who grew up with both a Christmas tree and a menorah every winter told how she couldn't discover the joys of being Jewish until she got to college. I wanted to learn more so I went to Yom Kippur services for the first time. I was so happy and so proud and I called home to say I went to services on Yom Kippur and fasted. My mother said You're skinny enough you shouldn't be denying yourself food for a day.

Other students like the woman who responded to questions about

Jewish attitudes toward intermarriage felt pressure from their parents to associate with members of their own group. My mother's a Holocaust survivor she said. It's hard for her to think she went through all of that to then have her daughter intermarry. Jewish cliquishness is usually for the purpose of survival. And a Black student voiced frustration at his parents' desire for him to make more Black friends. My parents keep telling me. You have to reach out into the Black community. I get so tired. I not only have to prove something to the white community but to the Black community as well.

Indeed, the question of how big a role ethnic identity should play in their lives weighed heavily in the minds of many students. Blacks frequently pointed out that Jews could choose, because of their skin color, to blend into white society. For many Jewish students, the dilemma felt like an either/or proposition. One young woman articulated the frustration well. I feel like I'll lose whichever way I turn she said. If I'm too involved with Jews, I won't be universal enough. If I'm with everyone, I won't be able to fully express myself as a Jew.

The Black students revealed similar ambivalence. Many resented the threat of being considered an Oreo— Black on the outside, white on the inside—by other members of the Black community and felt pressured by the notion that there's a particular way to be Black. One student told how he had been subject to such pressure at freshman orientation. This guy looked right at me and said, Some of you will turn out to be Oreos. But you won't be like that, will you? Your older brother was an Oreo, you know. I didn't know what to say, he said. I wanted to get up and tell him, What do you mean by being an Oreo? Is there one definition of being Black? There's a million different types of Blacks.

Obviously, nobody in their right mind can reject that they're Black. It's quite apparent, said another student. But a lot of Blacks think, If you're Black, then you should be this certain way. Well, is that any different than someone white saying, Well, you're Black, hey, you should be out there dancing!?

Both Black and Jewish students felt somewhat isolated with these concerns, and were relieved to find that they weren't alone in their struggles. Ironically, however, there were times when each group criticized the other's tendency to stick together. Each group felt threatened by the other's cliquishness; the students disliked being shut out or thought untrustworthy by their counterparts in the other group. At one point, a Black woman became very upset when one participant admitted, after telling of a childhood incident in which she's had rocks thrown at her for being a Jew, that she tended to spend time only with Jewish friends. It's not that I dislike anyone else, she responded to the Black woman's criticism, but I find comfort in hanging out with others who understand me. There's security in that.

During the same workshop, a Jewish woman became angry at a Black

man who told about a time when he'd been jailed for several months after a white woman had unjustly accused him of rape. While speaking, he had focused his attention primarily on two other Black men in the room. The Jewish woman resented this and said so. His response was that he couldn't have told the story at all if he hadn't been able to look at the two other Black men for solidarity.

The Jewish woman also criticized the man for telling the story with a smile on his face. I smiled because it was such an overwhelming experience, he answered later. It's the only way I could face it and still survive. This was one of several times that Jews questioned the reluctance on the part of many Blacks, particularly the men, to show their vulnerability. I never let anyone see how I feel, said one Black man. If I show you my pain, I'll be weak and vulnerable. As a Black person, I can't afford to do that. At the same time, many Jews acknowledged that, for them, showing rage and indignation was extremely difficult. If we get too angry, we won't be accepted, offered one student. I was taught by my family that Jews aren't supposed to get too loud or we'll stand out too much, said another.

These differences provided an opportunity for Jews and Blacks to help each other grow. The Jews showed the Black students that it might be safe to share their vulnerability. We can stand together and help each other express our grief. The Blacks encouraged the Jews to stand up for themselves. If I were a Jew, I'd go right into Jackson campaign headquarters and demand that they take my issues seriously and not leave until they did! The students came to see these differences not as reasons for alienation but as strengths that they could share.

### Money and Power

It's a neat trick that we can get played against each other. Because Jews can get so high in the system and then we're controlled, so we always have to worry. Are we going to get shut out? —A Jewish student.

So you Jews can make more money than we can. And we end up fighting you instead of all the WASPs who own the Fortune 500 companies. —A Black student.

More than any other political issue discussed at the workshops, the topic of money and power proved crucial when it came to opening up Black Jewish dialogue. Questions about Jews and money were raised consistently by both Blacks and Jews and proved confusing for everyone. Are most Jews wealthy? Do they really have access to power in this society? What does Jewish upward mobility mean for Black Jewish relations?

On a personal level, these issues came up when Blacks and Jews discussed their stereotypes of one another, attempting honestly to bring to light some of the prejudices they had absorbed from a racist and anti-Semitic society. Many Blacks admitted that their stereotypes of Jews had

to do with money—some of their first negative thoughts when they heard the word Jew were rich businessman and ambitious. This made the Jewish students uncomfortable. When I hear those things about Jews I get scared, said one student. Those are the very stereotypes that we've gotten killed for. Another student raised a question that was on many people's minds: What about the fact that the majority of Jews at her Ivy League college appeared wealthy? A young woman responded: But aren't the majority of *people* here wealthy? Why point the finger at the Jews? Yet another Jewish student reflected: When people hear of Jews being wealthy they associate it with stepping all over people and being greedy and not caring about anyone. So when you're labeled Jew and wealthy they think you got there by hurting others. The issue students realized was not the amount of money a Jew might have but the negative stereotypes that are attached to their economic achievement.

The issue was discussed in greater depth during the second part of the workshops when the students had a chance to explore their questions in a political framework. Many Black students and some Jews as well arrived at the workshops thinking that Jews have not only a great deal more wealth but exert substantially greater political influence than do Blacks. A few of the Jewish students didn't initially understand the factors that have made it more difficult for Blacks to achieve economic and political success in the United States. Some observed that there were good reasons for Jewish upward mobility—one student for example described how hard his grandfather had worked in the garment district adding: In the Jewish community one of the biggest things is that the next generation should do better. The Jewish students failed to understand that they had options that Blacks did not. The effects of slavery were different from those of the immigration experience.

Only after further probing of the issue did a more complex set of considerations emerge. I guess I want to know where so high up all those Jews are, remarked a Jewish student. When I look at the people who have power who are in the upper echelon it's not the Jews. The people with a lot of wealth are Anglo Saxon Protestants.

We're talking in relative terms here, replied a Black student. Most Blacks are aspiring to be middle class. And so to most Blacks Jews appear to be in power. They're the next level up. Blacks don't see the Fortune 500 people on the street. What they see is the Jews.

What many Blacks did see on the streets growing up were Jewish owned stores in Black neighborhoods. Looking at this phenomenon helped students to see in microcosm how misinformation about Jewish wealth could divide Blacks and Jews. I think I'm beginning to understand what you're all saying about the myth of Jewish power, said a Black student. When a Black walks into a store you see this guy standing there he's not from your neighborhood. What can you think? So Black folk end up thinking Jews have so much power. It's all a kind of divide and

conquer thing.

A Jewish student continued: So you guys end up stereotyping Jews and say: Okay we hate the Jews and then you band together with white Christians. And then they turn around and say: Okay we hate the Blacks. And then all of a sudden you're nowhere. And that's how we get split apart.

These discussions could not have taken place without the trust that had been growing between the students during the course of the program. Issues of power and economics are among the thorniest for Blacks and Jews many groups have discussed them and found that it is difficult to make real headway toward understanding and alliance building. But because the students were growing closer to one another they could acknowledge their misperceptions and take in new information with a minimum of defensiveness. A discussion that started out as frustrating became extremely fruitful as Blacks and Jews learned that their growing solidarity meant not just better personal relations but greater possibilities for political and social change.

### The Middle East

Why can't non Jews ever understand how scary it is for us to hear all these attacks on Israel? —A Jewish student.

I'm not sure—who exactly was there first anyway Palestinians or Jews? I don't understand the issues. —A Black student.

When Blacks and Jews were asked to choose the issue they most wanted the other group to understand the Jews invariably picked their ties to Israel and their objections to slurs like Zionism equals racism. Many had been disturbed by the tone of the debates over the Middle East on their campuses and were frustrated that their non Jewish friends didn't understand why anti Israel arguments and slogans threatened them so. I went to a lecture on campus about the Middle East where the speaker was equating Zionism with racism, recalled one student. I got so upset I just walked out of the room. I tried to talk to my roommate about it but she didn't even care to listen. She didn't see what the big deal was.

Students who attempted to explain what Israel meant to them as Jews often met initial resistance from some of the Blacks who entered the discussions with anti Israel attitudes. However contrary to what Jewish communal leaders concerned about Black attitudes toward Israel might fear some of the Black students proved to be more open minded than their initial posturing indicated. It's true and understandable that many Blacks on campus feel a strong alliance with the Palestinians as they do with other peoples of the Third World. But that doesn't in every case correspond to a blanket condemnation of Israel. Blacks generally agreed with the student who said: I think no Black would question Jews' rights

to a homeland. In fact, the thing Blacks seemed most sure of as discussion progressed was that they wanted more information on the issues. Some of the Jewish students had gaps in their understanding and romanticized images of Israel that weren't always useful in responding effectively to some of the legitimate Black concerns about Palestinian rights. What the workshop discussion did show was that both Black and Jewish students need fair and realistic information about the Middle East offered in an atmosphere that fosters critical inquiry on both sides.

The discussions also proved that it's possible, after initial resistance for students to put aside their differences and listen carefully to each other even when the subject matter elicits strong disagreement. Israel's relationship to South Africa was one such topic. Blacks objected to any nation having ties with the white minority government; most Jews agreed but felt that anti-apartheid activists were unfairly singling out and vilifying Israel while many other nations maintain relations with South Africa as well. One Jewish student expressed sympathy for the Israeli position.

"We're talking about a tiny beleaguered country here," he said. "If Israelis continue to trade with South Africa, it's because they have to for survival." Immediately several Black students protested loudly. But one Black student held up his hand. "Wait," he said. "Let's listen. We may not agree with him, but maybe he's saying something and I want to understand his position better." His response represented the real fruits of the workshops: a recognition of the need for both sides to slow down, listen respectfully, and put aside the immediate impulse to argue in order to gain greater long-range understanding.

### **The Jesse Jackson Campaign**

I didn't really know until now what Jesse meant to Blacks. It's important for me to hear what you're all saying. —A Jewish student

Even though intellectually I thought that the statement Jackson made must have been very offensive and very hurtful to Jewish people, I hadn't talked to anybody Jewish about it, and no one had mentioned anything to me. So I didn't get the depth of Jewish feelings until I came to the dialogue. I'm glad because it's helped me a lot more to understand and see all the work we still have to do. —A Black student

Many of the first Black Jewish workshops were held during the heat of the Jesse Jackson campaign, and students came to the dialogues deeply pained by events that had driven a wedge between Blacks and Jews on campus. At several schools, there had been angry, hostile meetings between Blacks and Jews. Some Jews reported that they could no longer talk to their Black roommates. Emotions were high, but underneath the emotional concerns was a growing desire on the part of participants to sort out their confusion about one another in a spirit of honest inquiry and soul searching.

In general, the issues for the students reflected those for Blacks and Jews in the nation as a whole. To many Black students, support for Jackson was part of an overall strategy to forge badly needed Black unity. While they might disapprove of Jackson's anti-Semitic remarks, they saw that unity as an overriding concern and weren't about to do anything to disrupt it. Jews, on the other hand, saw Jackson's comments as a blot on the candidacy they might otherwise have been able to support. One Jewish student expressed the feelings of many when she said, "I really wanted to vote for Jesse Jackson and I can't do it now. I like a lot of what he stands for, but he alienated me from the Rainbow Coalition." When a Black student argued that Jackson was just expressing anti-Semitic sentiments that all non-Jewish candidates feel, she responded, "I can't accept that if this is what he says before being elected when he's trying to butter everybody up, what will he say when he's elected and just doesn't care anymore?"

As the Jewish students expressed their concern, the Blacks struggled to respond. Torn between their support of Jackson and their empathy for the Jews' anger at his remarks, they tried to convey a sense of the campaign as a movement that went beyond the candidacy of one person—a movement they encouraged the Jews to join. As one Black said, "It's my feeling that Jews should say, 'I'm going to *make* myself part of this movement. You can't kick me out because this vision you have isn't just your vision. Damn it, you're going to have to do something different because I'm gonna be in this movement. You can't just make it your movement.' Few Jewish students disagreed that, in the best of all possible worlds, they would want to be a part of the Rainbow Coalition. But some were still concerned. As one student remarked, "There is nobody standing up publicly and saying that what Jackson said about Jews is not reflective of the movement."

Black students asked their Jewish counterparts to try to comprehend the meaning of Jackson's campaign to the Black community. One Black student's comment particularly touched the Jews. "I grew up in Harlem," he said. "When I was home last month, I saw all these kids on the street. I have to be honest. They were always losers, always hanging out on the corner getting drunk. Now they're all campaigning at the Jackson headquarters. They've been failures, but now they're saying, 'If Jesse can do it, I can too.' His forcefulness and enthusiasm helped the Jewish students to see how the campaign brought the Black community hope and to better understand how important it was for the Blacks to be part of the movement."

Throughout the discussion, the students modeled a willingness, rarely seen in older groups, to both challenge one another and look critically at their own actions and assumptions. Some students left the workshops saying they planned to bring up with roommates and friends a subject that they had, until then, felt was too volatile to raise. Many Jews felt that

this was the first time they were able to actually understand what Jackson's leadership meant for Blacks and Blacks gained a new commitment to speaking out against anti-Semitism

### **The Impact of Black Jewish Dialogue**

Black Jewish dialogue workshops have provided opportunities for hundreds of Black and Jewish college students to forge new relationships with each other. At some schools, workshop organizers kept in touch with participants and saw evidence of a growing alliance between Blacks and Jews at follow up dinners and other events. But more stringent documentation of the behavioral impact of the program was desired. Students were therefore asked to fill out questionnaires immediately before and several weeks after each workshop. These were designed to elicit profiles of the attitudes with which students entered the dialogue and their attitudes after participating. A detailed summary of these evaluations appears at the end of this manual.

Significantly, the evaluations showed that the workshops had the greatest impact on students who felt most positively about their own Black or Jewish identities. Any fear that participation in intergroup relations programs would encourage young people to abandon their ethnic ties proved, in this case, unfounded. In fact, students' ties to and knowledge of their own groups were strengthened by the opportunity to share and think freshly about their experiences. At the same time, Jews and Blacks with strong senses of identity indicated that they were more likely than other participants to attend additional workshops and to apply what they learned in other areas of their lives.

One area in which many students reported behavioral changes was their willingness to interrupt ethnic slurs or other expressions of prejudice. Some students started with themselves: one Jew said he'd stopped saying the word *schvartze* after learning how Blacks felt about it; a Black said she'd eliminated all anti-Semitic vocabulary from my conversational speech. Many other students reported personal triumphs when it came to challenging the racism or anti-Semitism they encountered in their daily lives. One Black woman described what happened when she heard a friend make an anti-Semitic remark. Suddenly I saw the faces of some of the Jews I've met and become friends with through the workshops. I started telling my friend all about the Black Jewish dialogue and what I'd been learning about the myths and stereotypes about Jews. I know I would have never had the courage to do anything before attending these workshops.

A Jewish student shared a similar experience. My family was at dinner with another family. The talk turned to welfare and then to Black issues. The father of the other family kept saying how lazy Black people were and how they are responsible for their own conditions. I reminded

him of everything I'd learned at the workshop about the Black struggle and the vicious cycle of the ghetto. I think maybe I got too angry but I felt good that I said something.

Another Black student described his reaction when someone in his dorm described another as "you know—the Jew." He was talking like I would know the person and know what that person's all about just by saying that one word. Before I went to the dialogues, I wouldn't have said anything even though I knew it was wrong, he said. But after I went to the dialogues, I began to understand why that was wrong and why I had to stop it. The dialogues gave me a feeling of empowerment about how I could stop it. And I told him all I was learning about Jews.

In addition to such individual interactions, the workshops gave many students the impetus to stand up publicly as allies for one another concerning issues of importance to Blacks and Jews on campus. Following a workshop at one school, a large group of Black students attended a rally in support of Soviet Jewry; it was the first time Black students had ever done so. At the same school, Jewish participants formed a Jews Against Apartheid group as part of the campus anti-apartheid movement, another first. On another campus, a group of Black and Jewish students went together to talk with a fraternity that had been holding insulting JAP (Jewish American Princess) parties, persuading them to stop. Probably the greatest impact came at Brown University where six workshops over a two-year period contributed to important institutional changes in the treatment of minorities on campus, brought about by student actions in which participants in the workshops played a major role.

Each school saw many more examples of individual and collective efforts at combating racism and anti-Semitism. Students had gained more than awareness; they had discovered in themselves the power to act in situations that had previously left them feeling powerless.

## Guidelines For Workshop Sponsors



**T**HE SUCCESS OF A BLACK JEWISH DIALOGUE depends a great deal on the level of preworkshop organizing that takes place on the campus. The following guidelines may be helpful.

### Key Organizing Principles

*1 A crisis may be the catalyst that leads to the decision to sponsor a workshop but workshops should not be organized around a specific incident*

The kinds of crises that have galvanized support for Black Jewish campus workshops have included Nazi literature found in the library, bottles thrown at Black students from dormitory windows, and hate letters sent to Black and Jewish groups. However, even when a crisis is the catalyst, students are more likely to attend if a workshop is not advertised as a response to a particular event. When a workshop is organized as the result of a crisis, it's all too easy for students to be diverted by the next crisis that comes along. In addition, a crisis tends to polarize students and keep them from facing the key issues that underlie the tensions. It is often best to wait until the incident itself has receded and students are able to engage in a dialogue and learn from one another.

On campuses where there has been intense hostility between Blacks and Jews, it is advisable to conduct general prejudice reduction, multi-ethnic workshops attended by others as well as by Blacks and Jews. The broader perspective relieves the polarization and creates opportunities for coalition building.

*2 It is vitally important to obtain the services of experienced knowledgeable and sensitive trainers to lead the workshop*

There are a number of criteria to consider in selecting trainers for Black Jewish or other multiethnic campus programs.

The trainers must be rooted in their own ethnic identities. Many of the students are struggling with their own identity issues. They need someone to work with who understands these dilemmas and can help the students assert ethnic pride in a way that increases intergroup understanding.

A Black Jewish dialogue should be led by a team whose members have worked together and know one another well. One of the more important aspects of these workshops is the modeling of cooperation between the trainers. This requires two people who have worked through their own intergroup issues and can actively demonstrate effective Black Jewish alliance building.

Each trainer must be familiar with the key economic, social, and political issues facing the other group. The Black trainer must have sufficient information about Israel, Israel's relationship to South Africa, and the Black African nations; the economic situation of Jews in the United States; and the specifics of recent tensions between Blacks and Jews. Similarly, the Jewish trainer must have sufficient information and knowledge about affirmative action, the anti-apartheid movement on campus, Black history, and the concern for unity in the Black community. More importantly, each trainer needs to be able to model being an ally to the other and to the long-range survival and well-being of each group. The Black trainer is there as much for the Jewish students as the Black students, and the Jewish trainer is there as much for the Blacks as for the Jews.

The trainers should be involved as early as possible in the planning for the workshops.

There are a number of places to seek trainers for Black Jewish campus programs.

► (a) On many campuses, Hillel House and the Afro American Center have directors who can help find qualified trainers.

► (b) There is often a favorite professor, well known by the students, who could be helpful in recruitment.

► (c) Chaplains' offices are frequently the most open supporters of these programs. Many chaplains know the specific intergroup tensions on campus well and can add fresh insight and leadership.

► (d) A number of off-campus organizations have been working on

Black Jewish dialogue and can be useful in developing resources for campus programs. They include The American Jewish Committee, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

**3** *It is much more useful to offer the campus a concrete program than to leave it to the individual campus to develop its own*

What made the Brown University dialogue program so successful was that the trainers had both experience and a specific workshop model to offer. In an area as sensitive as Black Jewish relations, most campuses needed the assurance that the dialogue would increase communication and understanding before embarking on the program. On a number of campuses, there had already been angry meetings between Black and Jewish students; what was needed now was a format that would help the students reach beyond the divisiveness. The fact that campus sponsors did not have to develop their own program but simply recruit students to attend an already existing program made them more likely to take on the project.

**4** *To succeed a dialogue program requires joint sponsorship and commitments from both student and administration groups*

Active administration backing proved to be essential in recruiting student participants. The more successful workshops were cosponsored by Hillel, Black student organizations, and administration offices—Student Life, Dean of Students, Office of Human Resources, etc. Many workshops were preceded by meetings with the administration staff to help them see the value of the program. On several campuses, chaplains played a significant role in developing support for the program. On most campuses, the administration contributed money for publicity, food, and the facilitators' fees.

**5** *Building contacts between Black and Jewish staff and administrators is necessary for a successful dialogue program*

The planning of a Black Jewish dialogue often brought administrative personnel together for the first time. Even where there had been substantial contacts, there had never been any specific concern about Black Jewish issues. In many cases, developing relationships among administrative personnel and identifying those who were willing to cosponsor Black Jewish dialogues required several months. Where these relationships were not sufficiently developed, the dialogues did not take place.

**6** *A core of Black and Jewish students who own the program and work together on a preworkshop planning committee is another essential ingredient*

Usually, an administrator sought support from Black and Jewish student organizations who, in turn, recommend students to serve on a planning committee.

**7** *To help Blacks and Jews feel safe and completely involved in the dia*

*logue, it is extremely important to have both a Black and a Jewish leader present throughout the organizing process and the workshop itself*

Because of the difficulties inherent in the dialogue, each group needs to have a leader it can identify with, one who completely understands its unique issues and concerns. On many campuses, the Black and Jewish students held preparatory meetings with their own leaders. There were often frequent phone calls and, in several cases, the leaders spent time in the homes of the students. Everything was done to help the students feel that there was someone leading the group who could speak on their behalf.

**8** *Communication between Black and Jewish groups must be coordinated*

At one workshop, the Jewish administration contact failed to inform the workshop leaders that a major Black program was taking place on the same day as the workshop. The Black students felt badly that they hadn't been able to participate fully. The need to coordinate efforts between each group is vital.

**9** *Although committee work is necessary, a successful dialogue program requires one person to spearhead the recruitment effort*

On every campus where a successful dialogue occurred, one person took primary responsibility for making the program happen. Sometimes that person was a Hillel director, sometimes a campus chaplain, and sometimes an administrative staff person.

**10** *Publicity should be lively and exciting to compete with other campus announcements*

On one campus, the organizer put up a rather dull poster announcing a workshop to deal with racism and anti-Semitism. To many students, the event probably sounded too much like a lecture, and a boring one at that; very few showed up. The same sponsors tried again, but this time they printed large, bright green posters that asked, "Are you tired of hearing the word JAP? Do ethnic jokes bother you? Come." This time many came. Publicity has to present the program as lively and fun; a too-serious approach tends to attract only students who feel guilty about the issues.

**11** *Although publicity and student press coverage are helpful, the most effective recruitment is one-to-one outreach*

Most of the Black and Jewish students attending their first dialogue were brought by friends. Very rarely is publicity alone sufficient to bring students to a workshop. It's just too difficult for a student to attend a potentially risky group without having prior personal contact with at least one person who will be there.

**12** *The students are the key to effective recruitment*

On one campus, a team of three Black and three Jewish students signed a letter of invitation that was sent to every Black and Jewish sophomore. They also held brief dorm meetings to discuss the workshops with their fellow students.

*13 The most effective time to hold the workshops proved to be either 2 6 00 p m or 4 8 00 p m*

There are major differences between private colleges with large numbers of students in residential housing and primarily urban colleges where many students are older live off campus and have family responsibilities For the urban colleges where students usually go home for dinner an earlier workshop time seemed to work best On campuses where most students live in dormitories a late afternoon workshop including dinner worked well Ending early enough to give students time for homework was important in every case

*14 It is more important to hold an initial workshop with small numbers than to wait until large numbers of students can be recruited*

On several campuses the first Black Jewish workshops were small (15 20 students) but the participants enthusiastically solicited more students for subsequent workshops On one small residential campus the first workshop attracted only 15 students but 100 showed up at the third including every Black and Jewish student leader on campus

*15 Evaluation of program effectiveness is necessary to gain support for future programs*

Pre and postworkshop questionnaires will identify any significant changes in student attitudes and behavior as a result of the program Too often workshops are initiated with no clear plan for evaluation and sponsors are unable to document their program's achievements The questionnaires add to the excitement and involvement of the students and help them reflect on their own growth

### **Handling Resistance**

Sponsors should be prepared to deal with a variety of objections

*1 This is not our issue*

On one campus Black student leaders continually maintained that Black Jewish dialogue was not a pressing concern for Blacks Only when the Black trainer held a separate meeting with the Black students listened to their concerns and helped them to understand how improving relations between Blacks and Jews was essential to ending racism did they change their minds On another campus Jewish students were so involved with Israel related programming that they didn't want to take the time to develop a Black Jewish dialogue The Jewish trainer spent several hours encouraging one Jewish student and helping her develop an entire organizing strategy Ten Jewish students were thus recruited for the first workshop and after a successful workshop it was easy to bring in other Jews

*2 There are faculty members on this campus who think they are the only ones capable of leading dialogue workshops*

On a number of campuses there were certain faculty members who

prided themselves on being the racism trainers on campus They were resistant to initiating Black Jewish dialogues and they didn't want anyone else to do it either In one instance the faculty member was given a special role at the workshop presenting some historical material this eased his resistance considerably On another campus the trainers encouraged the program sponsors to go ahead and set up the Black Jewish dialogue and the resistant professor was invited to attend if she so desired It's important to take resistant faculty members into account but at the same time not to give them so much power that a potentially successful program is forestalled Faculty need to know that there is always room for a diversity of programs on campus

*3 There is no one on the other side to talk to*

Often this kind of comment came from a Jewish or Black administrator or student organization director who had built very few relationships outside his or her department or group In such cases workshop organizers did some leg work to find Black and Jewish faculty or staff who were willing to join in sponsoring a dialogue

*4 Our campus doesn't need outside help We can handle our own problems*

This comment usually followed a particular campus crisis between Blacks and Jews In many of these cases outside agencies had tried to intervene—sometimes inflaming the situation At that point college administrators were understandably reluctant to sponsor a workshop In several instances it was helpful to let the crisis quiet down so that a workshop would not be seen as one more alien force making things difficult on the campus Certain campuses were more receptive when the workshops were presented as a *preventative program* designed to ward off future conflicts This approach has inspired some campuses to integrate the workshop model into general campus programming for intergroup issues not limited to those concerning Blacks and Jews exclusively