

Forum

"It's clear to me that the body politic must recommit itself to public funding for the arts I'm fighting mad and am going to do the best I can."

— Kitty Carlisle Hart, chairman of the New York State Council on the Arts for nearly 20 years, discussing the efforts to sabotage arts funding in her state and the nation.

DISTURBING PARALLELS IN ANTI-SEMITIC RHETORIC

NEW YORK — In a fiery speech delivered in Chicago on Feb. 26, Louis Farrakhan attacked "international bankers" for promoting this century's wars so that their "central banks" could collect interest off loans to the combatants. The bankers he singled out for ignominy were Jewish — the Rothschilds in Europe, and, in America, their alleged agent Paul Warburg.

Does any of this sound familiar? It will to students of the anti-Semitic ravings of Depression-era demagogues. But, far more disturbing, some of Farrakhan's points might also hit home with the members of the Christian Coalition, who have scooped up more than 500,000 copies of their leader Pat Robertson's tome, *The New World Order*, since its publication in 1991.

Like Farrakhan, Robertson overdramatizes Warburg's role as the "true draftsman" and "catalyst" of the sinister U.S. central bank, the Federal Reserve, in 1913.



FRANK RICH

COLUMNIST

Such is Robertson's fascination with the Rothschilds that he calls *The Economist*, an independent magazine that once had a Rothschild as its chairman, "the Rothschild publication."

And then there's the overlap of logic.

Farrakhan: "In order to fight a war, governments had to borrow money. They borrowed money from these central banks. The central banks waxed rich because they loaned money and charged interest. . . ."

Robertson: "The money barons of Europe, who had established privately owned central banks like the Bank of England, found in war the excuse to make large loans. . . ."

When I recently wrote about *The New World Order* the response from Robertson, the most powerful kingmaker in the Republican Party right now, was swift.

In a statement to *The Times*, he congratulated himself for his support of Israel,

then expressed shock and regret that anyone could possibly think that his "description of international bankers" referred to Jews. He described his book as "carefully researched," with "seven single-spaced pages of bibliography from original historical sources."

But while he repudiated his supposedly inadvertent use of anti-Semitic code words, he did not repudiate the book's content whatsoever.

The New World Order and Farrakhan's tirade have the same pedigree. Among its "original historical sources," Robertson's bibliography does not include either Warburg's papers or books, but it does list Nesta Webster's *Secret Societies*, a notorious anti-Semitic tract from the 1920s.

Our two most prominent extremists of the 1990s are dipping into the same well of



Robertson



Farrakhan

pseudo-history that once served Father Coughlin and Henry Ford.

On the phone this week, Ron Chernow, the author of the definitive biography, *The Warburgs*, noted that the obsession with Warburg and the Rothschilds "runs through all anti-Semitic literature."

To single out the depressed, morbidly shy Warburg as "the kingpin of a conspiracy," he added, is "absurd."

Then again, any *New York Times* writer might be part of the conspiracy too, since Adolph Ochs, a Jew who was *The Times'* formative publisher, makes a cameo appearance in *The New World Order* as well.

Is Robertson anti-Semitic? He says not. But that doesn't alter the fact that his book disseminates old anti-Semitic conspiracy theories, however encoded.

Were he leading a fringe movement, he could simply be dismissed as a footnote to what the historian Richard Hofstadter once labeled "the paranoid style" in American politics. But the Christian Coalition now has a major say in the Republican nominating process. At its "Road to Victory" convention last fall, Phil Gramm, Lamar Alexander and Elizabeth Dole, standing in for her husband, all kissed Robertson's ring.

Ralph Reed, Robertson's front man, assured *The Times* last weekend that Robertson's statement disavowing any anti-Semitic code words in *The New World Order* would be printed in a coming issue of *Christian American*, the coalition's newspaper.

In the February 1995 issue, meanwhile, you can read a column by Patrick Buchanan invoking *The New World Order* in which Robert Rubin, now secretary of the Treasury, is accused of supporting the Mexican bailout to enrich his old investment-banking firm, Goldman, Sachs.