

Open Letter To Cornel West & the other Uncle Toms from the African United Front (1993)

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As you are keenly aware, **The Honorable Louis Farrakhan** and **Minister Khallid Abdul Muhammad** of the Nation of Islam have been embroiled in a seething national controversy surrounding statements made by Minister Muhammad at Kean College in November of 1993, and Minister Farrakhan's response to those statements. Largely at the behest of Jewish leadership, many prominent Blacks have stepped forward to denounce both ministers for what Jews have described as "Black anti-Semitism." A number of White leaders and, most notably, the United States Congress, have also censured Minister Muhammad for his statements. Furthermore, Jews as a whole have widely condemned both men.



In light of the current dispute between Blacks and Jews, we write to you for three reasons. First, in the June 7, 1993, issue of *Time* magazine, it was revealed that you and *Tikkun* magazine's Jewish editor, **Michael Lerner**, have received a \$100,000 advance "for a joint book on Black-Jewish tensions." Secondly, you are one of the few Blacks who prominent and powerful Jews in the media provide a consistent forum for voicing opinions on the schism between Blacks and Jews. Thirdly, while your publications on this subject have generally been far more favorable to Jews than to Blacks, you have at least manifested enough objectivity (in contrast to **Henry Louis Gates** and other negroes of his ilk) to suggest that your mind is still open to input from your own people. (See the self-described **HEAD NIGGER IN CHARGE**)

As it stands now, the world has a distorted view of the conflict between Blacks and Jews in this country. This is largely due to the fact that prominent Jews and their Negro spokespersons have painted a picture of innocent American Jews who are the victims of a new, virulent and unwarranted form of Black anti-Semitism. No explanation for this behavior is ever provided, save reference to Black envy over Jewish progress, or Black scapegoating of a former "ally" who, among whites, would offer the least resistance to verbal or physical attack.

Dr. West, as an educator, philosopher and man-of-the-cloth, you must certainly realize that there are at least two sides to every story - even to the conflict between Blacks and Jews. Regrettably, however, we have yet to hear (even in your most recent appearance on ABC's *Nightline* on March 3, 1994) or read (even in your most recent article to appear in *Time* magazine) your presentation of the Black side of this one. You have gone to great lengths to lecture to

Blacks about specific anti-Semitic acts on the part of Blacks that have offended Jews. But, apart from occasional references to "Jewish racism" and the "demonizing" of Minister Farrakhan, you have yet to fully inform Jews of Black grievances against them.



From the Black perspective the current schism between Blacks and Jews did not begin with nor should it center on Minister Farrakhan, Minister Muhammad or the Nation of Islam. While we do not intend here to provide a history of this relationship, we do think that it is important for you, sincere Jews and readers of *Blacks and Jews News*, to be exposed to some of the real grievances (ignored by the mass media and shunned by many "chosen" Blacks) that Blacks have against Jews, which we believe to be at the root of the current hostility between both groups.

Let us first consider the media. In the Black community it is widely believed that Jews have strong influence in the media. This has recently been documented in Dr. Tony Martin's book, *The Jewish Onslaught: Despatches From The Wellesley Battlefront*, and it has been revealed by a number of Jewish writers, including **Charles E. Silberman**, **Lester D. Friedman**, **Howard Suber**, **Norman L. Friedman** and **Neal Gabler** (*An Empire Of Their Own: How The Jews Invented Hollywood*).

The problem is that Blacks are treated very negatively in the media. While journalists like **Jeff Greenfield**, **Norman Podhoretz**, **Roger Rosenblatt** and other Jews have besmirched the Black image in news shows or on the printed page, it has been the Jewish producer and showman in Hollywood whose assaults have been the most relentless and the most devastating.

From **Louis B. Mayer** becoming a millionaire by distributing *Birth of a Nation*, to **Eddie Cantor**, **Al Jolson** and **George Burns'** blackface routines, to **Norman Lear**, **Mort Lochman** and **Ed Weinberger's** degrading television sitcoms, to today's *Sugar Hill*, produced by **Armyan Bernstein**, **Tom Rosenberg** and **Mark Abraham**, Jews have consistently vilified and stereotyped Black people in Hollywood.

This Jewish smear campaign against Blacks on television and in the movies - which has reinforced White America's antipathy toward Blacks - can only be compared to **Julius Streicker's** degradation of Jews in *Die Sturmer* in Nazi Germany. It is astonishing, Dr. West, that you have failed to raise this issue in public forums.

Another Nazi practice that Jews have used on Blacks is the claim that people of African descent are inferior to other groups. **Michael Levin** of City College of New York, **Vincent Sarvich** of the University of California at Berkeley and **Richard Herrnstein** at Harvard are among the most prominent Jewish scientists and scholars who maintain that Black people are intellectually deficient.

Other Jews, including **Howard B. Abikoff** of the Long Island Jewish Medical Center, **Rachel Klein** of the Long Island Medical Center and Columbia University, and **Gail Wasserman**, in the Department of Child Psychiatry at Columbia, are engaged in research which has the potential to link genetics to violence in inner city Black and Latino children.

Where is the outrage, Dr. West? Where are the calls for repudiation?

Jews have also been at the forefront of the attack against Afrocentricity. Prominent scholars and educators, like **Diane Ravitch**, formerly of the Department of Education, **Albert Shanker**, President of the American Federation of Teachers, and **Mary Leftkowitz**, professor of the Humanities at **Wellesley College**, have launched heavy criticisms against Black historians and anthropologists without providing forums for responses.

The same is true of Jewish-owned magazines, such as the *New Republic* and *Tikkun*, which rarely, if ever, publish Black rebuttals to their assaults against Afrocentricity.

Perhaps one of the most glaring omissions of the entire Black/Jewish "dialogue" is the failure of Black "spokespersons," such as yourself, to publicly repudiate the **Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith** for its transgressions against Blacks.

The *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *San Francisco Examiner*, the *Los Angeles Times* and numerous other newspapers have documented the fact that for decades the ADL ran a private nationwide spy network - "a systematic, long-term, professionally organized political espionage operation complete with informers, infiltrators, money laundering, code names, wiretapping and secret meetings." Newspapers have revealed that among the 950 organizations and 10,000 individuals that the ADL prepared files on were many Black groups, including the NAACP!

Even more damaging to the relationship between Blacks and Jews is the recent revelation to Blacks - but long known to Jews - that the **Hamitic Myth** (that is, the association of African people with the alleged curse of Ham) was invented by Jewish Talmudic scholars over a thousand years before the trans-Atlantic slave trade began. According to **Dr. Tony Martin**, this myth provided "the moral pretext" upon which the entire slave-trade grew and flourished. This myth was also responsible for the social inferiorization of generations of African people after the end of slavery.

Another matter of concern to Black Americans that you constantly raise, but only to denounce your own people, is the Crown Heights, New York incident. You have written of "the vicious murder of **Yankel Rosenbaum** in Crown Heights in 1992," but you appear oblivious of the fact that his attack was preceded by a Jewish killing of a Black child, **Gavin Cato**, and the injury of another, **Angela Cato**, together with the police beating of the slain child's father as he attempted to rescue his son from the vehicle that had run over him.

There are many issues of varying degrees of significance that must also be raised to clear the air:

- On what authority did Jews base a demand that a group of black students be ejected from an Oakland, California, theater because they laughed at the wrong time while viewing *Schindler's List*?

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Why, in a slap-in-the-face to Black people, did the largely Jewish academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences choose Jewish actress **Whoopi Goldberg** to serve as master of ceremonies for this year's Oscar Awards, when the Academy is most-certainly aware of Goldberg's shameless participation in **Ted Dansen's** Black face performance at New York's Friar's Club in 1993.

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Why are Jewish leaders so quick to attack **Leonard Jeffries** - or even **Dolly Parton**, for that matter - for speaking out regarding Jewish influence in Hollywood? Yet, Jewish writers like **Joel Kotkin** and **Neal Gabler** make similar statements with impunity.

Why, even with the knowledge that for as long as thirty years, Israel had maintained strong economic, military, nuclear, scientific, academic, energy, tourist, cultural, sports, transportation, agricultural and intelligence ties with South Africa - and thereby prolonged Black oppression there - were Jews the only group in this country who arrogantly threatened to protest the visit of revered **African National Congress** Chairman **Nelson Mandela** to the United States in 1990?

It should also be noted that a number of prominent Jews have made anti-Black statements that have rarely been condemned by their fellow Jews.

Before his death, Israeli Defense Minister **Moshe Dayan** asserted that the quality of American military forces had deteriorated because they were composed of Blacks "who have low intelligence and low education." He urged America to ensure that "fresh blood and better brains go to their forces."

Prominent Jewish talk show host **Howard Stern** was quoted in the November 1st issue of *Time* magazine as stating that, "they didn't beat this idiot (Rodney King) enough." Stern has played Ku Klux Klan musical recordings and in a recent broadcast used the term "nigger" 55 times in ten minutes.

During the week of March 7, 1994, Jewish comedian **Jackie Mason** was quoted by news broadcasts as having said: "The susceptibility to violence happens to be more among Blacks than whites - a hundred times more."

Finally, when Blacks are offended by individual Jews, generally we respond with civility and restraint. Yet, in all of your "dialogues" no one has brought this fact to public light. The Black people of Los Angeles are a case in point.

- In 1991, Judge **Joyce A. Karlin** sentenced Korean merchant **Soon Ja Du** to five years of probation, 400 hours of community service and a fine of five hundred dollars for killing Black teenager **Latasha Harlins**.
- In 1991, Judge **Stanley M. Weisberg** transferred the "Rodney King case" to Simi Valley and thereby virtually assured an unfair trial for the Black victim.
- In August of 1992, Superior Court Judge **Roosevelt I. Dorn**, a Black jurist who had been hand-picked to hear the case of three men charged with beating **Reginald Denny** during the early hours of the L.A. Civil unrest, was removed from the case by District Attorney **Ira Reiner**.

Karlin, **Weisberg** and **Reiner** are all Jews. Most Blacks in Los Angeles know this. Yet, while many Black people were very angry at each of them for the decision he/she made, these jurists were attacked as individuals, not as Jews! In spite of the fact that the decisions of each of these people inflamed racial passions to the boiling point, there were no calls for Jewish leaders to repudiate them for their "racism" or "unfairness," there were no newspaper advertisements taken out to condemn them, nor were their names dragged before congress to be censured.

Dr. West, imagine the outrage among Jews in particular and Americans in general if Black people were stereotyping Jews in the media, claiming that Jews were genetically inferior, attacking Jewish Studies, spying on the **American Jewish Congress**, teaching that Jews are the cursed sons of Shem, etc. Yet, all of this and more is happening to Black people, and you have said little or nothing about it.

We are sending you this message today because it is time for you to either speak up or sit down. Your fence straddling on behalf of Jewish leadership has gone far enough and many Black people see through it.

Unless you use the \$100,000 advance that you have received (even *Time* magazine refers to this as "an almost unheard-of-sum for a scholarly work") to present the grievances of Black Americans in this ongoing "dialogue" with Jews, you have no right to claim to represent Black people. Absent a true commitment to the cause of your people, your appeal to Black leaders to take the moral high ground in this dispute rings hollow and insincere, and smacks of clever maneuver to further your own career.

The **African United Front** is a coalition of professional and lay persons and organizations that was formed in Los Angeles to address issues of concern to people of African descent.

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