



# Strangers in the Land: Blacks, Jews, Post-Holocaust America

*Eric J. Sundquist*

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In a culture deeply divided along ethnic lines, the idea that the relationship between blacks and Jews was once thought special--indeed, critical to the cause of civil rights--might seem strange. Yet the importance of blacks for Jews and Jews for blacks in conceiving of themselves as Americans, when both remained outsiders to the privileges of full citizenship, is a matter of voluminous but perplexing record. It is this record, written across the annals of American history and literature, culture and society, that Eric Sundquist investigates. A monumental work of literary criticism and cultural history, *Strangers in the Land* draws upon politics, sociology, law, religion, and popular culture to illuminate a vital, highly conflicted interethnic partnership over the course of a century.

Sundquist explores how reactions to several interlocking issues--the biblical Exodus, the Holocaust, Zionism, and the state of Israel--became critical to black-Jewish relations. He charts volatile debates over social justice and liberalism, anti-Semitism and racism, through extended analyses of fiction by Bernard Malamud, Paule Marshall, Harper Lee, and William Melvin Kelley, as well as the juxtaposition of authors such as Saul Bellow and John A. Williams, Lori Segal and Anna Deavere Smith, Julius Lester and Philip Roth. Engaging a wide range of thinkers and writers on race, civil rights, the Holocaust, slavery, and related topics, and cutting across disciplines to set works of literature in historical context, *Strangers in the Land* offers an encyclopedic account of questions central to modern American culture.

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