



ISSUES
IN NATIONAL AFFAIRS

DR. JEFFRIES
and the Anti-Semitic Branch
of the Afrocentrism Movement

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DR. LEONARD JEFFRIES AND THE ANTI-SEMITIC BRANCH OF THE AFROCENTRISM MOVEMENT

Anti-Semitism exists in one part of the Afrocentrism movement. That was amply demonstrated by CCNY professor Dr. Leonard Jeffries during a July 20, 1991 speech at the Empire State Black Arts and Cultural Festival in Albany, New York. Dr. Jeffries, chairman of the African-American Studies department at City College, claimed, among other things, that there is an anti-black "conspiracy, planned and plotted and programmed out of Hollywood," by "people called Greenberg and Weisberg and Trigliani."

The effort to promote study of Africa as part of the central curriculum is, by and large, one without an anti-Semitic component. It took Jewish professors to promote literature by Jewish authors that had been overlooked and to pull Jewish studies from the fringes of academics into the respected center. And there are many serious scholars, African American and others, who are trying to promote African studies. The inclusion of neglected fields of study is important for all students.

Yet, on the extreme of the movement are those who speak of "Afrocentrism," and mean by that term not, as Dr. Molefi Kete Asante of Temple University says, the effort to "reposition Africa in people's minds," but rather, the superiority of all things African to anything non-African. Dr. Leonard Jeffries is a central member of this movement -- one that is Europhobic and anti-Semitic, as well as racist, anti-Arab and anti-Catholic. But anti-Semitism is what it does best. Anti-Semitism is not an "add on" for Dr. Jeffries' Afrocentrism -- it is a central part, as his July presentation, excerpted below, demonstrates. Dr. Jeffries' brand of anti-Semitism is of the classic mold -- it sees hidden conspiracies attacking the body of a non-Jewish population.

Before his July 20, 1991 speech, Dr. Leonard Jeffries was already known for his teaching that blacks are racially superior to whites because blacks, whom he calls "sun people," have more melanin in their skin than whites, whom he calls "ice people." (Even though Jeffries is generally believed to be the inventor of this theory, it was actually founded by Dr. Frances Cress Welsing who, according to the *Amsterdam News*, contended that "white racism and aggression are the result of the lack of melanin. This genetic deficiency, the lack of color, compels white people to be hostile to people of color.")

In November, 1990, Dr. Jeffries organized the "Second National Conference on the Infusion of African and African-American Content in the High School Curriculum" in Atlanta. Over 1,000 predominately black educators from around the country attended.

According to the November 26, 1990 *New Republic*, the Atlanta conference reflected "the conviction that all Western knowledge is a corruption of Egyptian, i.e. black African thought [and therefore] schoolchildren, black and white, should be taught everything from a black African perspective." One speaker,

Wade Nobles, an educator from Oakland, California, said, "When we adopt other people's theories, we are like Frankenstein doing other people's wills. It's like someone drinking some good stuff, vomiting it, and then we have to catch the vomit and drink it ourselves. . . . The Greeks gave back the vomit of the African way. . . . Don't become vomit-drinkers."

Dr. Jeffries also has little tolerance for anything Western, and his agenda is not the inclusion of African-based studies in education, but to make it supreme, and every other inquiry of study inferior. To him, the inclusive notion of a multicultural education is "mental genocide."

The 1,000 black school teachers assembled in Atlanta heard, according to the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, that "Jesus was black; Moses was black; Buddha was black. . . . Ancient Egypt was the source of all modern learning and an advanced black society. Greek philosophers stole the wisdom of Egypt and made it their own. Subsequent generations of whites rewrote history and turned Egypt into a white society. . . . The Book of Exodus is wrong. Jews were never slaves under the pharaohs. Rather they were guest workers of benign black rulers who were too culturally advanced to have been oppressors. . . . Blacks are the real discoverers of America, having preceded Columbus by some 3,000 years."

Not explained, presumably, was how the Chinese and Japanese societies developed. But if one wanted to know more about the Jews, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the anti-Semitic Czarist forgery that alleges a worldwide Jewish conspiracy, and which fueled many pogroms, was sold at the conference.

The culminating event in Atlanta was a speech by John H. Clarke, professor emeritus at Hunter College in New York, who, according to the *New Republic*, said that no black American should soil herself with Christianity. "At what point do we stop this mental prostitution to a religion invented by foreigners?" he asked. "All religion is artificial. All the religions of the world are male chauvinist murder cults."

For Dr. Clarke, as for Dr. Jeffries, hatred of things white is not enough; Jews are an especial target. As reported in the Afrocentric-based magazine *Alkebulanian*, vol. 1 #6 (July 1989), Dr. Clarke said, at a speech at Wayne County Community College:

"African people have been manipulated into agreeing with everything white, from a white Jesus to white bread. A mere handful of people utilized the word 'Holocaust' and made the entire world weep for them making Black people forget that it was this same handful who participated in the African holocaust." [African slavery]

Dr. Clarke pointed out the fact that the "evil" genius of Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx and Albert Einstein has colonized the minds of the world and he asked why this minute group of people were so effective.

The *Alkebulanian* describes itself as dedicated to "the power of African pride and dignity revealing a divinity of spirituality as lived during the great era of Egyptian Kings and Queens. Our magazine will speak the truth and expose the falsehoods that have weakened a precious people through the course of history." The magazine, which claims that the Talmud was written by "racist dogs calling themselves Jewish Talmudist Scholars" (Arabs are also called "dogs") is being distributed on college campuses. At Ferris State University in Michigan it has been recommended by the Director of Minority Affairs. Reportedly associated with *Alkebulanian* is Mr. Ashra Kwesi, who regularly lectures on college campuses, and has appeared at Stanford, SMU and UCLA. He has an anti-Semitic, anti-Christian, sexist and homophobic delivery, regularly referring to the "faggot Pope" and "faggot America."

But of all the haters in this circle of Afrocentrism, Dr. Jeffries is the most vitriolic. His speech in Albany demonstrates the centrality of anti-Semitism to his teaching. Half of his nearly two hour speech was

spent attacking Jews. Dr. Jeffries preaches Jew-hatred like a religion -- in fact, he tells people to "put [his type of Afrocentrism] on top of your bible or move the bible over, or the Koran."

JEFFRIES, THE JEWS, AND THE MEDIA

Dr. Jeffries points to a real problem when he speaks about the stereotypes of African Americans produced in Hollywood. But he has copied the anti-Semitism of Louis Farrakhan, Gerald K. Smith and Legrand Clegg. Rather than point to the cultural and political aspects of racism in 20th century American society, he prefers a conspiracy theory that has proven its worth: the old-time *Protocol*-flavored, "the Jews control the media" canard.

From the fact that many Jews have been and are connected with Hollywood, Dr. Jeffries believes that there is something in the Jewishness of the Hollywood folk that is responsible for racism in the movies. Not mentioned is the fact that Jews went into the movie business because that new industry, unlike many others, was not closed to Jews by discrimination. Not mentioned is the fact that the most racist film ever to come out of Hollywood -- one which is still on neo-Nazi video lists -- is D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, and that this silent film which gave birth to the new industry was not made by a Jew.

At his July 20, 1991 speech, Dr. Jeffries said:

For years I grew up as a youngster just like you did going to movies where the African peoples were completely denigrated. That was a conspiracy, planned and plotted and programmed out of Hollywood, where people called Greenberg and Weisberg and Trigliani and what not. It's not being anti-Semitic to mention who developed Hollywood. Their names are there. MGM, Metro Goldwyn Mayer. Adolph Zukor. Fox. Russian Jewry had a particular control over the movies, and their financial partners, the Mafia, put together a system of destruction of black people.

DR. JEFFRIES, JEWS AND SLAVERY

No thinking person can deny the centrality of slavery to the African-American experience. Dr. Jeffries (as do many followers of Minister Farrakhan) sees Jews as the driving force behind that experience -- and it is a lesson he wants every school child to learn.

In his July 20 speech, Dr. Jeffries explained:

Most of you don't realize that when the *New York Times* put in the paper that Jeffries said, rich Jews were involved in the enslavement process, they put that in there to paint me as an anti-Semitic [sic]. . . . And the head Jew at City College, Dr. Bernard Sohmnner, saw me after the article in the *Times*, said, "Len, everybody knows rich Jews helped finance the slave trade." If everybody knows it, then let's put it in the classroom. . . . Let's talk about who financed, planned, operated and maintained the slave system. . . .

Newport, Rhode Island at the time of the American revolution was the leading legal slaving center in America and that was the home of the largest Jewish community and most active, wealthy Jewish community in America. . . . Aaron Lopez, Lopez of Newport, in the 1750's and '60s, one of the largest slavers out of Newport, Rhode Island, a community that had a number of outstanding wealthy Jews who not only controlled a couple of dozen, but they controlled most, if not all, of the 30 distilleries that process molasses from the Caribbean into rum to be sold to the Native Americans as "fire water" and to be sold to Africa for enslaved Africans.

That individual Jews, like others, were involved in the slave trade is, of course, both true and regrettable, but it had nothing to do with the fact they were Jews. Again, Dr. Jeffries sees all others involved in the slave trade as slave traders -- and Jews as somehow drawn to such practices as Jews.¹ His anti-Semitism infects his view of history further: he sees Jews as responsible for the behavior of others involved in the slave trade.

Dr. Jeffries asks:

Where do you want to start? You want to go back into the Spanish Sephardic Jewish community? Then get Stephen Birmingham's *The Grandees*. The grandees, the Jewish rich that supported the Spanish throne and helped lay the foundation for the enslavement in the 1400's and 1500's.

Even after the Jewish community was persecuted in Spain with the Inquisition in 1492, many of them that converted to Christianity stayed in Spain and helped the Spanish king and queen, who was anti-Semitic, Queen Isabella, helped her maintain the slave system against the Africans and Native Americans.

Where do you want to start? Do you want to go to Amsterdam? Then get a book by Jonathan Israel on *European Jewry In the Age of Mercantilism, 1550 to 1750*, and there's a picture of the Amsterdam synagogue, which was the center of slave trading for the Dutch. Amsterdam became a leading port in this period of time for slaving and it was around the synagogue that the slaving system was established. . . .

According to Jeffries, a Jewish conspiracy -- connected not by theology but by race -- was behind the various colonial apparati that were involved in the slave trade.

The entire world was at fault for the abomination of the African slave trade -- the colonial powers that ruled the countries to which slaves were sent, the people who purchased the slaves, those who sold them (including other Africans and Arabs). But rather than focus on states and economics and sociological and cultural matters to explain slavery, Dr. Jeffries feels it a more productive use of his time to connect individual Jews (who at the time were being chased out of many countries by the Inquisition) to the slave trade, and to thereby blame slavery on "rich Jews."

Dr. Jeffries explains:

We are now preparing the ten volumes dealing with the Jewish relationship with the black community in reference to slavery so we can put it in the school system. . . . We'll have the ten major books relating to the Jewish community, the wealthy Jewish community and enslavement. In Spain they were the grandees managing the money of the Spanish throne. In Germany in the 1600 and 1700s they were the court Jews managing the political and economic apparatus of Europe, the Hapsburg Empire, the German states, etc.

We have the names. We know who they were, what they were, what they controlled. We know when they set up the Dutch East Indian [sic] Company, the Dutch West Indian [sic] company, the Portuguese Company, the Brazilian company. We know who and what documents. We know the family connections. We know even when they converted to

¹ Some of Dr. Jeffries' apologists claim he is not talking about all Jews, but "rich" Jews. But it is their Jewishness, and not their richness, that makes them special targets for Dr. Jeffries.

Christianity they maintained links with their Jewish community brothers who had not converted, and that's why they had a network around the world. . . . [T]he Jewish community [moved] into Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire, along with the Syrians and Lebanese, and they became the lifeline of the fallen Roman Empire in the 15-- and 1600's, and they began to institutionalize a trade link with the Middle East. A trade link . . . dealt with humans.

Dr. Jeffries' view of the Jew as central to the existence of the slave trade is the key to his psychosis. Dr. Jeffries is not an original thinker,² and, like classical anti-Semites before him, he ignores the reality of discrimination against Jews in Europe and recasts them as a devilish power behind those very same forces that were targeting Jews. Note the conspiratorial allegations that make Dr. Jeffries' remarks of the same type heard by victimized Jewish communities throughout the ages: even when they converted, they "maintained links" and "had a network" for evil purposes.

Because these "rich Jews" were always so diabolical, they presumably had to enslave others well before Africans were the main subjects of the slave trade.

Dr. Jeffries states:

The humans it dealt with for hundreds of years were the Slavic people of Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe, the Czechs, the Poles, the Yugoslavs, the Russians; an alliance between the Catholic church and rich Jews selling white Central, Eastern and Southern Europeans into Arab slavery. . . .

The white slave trade in Europe, because the Central and Eastern Europeans were pagans. They were not Christians. The Catholic church had no allegiance to them, and the Jewish community didn't care either which way. So rich Jews and the Catholic church had an alliance for hundreds of years selling white folks from Central, Eastern and Southern Europe into slavery in the Arab world, the white slave trade, which is the precursor of enslavement later.

DR. JEFFRIES, THE JEWS AND CRITICS OF HIS BRAND OF AFROCENTRISM

Dr. Jeffries, along with many others, believes that education has for too long been "Eurocentric," meaning that it has taught the history of the world as a European history, and through European eyes, to the neglect of other experiences.

Rather than trying to include other perspectives as part of a more complete educational framework, Dr. Jeffries preaches the supremacy of African history, just as he preaches the biological supremacy of "people of color" over white folk.

Who are the enemies of those who would teach African supremacy? You guessed it. Here's how it works, according to Dr. Jeffries:

² Dr. Jeffries claims that he's "come up with a formulation which I call pyramid analysis. . . . And that pyramid analysis means that you've got to be able to process the enormity of information about the human experience. Using a pyramid as a model it allows us to deal the basic rule and understanding of human life and life on the planet and life in the universe, and that's duality.

"Duality and polarity is a basic concept that has to be understood. The pyramidal framework gives us a chance to deal with that. One polarity is what I call the thesis; the other polarity is what I call the antithesis. [Combine them and you have] synthesis."
To students of political science, Dr. Jeffries' "pyramid analysis" sounds like the Hegelian dialectic diagrammed on a Hobbesian chart.

Read Diane Ravitch's record, look at her track record. This is the ultimate, supreme, sophisticated debonair racist, pure and simple. And when Asa Hilliard and the others called her Miss Daisy, they did it right. And Asa said, "We're going to let Miss Daisy drive her own damn car from now on." And Miss Daisy has several partners. Albert Shanker . . . Arthur Schlesinger . . . And then the melting pot man. What is his name? . . . Glazer, Dr. Nathan Glazer, Melting Pot Glazer. And then Dr. Kenneth Jackson. . . .

The old standard was a Bible Belt Texas rural family. That's the standard for the textbooks that went into the schools for generations. Now the new standard is not a Bible Belt Texas family, but a sophisticated Texas Jew, and that standard is not good enough either. Because many people, such as the Ravitches, who happen to be Jewish, have blinded us from the attack coming from the Jewish community, systematic, unrelenting. And until we can look at it and deal with it, there's no efforts we can make that are going to be successful. Not anti-Semitic to raise the issue. . . . There's an orchestrated attack by the Schlesingers and the Shankers working with the white conservatives, the George Will, the Heritage Foundation. We're pinpointing their relationship, we're putting it on our African computer. The document is being prepared.

George Will can be a conservative; the most important quality of the Jews who disagree with Dr. Jeffries is, again, their Jewishness. For Dr. Jeffries, as for Gerald K. Smith or Father Coughlin or Henry Ford or any of the others who are classical anti-Semites, it is the Jewishness of the other that makes them evil, and their perceived attacks "systemic" and "unrelenting."

DR. JEFFRIES AND JUDAISM

Afrocentrics of Dr. Jeffries' school are so invested in their disdain for anything not rooted in Africa that their analysis is self contradictory. On one had, all western religions are evil, "murder cults," as Dr. Clarke referred to them because, as Dr. Jeffries explains, it was "in the river valleys of the world [that] civilization occurred. In the northern regions and other regions like the deserts where the environment was negative and the ecology was difficult, then you had barbarity."

But while Christianity and Islam and especially Judaism are scorned, they are also viewed as important, but only because they come out of Africa.³ In other words, as Dr. Jeffries describes what he believes to be the point of "Dr. [Cheikh Anta] Diop's latest work . . . *Civilization and Barbarism*[:] there's only one human race and it's the African race. Everything else is a mutation off African genes." Likewise, there is only one true spirituality and religion, African, and everything else is a mutation and, by necessity, inferior.

Dr. Jeffries elaborates:

The people of the bible were not European. They were Africans or people of mixed African blood. And you have to begin to deal with that. In our lessons we're going to put the ten major historical figures in the bible and all of their ten African wives. . . . And it's

³ According to Dr. Jeffries: "[T]he people who built the great cultures of the river valley civilizations, particularly in the Nile Valley, had a centrality of the female principle and a complementarity of the female principle with the male principle. Europeans don't have that. They didn't have it then, they don't have it today. Semites don't have it. They didn't have it then, they don't have it today. One side of the Semitic question is Jews, the other side is Arabs. The female is not at the center of their culture. Catholics don't have it. That's why when the put the women in the Catholic pictures it comes out as a Black Madonna. They have to reach for the African woman and child to put a woman in the Catholic Church's picture."

ironic that in the Jewish tradition in the orthodoxy, that if you are an orthodox Jew, you cannot be a true Jew unless you pass through the woman's life. But isn't it ironic that in the biblical text most of the great historic Jewish figures had African wives? So we've got to know that and know what the implications are, know it critically.

Dr. Jeffries point seems to be that if the ten most important Jews were not married to Jewish women, then their offspring cannot be Jewish. Why is this important? Because, like the followers of Minister Farrakhan who talk about the "so-called Jews,"⁴ Dr. Jeffries wants to discredit any Judaism that is not linked to African people.

Jews are to be disdained. So Dr. Jeffries' audience applauds when he declares that [The poem on the base of the Statute of Liberty] was written by Emma Lazarus . . . She was a rich Sephardic Jew The father of Emma Lazarus [was] Moses Lazarus . . . , who made his money in sugar refining and slave trading."

Yet Judaism must have some value because "the religion that was brought forth by the ancient Hebrews was most likely the religion of Akehnaten, the Pharaoh who brought forth the concept of the oneness of God, 1400 or thereabout B.C."

Dr. Jeffries declares:

All of the human race is African. We know for a fact that the ancient Hebrews came into the Nile Valley. They came into an African context. Thesis, antithesis. They came in without ten commandments, they went out with ten commandments. They came in without circumcision, they went out without [sic] circumcision. They came in without the concept of bar mitzvah and bas mitzvah, they went out without the -- with the concept. They came in without the concept of the oneness of God, they went out after meeting the Africans with the concept of one God. And the synthesis becomes Judaism. The Greeks didn't have a pot to pee in. They didn't have writing in the 800's and 900's B.C. They come into contact with the Africans and they develop their culture. They didn't have philosophy. They didn't have science. They didn't have mathematics. It's in the context of the relationship with the Nile Valley that they synthesized this. Same thing happened with the early Christians. Early Christians come into contact with the Africans of the Nile so the first Christian nations are Greek, are Egypt and Ethiopia. And later the Prophet Mohammed. Comes into contact trying to raise Arabs from barbarity, comes into contact with the Nile Valley and then the synthesis becomes Islam. And African centeredness gives you all of these historical movements that are of significance even to the Western world.

Through Dr. Jeffries' lenses and those of his cohorts, only things that come from Africa are important. Yet, almost in the same breath, he can proclaim, and his followers agree, that for the west, "the value system is domination, destruction and death. . . . The value system of our people is the three C's -- communal, cooperative and collective spiritual development." That it came from Africa made it good; once it left it became evil. Religions. Values. People.

⁴ Farrakhan's followers speak of the Khazars and argue that non-black Jews are descendants of this European kingdom that converted.

DR. JEFFRIES, THE JEWS AND THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

"Bush wants to put in a . . . a New World Order," Dr. Jeffries declares. "That means they got to have mind controls in the schools."

Rather, it is Dr. Jeffries who, in the process highlighting African contributions to society in the curriculum,⁵ wants to spread anti-Semitism.

Like traditional anti-Semites, he sees individual's Jewishness as the key ingredient in a delusional conspiracy against what he believes to be important. George Will is a conservative; Diane Ravitch is a "Texas Jew." CCNY has a "head Jew." Jews as a group are responsible for slavery, and for empowering the regimes that profited from slavery. Jews, in short, are the devil.⁶

Dr. Jeffries was a consultant to a curriculum review committee of the state of New York. According to the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, Dr. Jeffries wrote what was designed to be "the Afrocentric component of the New York State public school curriculum, grades K through 12." That "curriculum of inclusion" was shelved by the New York State Regents. That Dr. Jeffries should have a say in what can be taught to children about Jews is indeed frightening. Claims of academic freedom may allow him to keep his job -- and, indeed, academic freedom and notions of tenure are both important in their own right for a free and open society, and have served to protect Jews and Jewish interests many more times than haters like Dr. Jeffries. But that does not mean that his message should not be challenged at every opportunity, nor his plan to inculcate anti-Semitism into the school system exposed.

What is equally depressing is that Dr. Jeffries has a hard core of followers. He drew hundreds, and can draw thousands, of supporters who believe that he speaks the "truth," and that the conspiracy of which he complains is out to get him.⁷ It is a self-fulfilling and self-propelling delusion, one that will hurt both African Americans and Jews. And it is especially disturbing that some academics and community leaders do

⁵ According to the New York Times, The New Republic, and other sources, many experts have questioned the validity of many claims of those who share Dr. Jeffries' views.

⁶ Dr. Jeffries noted, in his July 20, 1991 speech, that "I had not touched the Jewish question for the past year. I had made an agreement with my Jews at City College that I would not deal with it."

Interestingly, he went out of his way to explain a positive contact he had with Jews during his college years:

I was in the Jewish fraternity in college. Most of you may not have known that. . . . One hundred Jews and me and a couple of Christians. (Laughter) And the president of the Jewish fraternity was called a Rex. So I had to go through college as Rex, the King of the Jews. Now I managed that. (Laughter) But the most important about the fraternity was that they had a system -- that they know how to take tests, they knew how to put a system of support into place. They had the records of all of the professors. They had their tests. They analyzed how they changed their questions from year to year to try to fool the students. We left nothing to chance. The Jewish fraternity won the scholarship trophy fourteen semesters in a row. The whole average of the fraternity was a Dean's list average. Even dumb Jews made it because there was a system of support.

My roommate was a black youngster from -- the football star Dan Wooten from Cape May, New Jersey. He was the vice president. So in the 1950's at Lafayette College the president of this Jewish fraternity was black, the vice president was black, two boys from New Jersey.

⁷ Dr. Jeffries see conspiracies, but Jews are not alone. The mysterious "they" can also involve others: "They have us all divided up. In fact they tell us, 'Don't worry about the economics. We'll take care of it.' In fact they bring people into our community to take care of it. Arabs. Vietnamese and other people."

not see his bigotry.⁸

Most ironic, it will hurt what is an important agenda -- the inclusion of African, Native American, and other neglected studies as an integral part of the core of academic inquiry. By trying to denigrate all other knowledge and peoples, Dr. Jeffries and his collaborators give ammunition to those who are not willing to see a difference between his Afrocentrism and the other, inclusive kind.

⁸ Dr. A.J Williams-Myers, director of the State University of New York's African-American Institute, which had co-sponsored the July 20, 1991 festival, was quoted by the New York Times, saying "if a similar conference were held today, he would invite Dr. Jeffries back."

Dr. Edward Scobie, professor at CCNY's athletic department, said, "Everyone who hates Dr. Jeffries hates us and hates Africa." Reverend Herbert Daughtry said, "I am convinced the speech is not anti-Semitic."

The Amsterdam News, the leading newspaper geared to New York's African American community, wrote that its "editors have viewed the tape, . . . and have concluded that there is nothing anti-Semitic, racist or chauvinistic in its content."

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