

Saul S. Friedman

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American
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**For my sisters, Phyllis Friedman, Jeanne Friedman Young,
Raquelle Friedman Ross and Rosalind Friedman Black who have brought
wisdom, art, humor and compassion into this world.**



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*“I’ve heard it said that the hottest lie’s the
best to tell.”*

—Plautus, *The Ghost*



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Preface

This is not a text in American history, Jewish history, nor, for that matter, the history of slavery. Neither is it intended as an update of Robert Weisbord and Arthur Stern's excellent study of black-Jewish relations, *Bittersweet Encounter*. Rather it is intended as a response to a series of charges which have been widely circulated in the last several years. To wit: (a) that the shipment of millions of Africans to the New World was a black Holocaust; (b) the number of victims and suffering in American death marches and ghettos measured over a 400-year period dwarfs anything experienced by European Jews under Hitler; (c) chief among the villains responsible for these degradations throughout the colonial world and well into the antebellum period were Jews who have successfully managed to paint themselves as chronic victims; (d) Jews not only masterminded the slave trade, they continue to exploit American blacks to the present day. In its simplest form, the charge is that Jews were responsible for the slave trade to and in America. As Louis Farrakhan noted, while trying to explain away the rants of his lieutenant Khalid Abdul Muhammad in February 1994, Jews owned 75 percent of the slaves in the South on the eve of the Civil War.¹

Such rhetoric has generated distress in the Jewish community as far afield as Youngstown, Atlanta and Boca Raton, especially since the publication of *The Secret Relationship between Blacks and Jews* by the Nation of Islam in 1992. Since then, two sources have responded to the charges: Harold Brackman, *Jew on the Brain: A Public Refutation of the Nation of Islam's Secret Relationship between Blacks and Jews*, and the Anti-Defamation League, *Jew-Hatred as History: An Analysis of the Nation of Islam's "The Secret Relationship between Blacks and Jews"* (1993). With a few exceptions, notably David Brion Davis of Yale, Seymour Drescher, and Eli Faber of John Jay College, most academics, aware that the accusations are baseless, have declined to make comment. Any response might dignify the charges, create a debate where none exists. It is a position similar to that taken by most academics who refuse to share a podium with Holocaust revisionists, the coterie of anti-Semites and anti-Zionists who deny that

six million Jews were murdered by the Nazis. No rational person questions that fact. But as the last survivors die off and people's memories fail, there may be a greater tendency to dismiss the Holocaust as exaggeration. Reputable historians have no obligation to debate the Revisionists, but they must refute them, to remind the public that the extermination camps were real.

It is the same motivation that has prompted me to address the charge that Jews dominated the slave trade. I have been lecturing against this notion in history classes at Kent State and Youngstown State University for more than nine years. The incendiary appearances of Khalid Abdul Muhammad at Kean State, New Jersey in November 1993, at Howard University and the Holocaust Museum in Washington in March 1994, and the repeated jibes of Louis Farrakhan added the final impetus. Assisted by a Youngstown State University research grant, I made my first trip to the Deep South in the summer of 1993. In Charleston I worked in the records of the South Carolina Historical Society, the City Library of Charleston, and Temple Beth Elohim, the oldest Reform synagogue in America. I interviewed local historian Sol Breibart, Professor James Hagy of the University of Charleston (author of the major text on Jewish life in the city), an old colleague and expert on the South, Dr. Alvin Skardon, and Attorney Robert Rosen (author of an excellent general history of Charleston.) In Savannah I worked through documents in the Georgia Historical Society, interviewed Rabbi Sol Rubin (editor of the definitive history of Temple Mickvah Israel), attorney Warren Swartz and two authorities on black history, W.W. Law and Carroll Greene. Back in Columbia, I worked through materials in the South Carolina State Archives and the University of South Carolina library, and interviewed several local Jewish historians including Hyman Rubin. In Atlanta, I spent several days in the Georgia Historical Archives and the Archives of the Jewish Community Center. My research there was also assisted by Marc and Laura Connelly. In the summer of 1994, I was fortunate enough to be designated a Lowenstein-Weiner Fellow at Hebrew University College in Cincinnati where, with the assistance of Dr. Abraham Peck, I scrutinized documents, particularly the Rabbi Bertram Korn Archives, in the American Jewish Archives. During the summer of 1995, I made a third research trip to the East Coast. In New York City, I was aided by Susan Tolan, archivist of Shearith Israel, Steven Siegel of the New York Jewish Historical Society, John Celardo and Greg Plunges of the National Archives/Northeast Division, and librarians at the New York Historical Society, New

York University, and the Jewish and Manuscripts Divisions of the New York Public Library. I am also indebted to Laurie Alfieri of the Rhode Island Historical Society, as well as librarians at the Library of Congress in Washington, the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond, and the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore, as well as research assistants from Youngstown State: Jim Guy, Carol Litty, Dirk Hermance, Mike Beverly, and Anne Heutsche. Laurence Mintz of Transaction Publishers did a superb job of editing the final manuscript. Special mention must be made of my wife Nancy and our son Jason who worked long hours alongside me in dusty archives, as well as editing this final manuscript.

Not surprisingly the research outlined in this book sustained what I had always suspected and what most people intuitively knew—Jews, whether on the continent of Europe, in West Indian and South American colonies, in the Old South played a small role in the slave trade. In the course of my research, however, I was troubled by two considerations. The first was the revelation that some of the most important heroes in American Jewish History—Francis Salvador, Judah Touro, Haym Salomon—had at one time either dabbled in the slave trade or owned slaves. How was I to treat this and other data detailing the slaving activities of Rhode Island merchant Aaron Lopez or the Davis family of Petersburg, Virginia? To publish such accounts might reinforce accusations of Jew-baiters. To withhold information would be disreputable. I have decided to publish whatever I have found, relying upon the good judgment of the reader to conclude whether a few exceptions prove the rule.

There is a second problem in dealing with a world more than a century removed from the slave marts of Charleston or Atlanta. Attitudes and behavior change over the course of time. What was acceptable, even desirable, in one era may later be scorned. Abortion once was unthinkable in most societies. Now it is part of U.N. recommended programs for population control. Capital punishment was once an accepted way of dealing with homicide. Today, it is rejected in many civilized areas. So, too, throughout history, and certainly in America, was slavery an accepted, if not approved, institution. Even in ancient times, people were troubled by the taking of another person's freedom. But it was done. As someone who has been criticized for applying current standards in judging the actions of people in the past, I now find myself asking how far do we go in applying contemporary morality in the reconstruction of history? In 1997 we say, of course slavery is wrong.

In 1997, we say of course it has always been wrong. But how can we judge the behavior of free blacks, as well as Jews, who yielded to the societal pressure and the lucrative lure of the “peculiar institution” more than a century ago?

I do not claim to have answers for all these questions. I anticipate criticism, even misrepresentation, of what I have written. Some may feel that I have given the editors of *Secret Relationship* an unwarranted platform for their views by devoting six pages in the opening chapter to a recitation and refutation of the contents of their book. I did so believing this may be the only opportunity for readers, who will never purchase or read *Secret Relationship*, to assess such arguments. Some may deem the chapters dealing with slavery in the ancient and medieval worlds superfluous. I believe them to be essential to an understanding of the institution, just as I believe it important to review traditional Jewish positions on slavery and the historic powerlessness of Jews. The choice of title (*Jews and the American Slave Trade*) and extent of coverage (French, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Danish and English colonies in the Western Hemisphere) is deliberate since the authors of the *Secret Relationship* attack Jewish slave ownership not only in the United States, but also in the West Indies and South America. The astute reader will readily note the reasons for the popularity of this canard in the last three chapters of this book. I take responsibility for opinions and errors contained in this volume. It is my hope that other academics will publish their own responses. We shall only reinforce one another. The reader of this volume will note a repetition in my own arguments. For good reason. The repetition of a lie creates the illusion of truth. Yet the plain truth, sustained by fact, not myth, is that Jews did not dominate the slave trade in the European colonies of South America and the Caribbean or the ante-bellum South.

1

Handbook of Hate: *The Secret Relationship between Blacks and Jews*

Teaching Anti-History

On July 20, 1991, Leonard Jeffries, professor of African-American studies at City University of New York, provoked angry responses from both Italians and Jews with a two-hour speech he delivered before the state-subsidized Black Arts and Cultural Festival in Albany. In his remarks, subsequently broadcast over cable television in New York, Jeffries charged (a) there was a conspiracy on the part of Hollywood producers to denigrate African people; (b) this conspiracy was a product of cooperation between the Mafia and Russian Jews bent on “the destruction of black people”; and (c) Jews were no strangers to domination and control of blacks since they had financed the slave trade. Jeffries was especially exercised about this last point, taunting that Jewish grandees and court favorites had done the handiwork of slaving for the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Germans, and English. They were allegedly assisted in this enterprise by “their Jewish community brothers” who established the slave trade next to synagogues in Recife, Curaçao, and New Amsterdam. The partisan audience at Albany gave Jeffries a standing ovation.¹

This was not the first time a black nationalist had come forward to heap the woes of his people at the doorstep of Jews. Marcus Garvey, the celebrated founder of the “back to Africa” movement, regularly used the editorial columns of his newspaper *Negro World* to flog “powerful” Jewish financiers whose goal was to submerge and destroy the black population of America. Whatever problems Jews experienced, said Garvey, had been brought upon themselves for... “Jews like money. They have always been after money. They want nothing else but money.

2 Jews and the American Slave Trade

A Jew is always a Jew. His history has been one of selfishness. His greed has clouded his judgment.”²

At least Garvey had the decency to denounce Adolf Hitler. Not so, some of his contemporaries. Visiting Harlem in the 1940s, Stephen Derounian (aka John Roy Carlson) listened as Arthur Reid, director of the African Progressive Business League, declared: “I like Hitler... Yeah, I like Hitler... Let the White Man kill his brother white man. It’ll leave fewer whites to bother with later—when the black man can step in and get justice for himself.” When would that be? Two black youths volunteered: “Inside of five years you’ll see the fighting goin’ on in this country, man. I’ll fight like I never fought before. There’ll be race riots like they never was.”

A crowd, gathered at the corner of 131st St. and Lennox Avenue, listened as a black woman shouted: “Do as Japan does. Copy like she does. She don’t preach no social equality stuff. There ain’t no such thing. She just walks in and takes what she wants. Be like her. Step up and take your freedom. Don’t you believe all them things about brotherhood. There ain’t no brotherhood for the colored man, except in his own kind. The white man can never do you no good.” There was a more familiar refrain to the harangue offered by one Carlos Cook to a group at the corner of 116th Street: “Jews are all Communists and Communism wants to exploit the Negro just like the white man. I wouldn’t lift my finger to save a Jew. We came here against our will. *They brought us here as slaves and they’ve treated us as slaves* [italics mine]. We owe nothing to America. America owes everything to us. This isn’t my home and my culture and my name are in Africa.” These were voices of despair, voices of anger, voices of hate. Astonishingly, these statements were uttered by young blacks in Harlem, not in 1968 or 1991, but in 1942, at a time when every Jew in the world was threatened with extermination by Adolf Hitler and the Nazis.³

What is especially distressing among the accusations of Professor Jeffries today and street radicals in Harlem in 1942 is the claim that Jews controlled the chattel slave trade in and about the Western Hemisphere. This hoary canard, repeated in the respectable chambers of black churches in Cleveland and Youngstown as well as on the stage of the Apollo Theater when Morton Downey, Jr. brought his travelling video circus to Harlem a few years ago, owes its revival to Nation of Islam spokesman Louis Farrakhan. Farrakhan, the former Louis Eugene Wolcott, a onetime calpyso singer from Bermuda, joined Elijah Muhammad’s Nation of Islam in the early 1960s. Displaying a bent for

oratory, Farrakhan denounced Malcolm X when the latter questioned the direction of the movement shortly before Malcolm's assassination in 1965. Thirteen years later, following the death of Elijah Muhammad, Farrakhan assumed a greater leadership role in the Nation of Islam and proceeded to outrage many Americans with his rhetoric that helped rupture the civil rights alliance between blacks and Jews. For Farrakhan, Adolf Hitler was a "great man," albeit a destructive one. Far worse were the Zionists who had conquered and persecuted the Palestinians. Or American Jews, who were admonished not to criticize Jesse Jackson after the onetime presidential candidate had referred to New York as "Hymietown." Jews in general followed a corrupt, "gutter religion." In 1984, Farrakhan gave an interview to the *Washington Post* in which he declared "a small clique of Jews" were responsible for "the ships that brought our fathers into slavery." For Farrakhan, his disciples and allies, the transatlantic slave trade was a human tragedy far outstripping the Jewish Holocaust. From Jeffries, Tony Martin of Wellesley and Farrakhan's lieutenant, the self-proclaimed "Doctor" Khalid Abdul Muhammad, came figures of 60, 100, even 600 million Africans slain in the overall operations of African slavery. And much of it could be blamed upon Jews.

To validate these charges, the Nation of Islam assigned its "Historical Research Department" to document Jewish involvement in the slave trade. Actually a group of graduate students from the Boston area, the Research Department published volume one of *The Secret Relationship between Blacks and Jews* in 1991 (suggesting that further volumes were to follow). A slick paper publication, laced with tables and charts appealing to a mass audience, *The Secret Relationship* contains citations from prominent American Jewish academics (e.g., Jacob Marcus, Salo Baron, Leonard Fein, Leonard Dinnerstein, Bertram Korn, Marc Raphael, Henry Feingold, and Jonathan Sarna). Readers who desired more information were invited to call a toll-free number—1-800-48 Truth.

Far from serving as a useful tool of research, *The Secret Relationship* violates the basic canons of historical methodology. Designed to capitalize on the victimization of two peoples, it may properly be termed a handbook of anti-history. Instead of attempting a thoughtful study of black-Jewish relations, the editors have indulged in (a) distortion; (b) exaggeration; (c) emendation; (d) use of ben trovato (made-up tales); (e) prevarication; (d) misquoting sources; (d) citing shaky sources; and (e) citing no sources.⁴

A common (and obvious) failing of pseudo-scholarship is to take the words of an author out of context. Thus, in the *Secret Relationship* the name of Jonathan Sarna is invoked to suggest “there is ‘much evidence’ to show that many Jews decided to remain loyal to the crown in the American Revolution” (p. 17), that of Marc Raphael to suggest that the slave trade was “a major feature of Jewish economic life” in Surinam (p. 36), that of Judith Elkin cited to prove thirteen Portuguese Jews managed to build up the trade of Buenos Aires through the illegal import of West African slaves (p. 83) and that of Henry Feingold, utilized in a section dealing with Jews and the rape of black women, to suggest that the number of mulattos counted to Jewish parents was only “the tip of an iceberg” (pp. 196–201).

Frequently, the editors of *Secret Relationship* stretch their sources or even turn them on their heads to prove a point. Arnold Wiznitzer, perhaps the foremost scholar of Brazilian Jewry, is cited as claiming that Jews held economic dominance over colonial Brazil, especially in the slave trade (p. 31–32). The evidence: a twelve-line quotation pasted together from four separate references in Wiznitzer to read: “Portuguese merchants, many of them [Jews] had controlled most of the slave trade between Africa and America until the Portuguese rebellion of 1640” (p. 28) Unsophisticated readers would not suspect that the word Jews does not appear in the original quotation. The actual term was “New Christian,” applied to Portuguese whose ancestors once had been Jews. According to Wiznitzer, many of these individuals never practiced Judaism and “there is no reason or basis to call them Jews.”⁵ Moreover, he writes, “It cannot be said that the Jews played a dominant role in Dutch Brazil as *senhores de engenho* (operators of sugar mills).”⁶ As for their role in the slave trade, Wiznitzer says that between 1636 and 1645 23,163 African slaves were brought to Brazil through its four functioning ports. There were approximately 1,000 to 1,400 Jews in Brazil at the time. Using Wiznitzer’s own formula of one adult male for every four women and children, we may estimate 250 adult Jewish males in the land. Most were merchants or small farmers, only a handful (20–30) were brokers. Yet Jews, everywhere, bear responsibility for the slave population of Brazil which reached more than four million when the institution of slavery was abolished in the nineteenth century

Equally sloppy scholarship is evident in the misuse of Rabbi Max Kohler and Elizabeth Donnan who are cited in support of the claim that Jews of Curaçao were forbidden by the Dutch West Indies Company to purchase more slaves because they were “notorious for their perceived

ability to control trade” and “flout established rules of trade” on the island in the seventeenth century (p. 66). A search of Donnan’s writings reveals very much the opposite, for the Amsterdam Directory instructed Peter Stuveysant to foster agriculture with the import of African slaves “by any means,” including barring anyone from leaving the country.⁷ Such topsy-turvy methodology is evident also in the attempted manipulation of Jacob Marcus, dean of American-Jewish historians. Marcus is quoted as saying that Jews in the Caribbean secured domination in sugar production, when he clearly states “there is no evidence that Jews or persons of Jewish ancestry ever dominated the industry.”⁸ Even the venerable Simon Wolf is abused. Using his *American Jew as Patriot, Soldier and Citizen*, the editors of *Secret Relationship* conclude that Jewish enrollment in the Confederate forces (1,324 men) demonstrates the pro-slavery sentiment of the 150,000 Jews who lived in the United States at the time of the Civil War (pp. 157–59). Such a conclusion, of course, overlooks Wolf’s figure of 6,611 Jews who fought for the Union, including six young Jewish men who won the Congressional Medal of Honor while participating in the conflict.⁹

The editors of *the Secret Relationship* do not distinguish between legitimate scholars and people who simply have managed to publish a book. Thus George Cohen, Rabbi Harold Scharfman, Philip Birnbaum, and the radical Lenni Brenner are cited as authorities on Judaism and the Jewish way of life when they support the editors’ position. Brenner is even a victim of emendation. He is quoted denouncing “Sephardic merchants” and cotton factors who brought thousands of Africans to America. Brenner goes on to remind his readers that 7,000 Jews fought for the Union, that many were committed to abolitionism in part because they had been oppressed in tsarist Russia or because being German “48ers” (the liberals who tried to revolutionize Central Europe in 1848) they were “light years ahead of most Northern whites in this regard.”¹⁰ Readers are not told that. Nor are they offered sources for charts listing slave owners in Surinam (48) or Jamaica (77) or the fifty New York Jews simply listed as prominent slave owners (97).

Occasionally, the editors of *Secret Relationship* bend their own facts to fit their prescribed goals. On one page (22) the reader is told that Jews contributed less than 0.5 percent of funds that originally capitalized the Dutch *West Indies* Company in 1623. On the very next page, however, we read that within a century as many as one-fourth of the directors of the Dutch *East Indies* Company were Jews. The confusion of one stock venture which focused primarily upon Indonesia with an-

other dealing with fading Dutch ventures in the Caribbean could only be deliberate.

If there are no facts, the editors of *Secret Relationship* just make them up. Thus we learn that Jean Lafitte, the pirate who fought alongside Andrew Jackson in the battle of New Orleans, was actually a Jew more interested in smuggling slaves past the British (86–87). Without providing a shred of genealogical evidence, the research staff devotes two pages in their chronicle of “Jews responsible for the Black Holocaust” to the DeWolf family of Rhode Island. John C. Femont, son of a ne’er-do-well Catholic from Lyons and a Norfolk, Virginia Protestant woman, is also transmuted into a Jew. So, too, was Joseph Ottolenghe, referred to on three pages (133–36) as “A Jew Teaches Slave Religion.” Ottolenghe, an eighteenth-century immigrant to Georgia from England did teach the catechism to slaves—after he converted to Anglicanism at the age of twenty-eight and remained a devout Christian for the rest of his life.¹¹

The editors are not above repeating legends and applying new spins to them. Thus we have conjecture about the ancestry of Christopher Columbus definitely resolved. Columbus is presented as a Jew and slave trader (14–17), a brutal warlord who enslaved natives in the New World. Those fluent in Spanish will delight in learning that the admiral managed to set sail not through the presentation of jewels (*joyas*) to Isabella. Rather, he used the influence of Jews (*judios*). An even more bizarre twist of an old wives’ tale concerns Lord Jeffrey Amherst (1717–1797), victor at Ticonderoga, Crown Point, and Montreal in the French and Indian Wars. This vaunted British commander is accused of deliberately spreading smallpox among Indians through the gift of infected blankets. It is a vicious, unsubstantiated canard which pops up from time to time in badly written American history books, infuriating legitimate colonial historians. The tale is revived and refined in *The Secret Relationship*. In this telling, Amherst was assisted by eight Jewish contractors who also exploited the “hapless Indians” by selling them liquor and the diseased blankets. “It was only a matter of time before the pogrom reduced the once mighty Indian nation to but a few holocaust survivors.” (105–13).

The widespread deaths of Native Americans, through disease and brutality is well-chronicled. It makes no sense to impute these deaths to a deliberate scheme on the part of Amherst and his Jewish commissariat.¹² According to John Long, Amherst’s principal biographer, the Baron was very supportive of Indian agent William Johnson. Writes

Long, Amherst solicited the support of the Six Nations (e.g., Oneidas, Onondagas, Senecas, Cayugas, Mohawk, Tuscarora), tried to mediate differences among the tribes, and disapproved of scalping or mutilations. In an effort to “solidify good feeling,” Amherst created an Indian flag.¹³ As for Jewish co-conspirators, it is true that the Philadelphia trading firm of Moses and David Franks (and their Christian partner William Plumsted) did supply Amherst’s troops between 1761 and 1763. The available documents refer to barrels of salt, beef, and pork, wagons loaded with flour, bread, peas, butter, rice, and broadcloths. There is no mention of blankets for anyone.¹⁴

The Secret Relationship offers howler after howler in the name of scholarship, beginning with a preface which claims to offer understanding for Jewish suffering throughout history, then indicts Jews for economic exploitation of Gentiles (sharp practices, usury, etc. vii, 10, 73). Jewish law supposedly permits “exploitation and oppression of the Gentile” (202). If Jews were barred from British colonies in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, it was not because of religious bias, but because they were feared as lawbreakers who exercised inordinate economic influence (26). Whatever temporary adversities they faced, the “majority” of Jews who reached North America in the seventeenth century were not “destitute, huddled masses” but “savvy businessmen with wealth that far surpassed most of the other immigrants” (89). Despite their avowed sympathy for the British crown (115–19), after the Revolutionary War, “the Jews were accorded equal rights and freed of all legal restrictions, and then continued to finance the enslavement, shipment, and murder of Black Africans” (99). Before the Civil War, no Jewish congregation, North or South, denounced chattel slavery (144). American Jews not only supported the rebels, northern Jewish merchants sent gold to the South to help prolong the conflict and make more profits (161). This, not some fancied anti-Semitism, was the basis of General U.S. Grant’s Order no. 11 barring Jewish merchants from border districts of Tennessee (165–66). Whatever post-Reconstruction rapport existed between Jews and blacks was “feigned friendship” on the part of the Jewish merchant designed to bankrupt the black farmer (169–175).

Consistently, though, the editors return to the principal sin of the Jews—their commitment to and success in various forms of slavery—sanctioned in the Bible (202), manifest in medieval trade (9), evidenced in international prostitution (73).¹⁵ Farrakhan’s aides suggest that the Spanish Inquisition came about because “slave dealing and slavery and

its connection with Judaism and Jews was offensive to the Spanish reformers.” (33–34). The research department maintains that Puritan America’s “Blue Laws” resulted from Jews taking unfair advantage over Christians by trading in blacks on the Sunday sabbath (205). The Nation of Islam also offers “irrefutable evidence that the most prominent of Jewish pilgrim fathers used kidnapped Black Africans disproportionately more than any other ethnic or religious group in New World History” (vii). Jews supposedly dominated the transatlantic slave trade. Jews dominated the slave trade and plantation industries in New Spain, Brazil, and the Caribbean. Jewish merchants brought “countless thousands of Africans” to North America in the colonial period (90), served as slave traders (121) and “entered the planter class in substantial numbers.” (121) Jews massacred the freedom fighters of Surinam and Guyana in the seventeenth century (36–54). They served as jailers, marshals, militia, and detectives in the Old South, helping to squelch the 1831 rebellion of “the Great” Nat Turner. The editors of *Secret Relationship* conclude: “Much like the Nazis at the concentration camps of Auschwitz, Treblinka, or Buchenwald, Jews served as constables, jailers, and sheriffs, part of whose duties were to issue warrants against and track down black freedom seekers”(p.207). The charges are endless. They are also untrue.

A Conspiracy of Silence

The number, exact or approximate, of Africans transported to the New World is open to debate. Following a tour of the Holocaust Museum in Washington in the spring of 1994, later when he spoke before a special convocation at Howard University (where he shared the podium with Leonard Jeffries and Tony Martin) Khalid Abdul Muhammad shrilled about the millions of slaves forcibly uprooted from their homes in Africa. Six million “so-called” Jews suffering in ghettos for six years could not compare to the agony endured by Africans at the hands of “white crackers” and “honkeys” over six centuries. “Doctor” Muhammad reminded a cheering audience at Howard that more than 100 million of his people had perished in the worst Holocaust in history.¹⁶

The figure 100 million black deaths in the slave trade has been bandied about so often in recent years that it has gained acceptance among some members of America’s black communities. Though no reputable historian has posited such a figure, 100 million deaths is accepted by many as fact. In *From Plantation to Ghetto*, a work deemed seminal to

black studies, August Meier and Elliott Rudwick do refer to “one author” who suggested that counting the wars and raids in Africa and the horrors of the Middle Passage, “the transatlantic slave trade might easily have cost Africa as many as 50,000,000 people.”¹⁷ The unnamed author (he is never cited in Meier/Rudwick’s text) may be Basil Davidson who speaks of the removal of one-quarter of the African population in his *Black Mother: The Years of the African Slave Trade*.¹⁸ F.George Kay uses the figure of 50 million as casualties in *The Shameful Trade*. Kay dips into reckless rhetoric when he compares inmates of Nazi concentration camps with slaves on plantations in the Old South and concludes that the crimes of World War II “pale into a brief and minor aberration of a civilised people.”¹⁹

It seems unlikely that sub-Saharan Africa maintained a population in excess of 300 millions in the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries. Because of war, famine, disease, the region barely sustains that many today. Tribal conflicts, still evident in Zaire, Rwanda, South Africa, Angola, and Somalia, cannot be ascribed solely to European interlopers. For 50 million Africans to have perished aboard sloops and schooners making the Atlantic crossing, slave traders bent on making a profit would have had to drag off more than 75 million people, hoping that a minimum one in three might survive. Records show this kind of death rate was unacceptable to slavers. In *Black Southerners, 1619–1869*, John Boles dismisses “wild estimates” of 50 or 100 million and instead offers the “consensus” view that between 1451 and 1870 a total of 10–12 million Africans were brought to the New World.²⁰ That is a figure accepted by Herbert Klein (*The Middle Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic Slave Trade*), Philip Curtin (*The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*), and James A. Rawley (*The Transatlantic Slave Trade*) all of whom reckon shipboard mortality at between the norm of 10 percent and the rare 20–30 percent.²¹

Assuming the worst (30 percent mortality), the transatlantic slave trade would have cost the lives of perhaps three to five million Africans. That is horrible enough without anyone having to enter into a contest of comparative pain. There is no excuse for one group that has endured persecution to deprecate the suffering of others. Shortly before her death in 1989, the Holocaust historian Nora Levin urged people to be sensitive to the horrors of Armenian, American Indian, Baha’i, and black history: “Each genocide has its own etiology, the characteristic environment that fuels it, the kind of society that sanctions it.”²² Each tragedy has its own configuration and merits study.

Unfortunately, black nationalist historians do not seem so charitably disposed. They not only see the Jews playing the predominant role in the dehumanization of their people, they also believe Jews have manipulated the world of scholarship, successfully concealing the facts from the public—until now. That the Jews who endured ghettos, pogroms, expulsions, and mass murder, could have wielded such power is patently absurd. Still, over the course of centuries, this vulnerable people has also been accused of the most outlandish conspiracies. Beginning with the Middle Ages, Jews were blamed for ritual murder, host desecration, well poisoning. In the sixteenth century, those who converted under force to Christianity were accused of secretly working with Polish and Dutch Jews to undermine the church in what was termed “La Complicidad Grande.”²³ Not until the publication of *Nostra Aetate* in 1965 were Jews generally relieved of the crime of deicide, carrying with it the implication of eternal hatred of the Christian church. Christians still prayed for their “perfidious” souls. The success of the Rothschilds in the nineteenth century, Napoleon’s call for a Sanhedrin in 1808, Herzl’s convocation of a World Zionist Congress in 1897, the creation of the Jewish Socialist Bund in the same year, all lent credence to the notion of a Jewish plot to seize control of the world, outlined by 1903 in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a spurious document subsequently debunked as a forgery.²⁴

For a people that supposedly masterminded the slave trade, the Jews are remarkably absent from major texts on the subject. There are several references to the activities of Arabs in James Rawley’s *Transatlantic Slave Trade* (telling of contacts in West Africa before the time of Henry the Navigator and their abuse of Senegalese in the 1780s)²⁵ but no mention of Jews. Roger Anstey speaks of “the considerable Arab slave trade in Central Africa” in *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition* but says nothing of Jews.²⁶ F. George Kay devotes thirteen pages to what he terms “disgusting” trafficking in slaves by Arabs in Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Guinea, Madagascar, Zanzibar, Botswana, Oman, and Khartoum,²⁷ but does not even include Jews in his index. In like manner, Curtin and Klein omit Jews from their comprehensive indictment of Danes, Frenchmen, English, Portuguese, and Spaniards who dominated the slave trade. David Eltis blames British, French, and Hispanic families (especially the latter who enjoyed a monopoly to the West Indies, Cuba, and Brazil) but also says nothing of Jews in his *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*.²⁸ There is a reference to Jews in Colin Palmer’s *Human*

Cargoes: The British Slave Trade to Spanish America 1700–1739, but it is as victims. For Palmer writes that “blacks comprised only one category in a slave population that included Jews, Arabs, Berbers and Moors.”²⁹ The single mention of Jews in Patrick Manning’s *Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental and African Slave Trades*³⁰ offers the suffering of the Jews in the Holocaust as a parallel for Africans in the transatlantic slave trade.

It is possible to find passing reference to Jewish slave traders in ancient Arabia or working alongside Gypsies and other exiles in the Portuguese trade to the Caribbean and South America³¹ and we shall look at these in future chapters. Most texts that deal with slavery, however, yield little on Jewish involvement. There is no mention of Jewish slave merchants or ownership in J.R. Ward, *British West Indian Slavery 1750–1834* (1988); Rollando Mellafe, *Negro Slavery in Latin America* (1925); Hubert Aimes, *A History of Slavery in Cuba 1511–1608* (1907); Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery* (1988); Danniell Mannix, *Black Cargoes: Transatlantic Slave Trade 1518–1865* (1962); Robert Toplin, *Slavery and Race Relations in Latin America* (1974) and *The Abolition of Slavery in Brazil* (1972); Leslie Bethel, *Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade: Britain, Brazil and the Slave Trade Question 1807–1869* (1970); Eugene Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made* (1965). Oliver Ransford makes a single mention of Jews in the Maghreb in *The Slave Trade* (1971). Herbert Klein devotes one paragraph in 300 pages to Jews in *African Slavery in Latin America* (1986). And Johannes Postma mentions the Belmonte family and David Nassy (pp. 8–10) in his *Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade 1600–1815* (1990).

If Jews were such a dominant force in the domestic/American slave trade, how explain their virtual absence from texts which are considered standard? In *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (1956), Kenneth Stampp speaks of Muslims and Christians finding victims among “the Negroes of Africa,” of the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, French, and English bringing human cargoes to the New World (pp. 16–17). Stampp lists some of the most prominent slaveholders in the Old South and even refers to slavetraders as “Southern Shylocks” (256–68), yet there are no references to Jews in his book. Nor are there any in U.B. Phillips’ *American Negro Slavery* (1918) or Robert Fogel’s *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery* (1989), Fogel and Engerman’s *Time on the Cross*, William Van Deburg’s *Slavery and Race in American Popular Culture* (1984); James Roark’s *Masters without Slaves: Southern Planters in the Civil War and Recon-*

struction (1977); Richard America, *The Wealth of Races; The Present Value of Benefits from Past Injustices* (Greenwood 1990); Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men* (1970); Merton Dillon, *Slavery Attacked: Southern Slaves and Their Allies 1619–1865* (1990); Paul Finkleman (ed.) *Articles on American Slavery* (1989); Edgar Thompson, *Plantation Societies, Race Relations and the South* (1975); or Willie Rose (ed.), *A Documentary History of Slavery in North America* (1926). Harry Ploski and Ernest Kaiser's massive (1,000-page) edition, *The Negro Almanac* (1971) contains one reference (p. 441) to black hostility toward Jewish shopkeepers and service workers in the inner city.

Searches in regional studies yield similar results. Not a word on Jews in Ronald Lewis' *Coal, Iron and Slaves: Industrial Slavery in Maryland and Virginia, 1715–1865* (1979); Bernard Steiner's *History of Slavery in Connecticut* (1893); Boles' *Black Southerners*; William Jenkins' *Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South* (1960); J. Winston Coleman's *Slavery Times in Kentucky* (1940); Orville Taylor's *Negro Slavery in Arkansas* (1958); Charles Sydnor's *Slavery in Mississippi* (1965); Peter Wood's *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 to the Stono Rebellion* (1974); Betty Wood's *Slavery in Colonial Georgia, 1730–1775* (1984); Randolph Campbell's *An Empire for Slavery: The Peculiar Institution in Texas, 1821–1865* (1989); Barbara Fields' *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Nineteenth Century* (1985); R. Douglas Hurt's *Agriculture and Slavery in Missouri's Little Dixie* (1992); James Johnston's *Race Relations in Virginia and Miscegenation in the South, 1776–1860* (1970); Charles Davis' *The Cotton Kingdom in Alabama* (1974) or the collection titled *Slavery in the States* (1969) which reprints turn of the century essays on slavery in New Jersey, Rhode Island, New York, Connecticut, North Carolina and Missouri. Joseph Karl Menn's multivolume, *Large Slaveholders of the Deep South 1860*, may be the most comprehensive list available, detailing major slaveholders in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. None of the sixty women cited were Jewish. (pp. 205–8) None of the seventeen railroad contractors were Jewish (213). None of the fifteen individuals listed in building construction, brickyards and sawmills were Jewish (213). None of the fifteen largest producers of cotton, or of rice, or of sugar were Jewish (244–56). None of the sixteen largest slaveholders in the entire South were Jewish (233–34). In fact, not one of the 6,000 persons owning fifty or more slaves in the states examined by Menn were Jewish.³²

American Jews were, for the most part, merchants and traders clustered in cities like New York, Philadelphia and Newport in the North,

Charleston, Savannah, Richmond and New Orleans in the South.³³ Because they were concentrated in urban areas, one might expect to find something in Richard Wade's *Slavery in the Cities: The South 1820–1860* (1964). Wade discusses the active role of specific religious groups (Catholics, Episcopalians, Baptists, and Methodists) among blacks (pp. 167–68). He quotes black abolitionist spokesman Frederick Douglass on slavery in the cities and highlights the relative decline of the black urban population after 1820. At no time in his discussion of living conditions, trades and employment, shopping, clothes, food, and health, patrols in pursuit of runaways, even the suppression of the Denmark Vesey insurrection of 1822, does Wade make reference to Jews. Jews are mentioned in a few places in Frederic Bancroft's classic *Slave Trading in the Old South*, the product of an exhaustive search of thousands of Southern newspapers, city directories, and business listings. Their numbers were, in the words of Rabbi Bertram Korn, amazingly small—3 of 70 slave brokers in Richmond, 4 of 44 in Charleston, 1 of 12 in Memphis.³⁴ According to Rabbi Korn, “probably all of the Jewish slave-trades in all of the Southern cities and towns combined did not buy and sell as many slaves as did the firm of Franklin and Armfield, the largest Negro traders in the South.”³⁵ As an example, Jacob Cohen, the most prosperous Jewish slave trader mentioned by Bancroft, earned commissions totalling \$2,500, less than nine other Gentile slave traders in Charleston, less than one-fourth of that obtained by Louis DeSaussure in 1860. Adds Rabbi Korn, none of the major slave-traders were Jewish, “nor did Jews constitute a large proportion of traders in any particular community.”³⁶

The last half-century has witnessed a veritable explosion of black studies programs at colleges and universities in the United States, with commensurate publications in black history. Yet here, too, writers have been remarkably silent about Jewish activity in the slave trade. The lone mention of Jews in Eugene Genovese's 800-page study *Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made* comes in the context of slaves identifying with Jewish Biblical history and “the persuasive theme of deliverance” that Moses presents as redeemer.³⁷ Meier and Rudwick mention Jews only in connection with Bayard Rustin's 1963 call for a march on Washington.³⁸ W.E.B. Dubois, the first and foremost black American scholar of this century, wrote extensively on the slave experience. Dubois chronicled the extent of slavery in various colonial empires at the start of the nineteenth century.³⁹ He described the rivalry between the Dutch and British in the West Indies, the temporary successes of Napoleon, the prominence of Newport, Rhode Island as a slave depot; he even

listed the foremost slave spokesmen in Southern commercial conventions between 1855 and 1859. DuBois, the Harvard-educated socialist, makes no reference to Jews. Booker T. Washington and William Hannibal Thomas both allude to hostile, unscrupulous Arab slave traders but say nothing about Jews in their studies of the American Negro at the turn of the century.⁴⁰ *White over Black* author Winthrop Jordan quotes a seventeenth-century source telling of “Jues” on the island of Barbados. But that is the extent of Jordan’s reference to Jews as slave traders in a volume strident in its assault against the Puritan oppressors of his people.⁴¹ As a group, Jews are mentioned in John Hope Franklin’s and Alfred Moss’ *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans* within the context of the civil rights struggle of the 1960s.⁴² The only individual Jew to be mentioned more than once (and this in a favorable light) is George Gershwin.⁴³ Morgan State historian Benjamin Quarles mentions only one Jew in *The Negro in the Making of America* and that is the philanthropist Julius Rosenwald who devoted more than \$4,000,000 to black education in the South before his death in 1932.⁴⁴

There are no references to Jewish slaveholders or traders in *From Slavery to Freedom*, in James Horton’s *Free People of Color: Inside the African American Community* (1993), Lerone Bennett’s *Before the Mayflower: A History of the Negro in America, 1619–1964* (1962–66),⁴⁵ Leslie Owens’ *This Species of Property: Slave Life and Culture in the Old South* (1976), Alphonso Pinkney’s *Black Americans* (1975), Nathan Hughes’ *Black Odyssey: The Afro-American Ordeal in Slavery* (1977),⁴⁶ John Blasingame’s *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (1979),⁴⁷ Vincent Harding’s *There is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (1981), Charles Davis and Henry Louis Gates’ *The Slave’s Narrative* (1985), Donald Wright’s *African Americans in the Early Republic* (1993), or in any of the data-filled works of Carter Woodson.⁴⁸ Extensive scrutiny of the *Journal of Negro History* dating back more than sixty years also yields few references to Jews in the slave trade. Search of the multivolume Slave Bills of Sale Project developed by the African-American Family History Association in Atlanta, Georgia is equally fruitless. The collection lists 2,539 slaves and 1,368 buyers and sellers dating back to 1796. The names that crop up repeatedly are James Grubbs, Zachariah Lamar, Elijah Smead, Allen Inman, the McAlpin family. No Jews are cited.

There is a good reason for such lacunae. Much as the editors of *Secret Relationship* would have it otherwise, the charge of domination of the slave trade simply is not born out by the facts. My onetime col-

league Dr. Amos Beyan, now of West Virginia University and the author of a volume on the Liberian slave trade, like most legitimate historians, dismisses the notion that Jews dominated the slave trade as crank history: "It's just not a serious debate among scholars. It's popular history. No one like John Hope Franklin or Genovese would take it seriously. There was no control of the slave trade on this side by common Americans. The power was concentrated in the hands of the aristocracy, kings, and bankers in Europe. England controlled it after 1713, but even as far back as the Armada in 1588. Were there Jews close to the monarchs? Even if there were, they were not as groups, but individuals. It had nothing to do with being Jewish or the Jewish religion."⁴⁹



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Slavery in Antiquity

A Universal Human Fault

From recorded time, slavery has been an accepted part of society. It was, as Fustel de Coulanges declared “a primordial fact, contemporaneous with the origin of society; it had its roots in an age of the human species when all inequalities had their *raison d’etre*.”¹ In northern China in the third century, unfree masses constructed the 1,500-mile-long Great Wall designed to protect the Chin empire from Mongol raiders. The Old Kingdom pyramids of Egypt may have been raised by slaves. In Mesopotamia, much of the wealth of Assyrian and Babylonian warlords derived from slave labor. As Sumerologist Samuel Noah Kramer has written: “Slavery was a recognized institution and temples, palaces, and rich estates owned slaves and exploited them for their own benefit.”² In sub-Saharan Africa, along the Amazon, on outriggers in Polynesia, aboard *dhows* bound for Muslim lords in Persia and Arabia, in the Yucatan Peninsula, among American Indian tribes, men warred with their fellow men and degraded the survivors.

Plato assumed the institution of slavery would serve the needs of his elite Greek “guardians” in the *Republic*.³ According to Aristotle, nature dictated that certain creatures were superior, others inferior. Just as there were differences between men and women, so there were different abilities among men. (“He who is by nature not his own, but another’s, and yet a man, is by nature a slave.”) Just as there were animate and inanimate “instruments” helpful in navigating the seas (a rudder and a human lookout), so the slave was nothing but an animate “instrument,” a possession, useful to the management of a household. Some men, warned Aristotle, are slaves everywhere, and some (meaning his fellow Greeks) are slaves nowhere.⁴ In his *Utopia*, Thomas More called for “fetters of gold” appropriate for the “hardworking, penniless drudges” who would perform tasks unworthy of free men (i.e., hunting, cooking, oxcart driv-

ing, butchering).⁵ John Locke included a provision on slavery for the charter of Carolina, holding that slavery was “entirely outside the social contract.” The Englishman who provided the inspiration for Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence, suggested that slaves who did not accept their condition might opt to commit suicide.⁶

The persistence of slavery demonstrates a basic flaw in human character. Scholars suggest that none of its previous incarnations can compare with the insidiousness of the transatlantic trade and slavery as practiced in the Western Hemisphere over the past five centuries. As Bernard Lewis wrote in 1971: “At no time did the Islamic world ever practice the kind of racial exclusivism which we find in the republic of South Africa at the present time or which has existed until very recently in the United States.”⁷ According to Claude Meillassoux, chattel slavery left Africans in a state of desocialization (aliens uprooted from their homes), depersonalization (stripped of their humanity) desexualization (the destruction of love and family), and decivilization (devoid of legal guarantees and freedom).⁸ Philip Curtin, who traces the origins of slavery in the west to the medieval world, would agree. The brand of slavery practised in the ante-bellum South was unique, says Curtin, for “never before in world history had agricultural enterprises on such a large scale depended so heavily on an export market.” In such a system, slaves were dehumanized as nothing more than labor units.⁹

Judging another society by contemporary standards always presents problems. As M.I. Finley has written: “Slavery is a great evil: there is no reason why a historian should not say that, but to say only that, no matter with how much factual backing, is a cheap way to score a point on a dead society to the advantage of our own; retrospective indignation is also a way to justify the present.”¹⁰ Self-justification is what some Afrocentrist writers like those who composed *Secret Relationship* seem to be about. They argue that chattel slavery is a recent invention, unique to Western society. There is something inherently corrupt in modern, industrial Europe which made of the slave a deracinated outsider, stripped of homeland culture, family, and identity. By way of contrast, traditional African tribal societies are presented as pristine, untainted by class structure. Technically all people were *dewoa*, possessions of the tribal chief. There were “house servants,” to be sure, but master and servant lived together, working, sharing food, celebrations, and a sense of common purpose. Slaves intermarried with their masters, adopted the Islamic faith, and even ran away without consequence. Africans may have taken other Africans away from their homes, but

never in the inhuman fashion of the West. Skin color was never a factor in slavery until the Europeans combined racism with economic exploitation after the fifteenth century. Ultimately, responsibility may be traced back to Jews and their holy books. Such Manichaean images, while comforting, are overdrawn. The lamentable fact is that wherever the institution of slavery existed, it corrupted the slaveowner and degraded the slave, and to some degree race, tribe or national identity were part of the process.

Slavery in Ancient Egypt

According to one Afrocentrist view, civilization originated along the banks of the Nile more than 5,000 years ago. “Black” African clans were then united by an heroic generalissimo (Menes) and from this society came the principal inventions (art, philosophy, writing, metallurgy, science, mathematics, organized religion) that make for the amelioration of life. The greatest construction projects known to ancient man (pyramids, granaries, irrigation canals) supposedly were raised not by slaves but by a combination of volunteer free workers and alien “guest laborers.” The serenity of this society is reflected in Egyptian art which remained static, unchanged, for centuries because this idyllic land bounded by sea, desert, cataracts (Nile rapids), and mountains was relatively secure from invasion. In this telling, every Egyptian hero is identified as a black African. Years ago, Langston Hughes started the process by claiming that Ikhnaton (the fourteenth-century pharaoh who antedated Moses with ideas of monolatry), even Cleopatra, a descendant of Alexander’s Greek general Ptolemy, were black Africans.

While most ancient historians privately reject such contentions, only a handful, led by Mary Lefkowitz, Andrew Mellon Professor of Humanities at Wellesley College, have had the courage to say so publicly.¹¹ Egyptians understand that anthropological evidence suggests different racial types existed side by side in the many nomes of ancient Egypt.¹² Unquestionably, there were contacts with blacks beyond the Upper Nile. Sudanese trackers (*medjai*) were employed by pharaohs of the Middle Kingdom (2000–1800 B.C.) and volunteered to assist the beleaguered Egyptians in the time of turmoil known as the second interregnum (1750–1580). In 945 B.C., the African monarch Sheshonk swept through the Delta on his way to conquests in ancient Judaea. Three hundred years later, Taharka, another Ethiopian, established his own dynasty in Egypt.¹³

Black Africans were not always welcome in Egypt. Fear and loathing of southerners was such that lords in the Middle Kingdom erected a string of fortresses below the first cataract as protection against the *Nehsiu*, a derogatory Egyptian word for Hamites and Nubians. Boundary steles also warned blacks against setting foot on Egyptian soil without permission. From Senusert III (1878–1840 B.C.) came two admonitions at Senmeh—the first politely warning against any Nubian ship or herds passing north, the second employing insulting phraseology about blacks (the *Nehsiu* “fall down at a word,” “they run from battle,” “they are not worthy of respect,” “they are poor and broken of spirit.”)¹⁴ But it was not just Nilotic blacks who were unwelcome in the lush Nile valley. A host of early dynastic inscriptions (a rock carving of Sekhemkhet at Wadi Mashara, an ivory label of King Den, the Two Gazelles Palette, the Bull Palette) show Egyptians battling with Libyans of the western desert. The Palette of Narmer, the first artifact to portray a single king wearing the *deshret* (red crown of the delta) and *hedjet* (white crown of Upper Egypt), also shows the pharaoh clubbing desert dwellers and dragging survivors off in a snare.¹⁵

Despite its natural insularity, Egypt could be a violent land, its peace disturbed by invaders from Crete and Semites from Upper Retenu (the name for ancient Palestine). Occasionally, the invaders were rebuffed (as in the reign of Rameses III, c.1190 B.C. when the sea peoples were defeated). There were times, however, when an influx of migrant traders might be succeeded by armed hosts. That was precisely the scenario with the Hyksos (shepherd kings), Semitic hordes that conquered Egypt in the eighteenth century. Historians see harbingers of this invasion in wall inscriptions of nobles at Beni Hasan where colorfully garbed foreign merchants known as *Apiru* or *Habiru* are displayed. Some historians (beginning with Flavius Josephus) made the mistake of equating the Hyksos with the pastoral Israelites.¹⁶ The Egyptian priest-historian Manetho suggests that they were 240,000 Semites who eventually fled back to their ancestral lands.¹⁷ The probability is that some of the interlopers remained in Egypt and were enslaved.¹⁸ Included in the multitude were the Israelites, the ancient forebears of the Jews. Which presents a dilemma for the Afrocentrists. Essential to their arguments of victimization is the claim that blacks historically have been powerless, unable to enslave. But if the Egyptians were black, how justify their use of slavery? And if, as some Pan-Africanists have argued, the Israelites themselves were black,¹⁹ how explain the additional paradox of the black Egyptians enslaving black Israelites?