



Einstein on Race and Racism

By Prof. Fred Jerome, Rodger Taylor

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Nearly fifty years after his death, Albert Einstein remains one of America's foremost cultural icons. A thicket of materials, ranging from scholarly to popular, have been written, compiled, produced, and published about his life and his teachings. Among the ocean of Einsteinia-scientific monographs, biographies, anthologies, bibliographies, calendars, postcards, posters, and Hollywood films- however, there is a peculiar void when it comes to the connection that the brilliant scientist had with the African American community. Nowhere is there any mention of his close relationship with Paul Robeson, despite Einstein's close friendship with him, or W.E.B. Du Bois, despite Einstein's support for him.

This unique volume is the first to bring together a wealth of writings by the scientist on the topic of race. Although his activism in this area is less well known than his efforts on behalf of international peace and scientific cooperation, Einstein spoke out vigorously against racism both in the United States and around the world. Fred Jerome and Rodger Taylor suggest that one explanation for this historical amnesia is that Einstein's biographers avoided "controversial" topics, such as his friendships with African Americans and his political activities, including his involvement as co-chair of an antilynching campaign, fearing that mention of these details may tarnish the feel-good impression his image lends topics of science, history, and America.

Combining the scientist's letters, speeches, and articles with engaging narrative and historical discussions that place his public statements in the context of his life and times, this important collection not only brings attention to Einstein's antiracist public activities, but also provides insight into the complexities of antiracist culture in America. The volume also features a selection of candid interviews with African Americans who knew Einstein as children.

For a man whose words and reflections have influenced so many, it is long overdue that Einstein's thoughts on this vital topic are made easily accessible to the general public.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Albert Einstein was a genius and, apparently, a race man. Drawing upon extensive research, authors Jerome and Taylor—a journalist and a librarian, respectively—show the Nobel Prize-winning physicist to have been fairly active in the civil rights movements of the 1940s. It's clear the authors believe that this fact constitutes some sort of hidden truth, and they're reasonably correct: numerous historians left out the details of Einstein's controversial alliances with W.E.B. Dubois, the NAACP, the Civil Rights Congress and the Southern Conference Educational Fund. The authors saturate the first half of the book with comments from the black inhabitants of Princeton's Witherspoon Street. Their quotes are anecdotal at best and show little more than that Einstein was a friendly man who wasn't afraid of black people. A few of the quotes are telling in ways the authors may not intend: "My grandmother worked as a domestic for Einstein...When Professor Einstein had visitors, they sat and ate in the dining room; she listened from the kitchen." Others such as "me and my sister Lili used to watch Einstein walking up Witherspoon Street" record merely that black people witnessed Einstein's presence in their neighborhood. Einstein's provocative statements on American bigotry—"Everyone who is not used from childhood to this injustice suffers from the mere observation"—are reserved for the book's second half, which presents his letters and speeches. A useful compilation for students of Einstein's politics, this book lacks the kind of strong narrative thread that might have brought it a wider audience. 8 pages of b&w photos.

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Review

"As any reader of Faulkner knows, Princeton University before the Second World War was a southern university, and the town of Princeton adopted corresponding racial attitudes. In 1933 into this community came Albert Einstein, fresh from cosmopolitan Weimar Berlin and with the example of how Nazi anti-Semitism was helping to destroy all that was best in German culture. This book tells the story of how he reacted to the racism he saw around him, and to the fight-back against it by Princeton's long-established black community. It is a fascinating story and, unfortunately for our country, it is not just history but a contribution to contemporary struggles against American racism, at home and abroad.

"

(John Stachel *director of the Center for Einstein Studies, Boston University* 20990101)

"For many people around the world, Einstein's name is a household word, and yet Fred Jerome and Rodger Taylor's important new book reveals in startling ways how little we know about his profound insights into the realities of race and racism. Who knew? Fortunately for all of us, Einstein's ideas and insights on this issue are as timely and instructive as his most advanced scientific contributions. We owe Fred and Rodger a huge debt of gratitude.

"

(Danny Glover 20990101)

"In *Einstein on Race and Racism*, the authors remind us that it is significant to achieve consciousness through education. Through their historical analysis, they unveil the interconnection that existed between Paul Robeson and Einstein, so as to ensure that contemporary scholars understand humanizing pedagogy and civic responsibilities. This is insightful scholarship that explores race and racism, drawing on the analytical insights of innovative giants of divergent social and professional recognition.

"

(Prosper Godonoo *Director, Paul Robeson Cultural Center, Rutgers University* 20990101)

"Fred Jerome and Rodger Taylor paint a compelling portrait of an Einstein who has been almost completely absent from the public record: the man who co-chaired a committee that pushed for federal anti-lynching legislation, who joined the campaign to save the 'Scottsboro boys,' who helped sponsor the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund, who became a close friend and supporter of Paul Robeson, who frequently strolled through Princeton's African-American neighborhoods-in short, a man not afraid to use his fame to battle the racism that plagued America (and Princeton, both town and university) during his years in the U.S. This is a side-an important side-of the great physicist and pacifist that anyone interested in the man, and his times, will find eye-opening.

"

(Sharon Begley *science writer and coauthor of The Mind and the Brain* 20990101)

"This book continues the process of peeling back the politics of Albert Einstein to reveal a vital (and up to now invisible) layer of anti-racism activities. It demonstrates, through Einstein's example, how not to 'stand idly by' in the face of America's most pernicious problem-racism.

"

(Dorothy M. Zellner *civil rights activist, member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee* 20990101)

"While Albert Einstein is most famous for his theory of relativity, he held fervently to some moral absolutes, few more precious than his heroic and passionate anti-racist writing and activism. *Einstein on Race and Racism* brilliantly recovers the engaging, principled, and courageous views of one of history's most famous scientists, whose anti-racist writings have been ignored, overlooked, even hidden from the world by his biographers and custodians. Thanks to Fred Jerome and Rodger Taylor, we have unimpeachable evidence that the 'Man of the Century' wrestled fearlessly and insightfully with what his friend W.E.B. Du Bois termed the century's greatest problem: the color line. This is one of the year's most important books."

(Michael Eric Dyson *author of The Michael Eric Dyson Reader* 20990101)

About the Author

Fred Jerome is the author of *The Einstein File: J. Edgar Hoover's Secret War against the World's Most Famous Scientist*. A veteran journalist and science writer, his articles and op-ed pieces have appeared in dozens of publications, including *Newsweek*, *Technology Review*, and the *New York Times*. He has taught journalism at Columbia Journalism School, New York University, and numerous other New York-area universities. Rodger Taylor, a supervising branch librarian with the New York Public Library, is also a freelance writer. His articles on city life, early African American New York, and the African Burial Ground have been published in local newspapers and magazines, including several in *New York Newsday*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mary Gale:

Exactly why? Because this *Einstein on Race and Racism* is an unordinary book that the inside of the e-book waiting for you to snap it but latter it will zap you with the secret the item inside. Reading this book close to it was fantastic author who write the book in such wonderful way makes the content interior easier to

understand, entertaining means but still convey the meaning thoroughly. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this anymore or you going to regret it. This excellent book will give you a lot of rewards than the other book possess such as help improving your proficiency and your critical thinking method. So , still want to hesitate having that book? If I ended up you I will go to the reserve store hurriedly.

Cassandra Martin:

Reading can called brain hangout, why? Because when you find yourself reading a book especially book entitled Einstein on Race and Racism your head will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in each and every aspect that maybe unfamiliar for but surely will become your mind friends. Imaging each and every word written in a book then become one type conclusion and explanation in which maybe you never get before. The Einstein on Race and Racism giving you yet another experience more than blown away your brain but also giving you useful data for your better life with this era. So now let us present to you the relaxing pattern at this point is your body and mind will likely be pleased when you are finished reading it, like winning a casino game. Do you want to try this extraordinary investing spare time activity?

Terry Matlock:

The book untitled Einstein on Race and Racism contain a lot of information on that. The writer explains your girlfriend idea with easy way. The language is very straightforward all the people, so do not really worry, you can easy to read this. The book was authored by famous author. The author brings you in the new age of literary works. You can read this book because you can continue reading your smart phone, or model, so you can read the book in anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can start their official web-site in addition to order it. Have a nice learn.

William Kozak:

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