



ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA

GREATER PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER

July 8, 2020

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The Philadelphia Eagles

NovaCare Complex

One NovaCare Way

Philadelphia, PA 19145

Dear Mr. Lurie and Mr. Smolenski,

We write to you as leaders of the oldest and foremost pro-Israel Jewish organization in the Greater Philadelphia region to strongly encourage you to suspend for the entire next season Eagles player DeSean Jackson for his overt Jew-hatred, and his praise for and endorsement of one of the most vile and prolific Jew-haters in America: Louis Farrakhan. In addition, we strongly urge you to strengthen the team's statement condemning Jackson's hateful activity on social media.

While the team's statement was strong, it spoke in generalities and omitted any specificity with regard to Jackson's actions against the Jewish People. Let's be clear: What Jackson published on social media – on multiple occasions – was not merely "offensive, harmful and absolutely appalling" but rather it was specifically and unambiguously anti-Jewish. The omission in your statement of the fact that he attacked Jews and praised and endorsed Farrakhan – who has a long, well-known record of Jew-hatred and incitement – is frankly a denial of who Jackson targeted and sweeps the matter under the rug.

Should the team fail to sufficiently punish Jackson it makes a mockery of any claims by the Eagles that it cares about minorities, or eradicating hatred, or social justice. In addition, it gives tacit approval for Jackson's actions. Jackson – as are all NFL players – is a role model. That is the perception. He has millions of fans and social-media followers. No doubt some fans proudly wear replicas of his jersey or have posters of Jackson on their walls. Thus, were his so-called "apology" to be the end of the issue, what message does this send?

It sends a loud and clear message that there are no tangible repercussions for Jew-hatred, and that promoting Farrakhan – who not only is anti-Jewish but is also anti-Christian and anti-LGBTQ – is ok with the Eagles.

With regard to Jackson's so-called "apologies": His choice of words reveals he is patently insincere, and not once mentions any remorse for praising and endorsing Farrakhan – and particularly Farrakhan's address of July 4, 2020. This address was laced with vile, false attacks against the Jewish People and the Jewish State of Israel. He even wished the COVID-19 virus to especially hit hard the people of Florida! And yet Jackson apparently has no regrets about encouraging people to watch it and to learn from it.

At one point in his address, Farrakhan blames the Jewish state for teaching American police the

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tactics that killed both George Floyd and Freddy Gray. Given the heated climate in America, the arsons and the violence and vandalism – including some specifically targeting Jews and Jewish institutions – Farrakhan’s rhetoric is akin to lighting up a cigarette next to a gas pump – with Jackson urging everyone to gather round the gas pump and the cigarette smoker.

As you know, Jackson begins his video “apology” noting he is motivated to make it due to “backlash” from social media rather than a sense of wrongdoing. How less-sincere can one be? He claims he “never wanted to put any race down or any people down.” How can he honestly be oblivious to what accusing Jews of blackmail and extortion against America and planning “world domination” will be interpreted as? He claims “I never try to put another religion down” but what does he believe the claim that “Negroes are the real children of Israel” amounts to? Jackson mouths the words, but those words are hollow and non-specific.

Jackson states he “didn’t mean it to the extent you guys took it” – therefore blaming the Jews for our reaction. Jackson says that he “probably” should not have posted the hitleresque excerpt – he isn’t certain? -- “because Hitler was a bad person.” Jackson is a “bad person.” Hitler committed genocide against Jews, slaughtered millions of others and was responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Americans. “A bad person” does not nearly go far enough to describe Hitler. Add in what Hitler did throughout Europe, raining death and destruction. Is Jackson illiterate about the Holocaust and World War II history? That seems to be the case. How tragic.

His claim that “I was just trying to uplift African-Americans and slavery and enlighten my people” is incredulous. How does spreading lies about one group uplift another?

Of course in this “apology” Jackson purposely neglects to mention – or apologize for – promoting and endorsing the Jew-hater Farrakhan. Farrakhan’s Jew-hatred and attacks against other faiths and faith-tradition are bad enough, but his ongoing incitement against Jews is dangerous. Jackson closes his video with “I hope everybody respects my platform and my opinions.” Clearly this refers to his position on Farrakhan and Farrakhan’s rhetoric. See below some examples of Farrakhan’s Independence Day remarks. Jackson told his followers and fans that Farrakhan’s words were “the truth.”

This is appalling and unacceptable. For as long as DeSean Jackson is a Philadelphia Eagle, he represents your team, and the team gives its imprimatur for what Jackson does and says. Jackson has more than one million followers on social media. On each of the social media platforms that he uses he is identified as a Philadelphia Eagle.

More than mere hate speech, the Eagles and the National Football League must take into consideration that Jackson is inciting Jew-hatred in an era where Jews are murdered and beaten for the sole reason that they are Jewish, and that Jewish institutions are attacked and vandalized in numbers not seen in decades. While the league and its teams have endorsed the Black Lives Matter movement, they must also make it clear to their fans that Jewish Lives Matter as well. If Jackson plays even a down this season, here’s a suggestion: His jersey should be emblazoned with “Jewish lives matter.” It would only be fitting. It is clear Jackson needs to learn about the Jewish People, about the Holocaust and about Israel. ZOA would be happy to facilitate that.

Please see below examples from Farrakhan’s speech from July 4 that Jackson endorsed. Likely you will recoil from each of these – as did we. We hope to hear from you about the Philadelphia Eagles’ resolution of this situation at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Kevin Ross

Kevin Ross
President

Steve Feldman

Steve Feldman
Executive Director

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Excerpts from Farrakhan's speech on July 4, 2020:

“Those of you that say that you are Jews, I will not even give you the honor of calling you a Jew. You're not a Jew. You're so-called; you're Satan. It is my job now to pull the cover off of Satan so that every Muslim, when he sees Satan, pick up a stone, as we do in Mecca – when you know who Satan is, you don't have to kill him. The stone of truth – that is what you throw. ... We cast truth at falsehoods until we knock out their brains. ... [crowd rises to its feet] Stand up on the truth and tell Satan: ‘Who the hell are you to try and pick my friends.’”

...

““The Talmud is the enemy of the people who have received by G-d the Prophets of the Torah.”

...

“Miss Chelsea [Handler], my black brothers and sisters: The reason they [he was discussing Jews] hate me: Because they know I represent the end of their civilization. I represent the uncovering of their wickedness, fulfilling the judgement that G-d has come to bring down on America and the world.”

...

“And to the false impostors that claim they're Jews and they're not: They have broken their covenant relationship with G-d. They have failed to live up to the statutes' commandments that he gave them.”

...

[After describing what happened to George Floyd and Freddy Gray:] “This is the technique that they use in Israel. Israel: Let me tell you your day is here now. The god of justice has something for you, Israel. You're troubling some waters and you won't be there long if G-d gets after you. You've got a hell of a nerve claiming a part of our – listen to me good, Israel. You don't deserve that place. You're not kindred to that place. Nobody ran you from that place. So be careful, Israel.”