

Black academics blast Yorkshire lecturer's claims of low intelligence among black people

13 March 2006 Deborah Gabriel

Bell Curve Theory spouted by Ellis widely discredited

Dr Frank Ellis, the lecturer of Russian and Slavonic studies at Leeds University who said he subscribed to theories that claim black people are less intelligent than whites, was given yet another public platform on which to repeat his right-wing views on BBC radio 5 last week.

BBC News online reported that Dr Ellis said in a radio broadcast that society refuses to accept what he called **"the dirty little secret"** in psychology, that intelligence tests are the best way of measuring a person's intelligence.

He used the opportunity to re-affirm his views expressed earlier –based on the Bell Curve theory, which was written in 1994 by Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray.

Dr Ellis claimed that allegations of racism directed towards him were being used to attack his freedom of speech. Ellis is quoted as saying:

"These days a racist is anything you don't like – it's a hate word. I have no strong feelings towards black people either way."

Although it has not been mentioned in recent news reports, this is the same Dr Ellis who attacked the Mc Pherson enquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence in a far right publication called **Right Now**.

In it, Dr Ellis who claims he is not a racist said: **"Over the last quarter of a century, the racial-industrial complex, with its nasty, parasitic, semi-criminal fringe of self-styled 'anti-fascists' and 'anti-racists', has emerged as a very serious threat to our freedom."**

Dr Ellis went on to call the Ms Pherspon report **"disgraceful."**

The Bell Curve claimed that low IQ test scores on African Americans in comparison with those of whites and Asians were a result of genetic factors. It concluded that the IQ of the average immigrant was lower than the national average.

But if one is to take Dr Ellis's words literally, then anyone who disputes his supposition of black intellectual inferiority is accusing him of racism. However, critics of the Bell Curve which are in abundance, have not all used arguments of race to discredit it.

Rey Bowen, a former university lecturer who specializes in Black History and social psychology points to social psychologist Eric Fromm, who argued that reasoning is more desirable than intelligence. Bowen told Black Britain:

"Intelligence is a false construct and is about who can manipulate facts. Anyone can manipulate facts, especially if you are taught to do so."

A debate that followed the publication of the Bell Curve edited by Russell Jacob and Naoimi Glauberman argued that the fifteen point difference in the IQ scores between blacks and whites:

"Permits no automatic conclusion that truly equal opportunity might not raise the black average enough to equal or surpass the white mean."

Science being used to give credibility to prejudice

But critics went further than suggesting that differences in IQ tests were influenced by social and economic factors.

Steven Jay Gould, an American evolutionary biologist and science historian argued in his updated version of 'The Mismeasure of Man', that the Bell Curve was another example of scientific research being used to support **'biological determinism'** and racial superiority. He wrote:

"The Bell Curve contains no new arguments and presents no compelling data to support its anachronistic social Darwinism."

Dr Dwyane Smith, Asst. Vice President of Academic Affairs at Avila University in Kansas told Black Britain: **"Notions of biological determinism is the belief validated by 'scientific evidence' that certain groups are intellectually inferior."**

He said he was somewhat surprised to hear that **"such a debunked theory is still bantered about."**

Dr Smith also stated that in America 'intelligence' was used to justify **"slavery, legal segregation and racist policies."**

This view was discussed in Joseph L Jnr Grave's book: **The Emperor's New Clothes: Biological Theories of Race at the Millennium**, in which he states that even before social Darwinism biological theories made claims that racial differences were supernaturally ordained:

"In the West the rise of colonialism brought in a racial hierarchy that was linked to these religious and biological theories."

The whole ideology which underpinned European chattel enslavement was that: **"Europeans ... had to be closest to God and natural science was expected to confirm this."**

Dr Perry Stanislas is an academic who specializes in social policy. He told Black Britain that he feels theories such as the Bell Curve used by Dr Ellis: **"Are promoted and developed to retrospectively justify racial practices which already exist."**

No greater indication of black intelligence than the creation of Ancient civilization

Professor Scott Williams from the State University of Ohio has conducted ample research on the mathematicians of the African Diaspora.

He argues that most mathematics historians barely give a mention to Ancient Egypt and North Africa in the Middle Ages, giving the impression that this history did not even exist.

However, in 1960 among the remains of an indigenous population by the shores of Lake Edward, which is located on the border of Uganda and Zaire, was discovered the second oldest mathematical object.

The remains belong to a small community who have been named Ishango who survived by fishing and growing crops. It is widely believed that the bone – called the Ishango bone was a tool.

But it contains mathematical markings consistent. Bowen told Black Britain:

“We are talking about high mathematics over a period of decades, which signifies intelligence in operation, 30,000 years before the present time.”

In his highly acclaimed book: **The Destruction of Black Civilization: Great Issues of a Race from 4500BC to 2000 AD**, Dr Chancellor Williams who researched over 26 African countries and more than 100 languages revealed that the Black Kings and Pharaohs of Ancient Egypt were erased out of history.

His research established that it was Africans who started the Dynastic system in Egypt around 3100BC. Pyramids were built by Africans, for example, the Great Sphinx is the portrait statue of the black Pharaoh Khafre.

Dr Williams writes: **“The long, long stretch of the centuries into millenniums made it easy to delete some of the most significant developments in those early ages in Egypt.”**

Dr Perry Stanislas told Black Britain that Dr Ellis's arguments on low black intelligence are an example of how some academics choose the statistics which support their case and deliberately ignore other evidence. He added:

“My argument is that Dr Ellis just chose evidence to support his initial bias, prejudice and pathological views on black people.”

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