

# Women Must March on the Right Road

by Michael Curtis



Women's March organizer Tamika Mallory with Louis Farrakhan

Political theater in the United Nations is often in the wrong time and the wrong place in the wrong style. In her farewell speech in the UN General Assembly on December 18, 2018, U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley spoke of the anti-Israeli bias of United Nations bodies and of the antisemitic boycott they approved. The lack of any form of objectivity by the UN Human Rights Council regarding Jewish citizens has been a continuing display of thoughtless and automatic malevolence. Expecting otherwise is like being at a Chekhov play, waiting for something that's not going to happen.

At one point it was hoped that UN conferences on women might concentrate on and be limited to the problems facing women, achieving greater equality and opportunities for women, empowerment of women, ending sexual harassment, improving women's place in the political and economic community. Sadly,

the women's conferences. sponsored by the UN, starting with the first one in Mexico City, June-July 1975, diverted from appropriate objectives to focus on condemnation of Israel, and for elimination of Zionism along with "racial discrimination in all its forms." A resolution at Mexico City condemning Zionism was approved by the UNGA 107-1 with 26 abstentions.

The subsequent Women's Conferences, in Copenhagen, July 1980, Nairobi 1985, and Beijing, September 1995, included the demonization of and calls for the isolation of Israel, condemned as a colonial power. Would the latest private Women's organization formed around 2017 be different? This is the Women's March, WM, organization, a group, created in opposition to the inauguration of Donald Trump as U.S. President, which organized a highly successful protest march on January 21, 2017 that attracted an estimated 500,000 in Washington, D.C. and many in other U.S. cities.

Th group immediately became celebrated, and its organizers were featured in prominent journals, *Glamour* and *Fortune* magazines. The organizers were praised in *Time's* Most Influential People's List 2017. The entry for them in the story was written by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (Dem-NY) who commented that WM was "the most inspiring and transformational movement I've ever witnessed in politics."

This has led to national media coverage of the four women recognized as co-leaders of WM: Tamika Mallory, Bronx born, African-American, Linda Sarsour, Palestinian-American activist, who worked for some years with the Arab-American Association, Carmen Perez, self-defined Chicana/Mexican American, who co-launched the Justice League in 2013, and Bob Bland (Mari Lynn Foulger) fashion designer.

*Jet Magazine* called Linda Sarsour, "the Sojourner Truth of our time." It appeared to ignore the fact that she supported Assata Shakur, former Black Liberation Army Commander, convicted of murder, who had fled to Cuba.

WM continued its existence, organized another March in 2018, plans another in D.C. in January 2019, and trains activists. The WM purportedly claims to give a voice to women in government, media, politics, to minorities and people of color, to LGBTQIA and to work across racial and religious lines. It claims to fight bigotry and discrimination in all its forms.

An organization genuinely interested in reducing the disparity and gender gap, especially for black and Hispanic women, is to be welcomed. However, from the start, allegations of antisemitism among its leaders and refusal to allow Jewish women activists to be part of that leadership have been voiced.

There is no secret of the progressive political leanings of the leading organizers. Mallory admired Fidel Castro. They were vocal in criticism of Trump, the day after his inauguration. They were conspicuous in attending the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing of the nomination of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court, and in their support of Professor Christine Blasey Ford who had accused Kavanaugh of sexual abuse. They were critical of Starbucks in April 12, 2018 for the behavior of staff in its Philadelphia branch when two African-Americans waiting to meet someone, were arrested on suspicion of trespass. Starbucks closed its stores to train its employees in a company-wide program against racial bias. Sarsour, long time director of the Arab American Association of New York, led a coalition to close NYC public schools for observance of two of Islam's most holy days. Sarsour has asserted that "the same people who justify the massacres of Palestinian people and call it collateral damage are the same people who justify the murder of young black men and women."

Most focus has been on Mallory and Sarsour for alleged antisemitic remarks, or sympathy towards antisemites, for statements that the creation of Israel was a human rights crime, and above all for friendship with Louis Farrakhan,

leader of the Nation of Islam and acknowledged antisemite, whose meetings they attended.

Whatever one's views of the Nation of Islam, it is undeniable that Farrakhan is a hateful person. The organizers of WM are not naïve. Mallory attended the Farrakhan meeting, his annual Savior's Day, on February 25, 2018 in Chicago where he referred to the "Satanic Jew," and declared that "the powerful Jews are my enemy." He reiterated that the devilish Zionists must be confronted. Mallory, even if she did not agree with Farrakhan, did not separate herself from his racist remarks and beliefs. Indeed, she congratulated him on his birthday.

Mallory has been invited to be the keynote speaker at the University of North Carolina's Asheville celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Week. She should remember that King in 1968 remarked that "when people criticize Zionists they mean Jews, you are talking antisemitism." She might compare this with Farrakhan's diatribe that Jews control the media, Hollywood, the FBI, most of Europe and Mexico. Does she accept Farrakhan's view that the "white people running Mexico are Mexican Jews?" Or his view that "whites are a race of devils, and that the Jews, a small handful, control the movement of this great nation?"

Farrakhan's record is well known. He regards both Adolf Hitler and Henry Ford, "who was called an antisemite," as "very great men." In his 2015 Saviour Day Keynote address, he informed the world that Israel and the Jews orchestrated the 9/11 attacks, and Jews had foreknowledge of them.

A photo of Mallory and Carmen Perez was posted holding hands with Farrakhan. Of course, Mallory is not alone in attending Nation of Islam meetings. Among others are members of Congress, one of whom referred to Farrakhan as an "outstanding human being." But at least three of the WM organizers appear to accept Farrakhan's arguments that white Jews, as white people, uphold white supremacy, that Jews are not trustworthy,

that Jewish women are part of the privileged white majority. They may not completely believe, as does Farrakhan, that Jews were prominent in the slave trade and "the prison industry" but have not refuted it.

The WM organizers may be aware of Farrakhan's book, *The Secret Relation between Blacks and the Jews*, emphasizing the Jewish control of the slave trade, but are they aware that Henry Louis Gates called it the "bible of the new antisemitism?" It is disappointing but consequential that the WM organizers agreed that security for their next march was to be provided by the leaders of the Nation of Islam.

The revelation of support by WM for antisemite Farrakhan has led to alternative groups such as March On, a diverse coalition. Since the WM organizers have persisted in manifestations of sympathy for antisemites, U.S. judicial authorities might follow the example of France at a critical moment.

Paul Marchandeu, French minister of justice, November 1, 1938 to September 1, 1939 in the government of Edouard Daladier was the author of the decree of April 21, 1939 that amended the law on the freedom of the press of July 29, 1881 by allowing prosecution "when defamation or insult committed against a group of persons, by their origin, race, or religion, will have been designed to arouse hatred among citizens or residents." It was repealed by the antisemitic law of the Vichy government of August 16, 1940, but Marchandeu remains as a model to be followed. Antisemitism must be punished. The WM must find the right road.