

**HATE PROPAGANDA MASQUERADING AS HISTORY:
VOL. 2 OF LOUIS FARRAKHAN'S *THE SECRET RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BLACKS
AND JEWS***

“But now let us go back to the forgotten pioneer, the man who was there with the wagon train during the gold rush; the man who conferred dignity upon the recently freed Negro’s first purchases as a free man [which] were from the peddlers The Negro wanted a hat, . . . and his wife wanted a gold wedding band on credit and to put her name in a little ledger book. When he made his rounds . . . she always asked him to let her see the name on a page of accounts, evidence of human dignity, evidence that she was paying her way.”

———Harry Golden, *Forgotten Pioneer* (1963)

Overview

The Nation of Islam’s *The Secret Relationship between Blacks and Jews*, Volume 2, is a dishonest exercise in distorting and manipulating historical sources in the service of a vision of racial separatism. Its purpose is to undermine the historic Black-Jewish alliance for civil rights and foreclose the possibility of ever achieving a post-racial America.

This Report will show—contrary to Louis Farrakhan’s false history—that:

- the Rothschilds did not control the Jim Crow South
- Jewish peddlers and storekeepers were not a dominating, all-powerful influence in the region
- Jewish merchants typically treated their black customers better than non-Jewish merchants
- Jewish cotton brokers did not betray blacks by helping to restore the South’s economy after the Civil War
- Southern Jews were and are more racially tolerant than other Southern whites
- The KKK has always targeted Jews who stood up for African American rights

African Americans and Jews need honest dialogue—not assaults on historical truth meant to demonize each other. This is especially true of young people permanently harmed by a steady

diet of hate propaganda. To move forward, we need to consign pseudo-scholarship like *The Secret Relationship* to the dustbin of history.

Introduction

George Orwell's *1984* warned: "He who controls the present, controls the past. He who controls the past, controls the future." Orwell was a careful observer of how totalitarian regimes like Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia rewrote history to serve their hateful purposes. Yet the phenomenon predates the twentieth century. In the nineteenth century, German historian Heinrich von Treitschke schooled generations that "the Jews are our misfortune." And now in this new century, Iran has emerged as the leading state sponsor of Holocaust Denial.¹

In the United States, we are fortunate that anti-Semitism remains less pronounced than in the Middle East and in Europe where almost one third of the population blames the recent global economic crash on Jews. Yet here we have our own distinct intergroup relations pathologies—one of which is the malign influence of Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam.²

We live in a time when every national story—from the Tea Party Movement's tussle with the NAACP to LeBron James' departure from the Cleveland Cavaliers—seems to take on an explosive racial subtext. Now, Farrakhan's NOI has issued Volume 2 of *The Secret Relationship Between Black and Jews*. Twenty years ago, Volume 1 argued that a relative handful of Jewish merchants were able to implement "the Black Holocaust": the forced transfer over 400 years of from old world to new and enslavement of 10 to 12 million uprooted Africans (Farrakhan claims 100 million!). Despite numerous refutations, beginning with my *Farrakhan's Reign of Historical Error* published by the Wiesenthal Center in 1992, the NOI's anonymous Historical Research Department has never retracted its bizarre claims.³

There is nothing "secret" about the fact—documented by Jewish historians for over a century—that there were Jewish slave traders and slave holders. According to Jacob Rader Marcus, "American Jewish businessmen were accountable for less than two percent of the slave imports into the West Indies and North America."⁴ According to Bertram W. Korn, "None of the major slave traders [in the Old South] were Jewish," while "Jewish owners of plantations . . . constituted only a tiny proportion of the [slave holding] Southerners."⁵ Not only were Jewish slaveholders vastly outnumbered by white Christian slaveholders, they were also decidedly outnumbered by free blacks who owned other African Americans—most often for the same motive that impelled whites to own slaves: the profit motive.⁶

Yet now we have Volume 2 of *The SR* building on Volume 1's treacherous foundations a new superstructure of lies centering around the false claim that "Jews gained control of the Black economy" after the Civil War.

According to Farrakhan's historical crew, there is "an undeniable record of Jewish anti-Black behavior, starting with the horror of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, plantation slavery, Jim Crow, sharecropping, the labor movement of the North and South, the unions and the misuse of our people that continues to this very moment." If that were not enough, they throw into the mix the conspiracy theories that Rothschilds ran the American economy, Jewish merchants learned to exploit black sharecroppers from the Talmud, Jewish pimps monopolized organized prostitution, and the KKK and Freemasons were both fronts for the Jews. If Jewish merchants sold white frontiersmen "scalping knives," they were responsible for the annihilation of Native Americans. If they sold white Southerners sheets that could be worn by Klansmen, they were responsible for the rise of the KKK!⁷

Leaving it to a psychoanalyst to dissect the wider web of poisonous Farrakhanite fantasies, we will focus here on the core accusations made by Volume 2 of *The SR*.

Myth No. 1: The Rothschilds Ruled the Jim Crow South

Like most anti-Semitic polemics of the last century or so, Farrakhan's pseudo-historians insist on embedding their immediate concern—Black Jewish relations—in the "diabolic desire to control the world of wealth" of the European Rothschild banking family. In fact, Louis Farrakhan is the first prominent African American to share the age-old obsession with the Rothschilds. In the 1890s, this led both discontented farmers and declining aristocrats to sympathize with Democratic-Populist presidential nominee William Jennings Bryan who promised to prevent America from being "crucified on a Cross of Gold"; in the 1920s, it led industrialist Henry Ford to rail against "Jewish international bankers."⁸

Niall Ferguson's exhaustive two-volume history of *The House of Rothschild* tells the real story beginning in the 1830s when the English House of Rothschild was convinced to buy cotton-backed securities by Nicholas Biddle's Bank of the United States. Stripped of its government charter by Andrew Jackson, Biddle's Bank soon suffered an ignominious bankruptcy. Losing millions on their investment, the Rothschilds remained for the remainder of the nineteenth century wary of investing in "that blasted country" America. In the 1850 when the Rothschilds took another risk, they chose Gold Rush California not the South's Cotton Kingdom to make a strategic U.S. investment. During the American Civil War, their American representative August Belmont—a pro-Union Democrat—wisely convinced them to invest in U.S. government securities rather than Confederate bonds. In 1863, the English House of Rothschild shunned a massive Confederate bond offering floated by Löb Moses Erlanger. The head of the Frankfurt House of Rothschild gave an unprecedented interview to *Harper's Weekly* stating that his family joined all Germany "in condemning this act of lending money to establish a slaveholding government" by "an apostate Jew." Dabbling in the American cotton market by Rothschild

“nephews” immediately after the Civil War remained minor. In fact, the Rothschilds’ support for projects like the Suez Canal—bringing the Egyptian and Indian cotton production into the international market—almost certainly depressed the U.S. cotton industry.⁹

Farrakhan’s house historians cite Ferguson’s work, but either distort or omit the true story in order to picture the Rothschilds as the Jewish “evil empire” controlling America’s cotton economy during the Jim Crow Era.¹⁰

Myth No. 2: Jewish Immigrants after the Civil War Were a “Plague of Locusts” Descending on the South

The Farrakhanite historians are obsessed with the “swarm” or “invasion” of Jewish peddlers who allegedly descended—like the biblical locust plague—on the South after the Civil War. Perhaps several thousand Jewish immigrants seeking a new beginning in America did see the postwar South as the land of opportunity. One question is how many? The NOI’s book cites in its footnotes the exemplary study by economic historians Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch of “the economic consequences of emancipation,” but fails to give the reader their statistical conclusion. In 1880, 11 percent of peddlers and shopkeepers—including non-Jews and Jews—in the South were “foreign born” which would mean that the “swarm” of Jewish immigrants in business in the rural South was far from a majority.¹¹

The South’s new Jewish businessmen were not numerous enough to be a majority of the merchant class, but were a visible enough minority—because of their accents, ethnicity, and the prevalent Judas and Shylock stereotypes—to be scapegoated. Rather than rely on scholarly accounts of Southern Jews, the Farrakhanites prefer to cite writers tinged with anti-Semitism who offered malicious accounts of Jews as the taskmasters of the postbellum Southern economy. They even give two pages to that “keen observer” of American Southern history, Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoyevsky, who described Jews “leaping en masse” on “the exploited tribe” of black freedman.¹² Next comes novelist Mark Twain—ambivalent about Jews—who in a 1898 essay in *Harper’s Magazine* insisted, without any evidence, that there were 25 million Jews in the U.S. (the actual figure was 250,000) including hundreds of thousands who had descended on the Mississippi Valley!¹³

Finally, there’s the unfortunate case of W. E. B. Du Bois who, early in his brilliant career when he was still under the influence of the genteel anti-Semitism he absorbed at Harvard and German universities, wrote that the “shrewd and unscrupulous” Russian Jewish immigrant is “heir of the slave baron.” At that time, Georgia’s population of two million included just over 1,000—one half of one percent—immigrant Jews. Du Bois in the fiftieth anniversary edition of *The Souls of Black Folk* (1953) rewrote this passage—not only because he was shaken by the Holocaust—but because he admitted that the informants he relied on in 1903 were biased and unreliable.

Jonathan M. Wiener has shown that the white planter class never lost its grip on Southern agriculture, and that the merchant class—including a minority of Jews—were relegated to junior partners of the landowners.¹⁴

Myth No. 3: Jewish Peddlers and Storekeepers were “Money Lenders on the Roof” Exploiting Black Sharecroppers

There is general agreement that Jewish peddlers and storekeepers after the Civil War often won the business of newly freed African Americans by offering them a combination of courtesy and credit. This meant a smile and a handshake, the respectful appellation “Mr.” and “Mrs.,” and a willingness to sell consumer goods for the promise of future payment in cotton. No particular friend of the Jews, the Southern historian Bell Wiley recalled that in his hometown the lone Jewish storekeeper “got most of the black trade because he treated Negroes as human beings and was kindly to them, taking time to joke, inquire about their families and otherwise manifest interest in them.” Farrakhan’s historians, in contrast, characterize the behavior of pioneering Jewish merchants as a Jewish onslaught by “a new predatory capitalism focused entirely on the vulnerable Black ex-slave.”¹⁵

A good example of how the Farrakhanites treat historical evidence is what they do with the story of Russian Jewish immigrant peddler and then merchant David Pearlman who arrived in Georgia around 1880. According to Louis Schmier who edited his reminiscences, Pearlman initially viewed the first black people he had ever seen as *dybbuks*, but quickly overcame his fright and saw parallels between the plight of persecuted Jews and that of black freedmen who deserved to be treated “*like menschen*.” Though his older cousin Sam advised against too much familiarity with his black customers, Pearlman broke a racial taboo by accepting an invitation to sleep under the roof of a black family who taught him his first words of English. Then—with the encouragement of a white landowner who agreed to act as a guarantor—Pearlman began selling to his black clientele of tenant farmers and sharecroppers everything from farm supplies to machine-made clothes to jewelry on credit. Things went smoothly until a white customer—angered that a black customer was served first in the Jew’s store—told Pearlman that he was a fool and a hypocrite because the credit he extended blacks was being manipulated by the white landowner to drive them deeper into debt than Pearlman knew. The Jewish store owner did what he could to make amends to his black customers by, from that point on, charging them less than whites for the same goods and by taking control of their credit accounts out of the white landowner’s hands. Unfortunately, Jewish merchants who may have wanted to treat blacks better were rarely able to seize control from landowners of decisions over land tenure as well as credit. The reminiscence ends with an elderly Pearlman telling his extended family that “you are here not just because of me. You are here because of them (the blacks). What you have now is because of them.”¹⁶

The Farrakhanite book devotes three pages to this story—but emphasizes the racism or cynicism of Pearlman’s cousin—not his decency and tolerance. The book leaves out entirely his decision to charge black customers less than whites, and to stop the landowner from exploited their credit accounts. Pearlman was probably an exceptional man whose humane treatment of African Americans put him at one end of a spectrum that went all the way from good to bad treatment of black customers by Jewish businessmen. A common middle-of-the-road position was articulated by immigrant Russian Jewish merchant Aaron Bronson who said “I’m here for a living, not a crusade.” The point, however, is that the Farrakhanites delete from his reminiscences the most striking examples of his conscientious treatment of African Americans.¹⁷

The Jewish peddlers who never emerged from poverty tend to be ignored. Pearlman was typical of successful Jewish peddlers who made the transition to town merchant supplying a black as well as white clientele. They also often also acted as middle men for white landowners—in parallel with the role Jews sometimes played in Eastern Europe as agents between lordly aristocrats and the peasantry. The difference was the Black-Jewish relationship in the American South seems to have less steeped in ancient animosities. Historians Steven Hertzberg and Arnold Shankman discern a relatively amicable relationship. Occasionally, there were ugly episodes—from scuffling youngsters trading the epithets “nigger” and “Christ killer,” to black complaints about price gouging, to crimes committed against Jewish merchants including robbery and even murder True to form, the Farrakhanite book—while always willing to believe the worst about Jews—indignantly refuses to admit that African Americans ever committed crimes, whether or not motivated by prejudice, against Jews.¹⁸

Sometimes, the Farrakhanites seem to damn all purchases based on credit as usurious because their ideal is a primitive barter economy. More often, their problems seem to be exclusively with Jewish merchants. In truth, the risk to reward ratio in lending to consumers who had no way to pay except with future receipts from uncertain cotton sales was extremely high. Non-Jewish white merchants frequently refused to take the risk when the customer was black, and black merchants—a rarity—could not afford to extend credit. This meant that Jewish merchants were often the only option for black tenant farmers or sharecroppers who wanted to stretch their purchasing power to buy, not only seed and tools to farm, but consumer goods ranging from wedding rings, to calico dresses, to a new pair of shoes. They were willing to take on the debt and—so far as we can tell—generally grateful to get credit from Jews. Jews were also notable in their willingness to hire blacks on better terms than white landowners. We know this because, around 1890, white farmers in Louisiana and Mississippi—accusing Jews of displacing them by hiring black tenants—launched a violent movement to drive out the Jews called “whitecapping.” Over 400 African Americans signed resolutions in support of their Jewish employers. When public opinion polling finally came into its own in the 1960s, a third or more of Southern blacks registered a preference for working for, buying from, and renting from Jews—much higher a percentage than preferred non-Jewish whites.¹⁹

Today’s polling evidence that African Americans nationwide show higher levels of anti-Semitism than do whites—probably a reflection of less education and more religious prejudice. There also is a longstanding component of ambivalence, especially among African American business people combining emulation with envy and admiration with antagonism. The NOI’s book echoes wild accusations from over a hundred years ago that “Jewish moneylenders” held “the purse strings of the world” and were “fast getting control of Southern merchandising, farming, and banking interests.”²⁰

Nevertheless, the preference among Southern blacks for Jews as employers, merchants, and landlords is significant. Civil rights activist Aaron Henry, who grew up in Clarksdale, Mississippi, recalled that the black community patronized Jewish merchants because “you would consider them the better of the white element that you had to deal with.” The majority of mainstream Southern blacks have never shared the Farrakhanites’ opinion that Jewish peddlers and storekeepers—and the department stores for which they laid the foundations—were incorrigibly predatory and racist. As early as 1900, Booker T. Washington was worrying that the black preference to buy from Jewish merchants was angering powerful Southern whites who might retaliate against his Tuskegee Institute.²¹

Myth No. 4: Jewish Cotton Merchants were Responsible for the Economic Bondage of the Black South

The Farrakhanites’ book focuses much attention on the “kosher cotton connection” or alleged conspiracy involving Jewish business families like the Lehmans and the Seligmans whose trajectory led from their start as peddlers and storekeepers in the antebellum South to their ultimate success as merchant bankers in postwar New York. In fact, the Lehmans—who remained in wartime South as supporters of the Confederacy—and the Seligmans—who left the region earlier and supported the wartime North—both helped to restore Southern economy after 1865. The Lehmans did so directly as cotton brokers founding the New York Cotton Exchange in 1870. The Seligmans did so indirectly as commodity investors, buying and selling cotton futures. Elliott Ashkenazi in his history of the Jews of Louisiana traces the close ties between the New Orleans and New York business communities during critical periods like the 1870s when Jewish firms involved in the cotton trade averaged an annual profit of 15 percent percent—not exorbitant for involvement in a highly speculative business in which investors could be wiped out overnight by crop disease or a collapse of cotton prices. Few businessmen entered the profession because of the astronomical risks.²²

The sin of the Jewish cotton merchants, in the eyes of the Farrakhanites, is that “Jewish merchants brought capital investment—a reprieve, or veritable pardon—to their fellow racists . . . [they]supplied a lifeline, the economic oxygen to keep alive a system so injurious to Blacks

that the effects are still prominently felt to this day—a century and a half after emancipation.” Except for the Jews, “Blacks could have entered a truly free environment and recreated the African communal systems that had sustained them for thousands of years before the arrival of the Europeans.”²³

Aside from exaggerating the importance of a few Jewish businessmen, the problem with this picture of American blacks returning to a precapitalist African Eden is that it’s a reactionary fantasy that no one—including the newly freed slaves—believed was possible. The tragedy of Reconstruction, first dissected by W. E. B. Du Bois in the 1930s, was the failure of the federal government to follow through on emancipating slaves with economically empowering them with the proverbial “forty acres and a mule.” This was a national failure of will and imagination that consigned the entire South to the status of a depressed region, dependent on a one-crop economy, and without the investment in human infrastructure—especially schools—that would have made Southern black freedom tangible. Prominent Jews like the Lehmans and Seligmans had a negligible part in a result that was determined by national politics—an arena of which, unlike Rothschild representative August Belmont, they steered clear. Their role was to help the South’s agrarian economy to get back on its feet. The alternative, if that had not happened, would have been the region’s reversion to a backward autarkic economy, without links to world markets, that would not have supported even the minimal quality of life enjoyed by postwar Southerners including the black freedmen. It should also be noted that African Americans did not monopolize cotton growing after the Civil War; in fact, in 1885, for the first time over half was grown by white farmers.²⁴

Initially, the freed slaves showed an aversion to cultivating cotton—“the master’s crop.” Very soon, they learned that cotton was the only cash crop that would finance their needs and aspirations. Of course, they strived to own the land, but—when this wasn’t possible—they preferred tenant farming and sharecropping to agricultural wage labor because they did not want to work any longer in labor gangs under white control like in slavery times. A significant minority of Southern blacks did become landowners. A few even launched all-black communities like Davis Bend in Louisiana and Mound Bayou in Mississippi that raised and sold tobacco while trying to eliminate white middle men. The ultimate failure of these model communities—one of which, Mound Bayou, was financially supported by Julius Rosenwald—showed how limited their real world options were.²⁵

Jewish cotton merchants helped to finance the postwar Southern economy. That economy failed to deliver a fare share of the American Dream to the freed slaves, yet provided them with the minimum economic foundation that served as a launching pad to geographic and social mobility for the subsequent generations of Southern blacks who moved North as well as those who stayed behind ultimately to launch the civil rights revolution. Jews in the North—and even some in the South—cooperated with African Americans toward a new day. In fact, as far back as the 1880s,

Jacob Schiff—a leading member of the “Our Crowd” of elite New York Jews, many with Southern ties—supported the racial desegregation of the New York City public schools. Edwin R. A. Seligman, the son of the founder of the family banking house and a professor of economics at Columbia University, supported the fledgling NAACP, while the Lehmans also joined many other New York Jews with Southern roots in supporting Booker T. Washington’s school at Tuskegee.²⁶

Myth No. 5: Jews and the Ku Klux Klan were Allies in Oppressing Black Southerners

In the American South during the segregationist era, Jews occupied an anomalous position and walked a racial tightrope—benefitting from being white in a Jim Crow region yet endangered by any show of sympathy for African Americans. Rather than stop with this defensible thesis, the Farrakhanite historians argue that Southern Jews were hard-core racists as well as leeches on newly freed blacks. They employ a simple strategy to make their argument that Southern Jews and the Ku Klux Klan—far from being enemies—were allies in the Jim Crow South. Essentially, the strategy is to emphasize everything that a Southern Jewish newspaper editor or aspiring politician ever wrote in praise of the segregationist order while ignoring every statement and action to the contrary.²⁷

The first KKK—organized after the Civil War—targeted free blacks. The second—organized during the World War I era—gave more attention to Jews and Catholics. In March, 1922, Philip Rothblum, a Jewish immigrant, was blindfolded and taken out to the Dallas city dump where he was flogged and threatened with death if he did not leave town immediately. The ringleader—a member of the Dallas police who owed Rothblum money and also resented his friendship with black customers—was tried but never punished. The upshot was Dallas electing a Klansman mayor, followed by the Ku Klux Klan Day held at the State Fair in October, 1923. Imperial Wizard Hiram Wesley Evans condemned Jews, Catholics and Blacks as “unblendable”—reserving his greatest scorn for the Jews of whom he asked the audience of 150,000: “Would you want your daughter to marry one?”²⁸

Farrakhan’s book claims that there was a mutual admiration society between Jews and such “friends” as Evans and his ilk! How do they know? Because in the early 1920s, James E. Ferguson—the former governor of Texas, impeached and removed for corruption—sought to make a political comeback by publishing in his newspaper, “The Cloven Foot of the Dallas Jew,” a manifesto charging that Klansmen who opposed Ferguson were really pawns of a Jewish conspiracy: “As between the Dallas Jews and the Dallas KKK, I want to say that the Ku Klux is the better of the two.” Rather than keep their distance from the anti-Semitic demagogue “Farmer Jim” Ferguson, the Farrakhanites embrace him as a hero—not because he was pro-black—but because he hated Jews even more than did the Klan!²⁹

Eric L. Goldstein in his book, *The Price of Whiteness*, collects all the evidence he can find of Southern Jews taking on the racist coloration of their region. Yet he concludes that the tendency “to shy away from the harshest forms of racism . . . prevented them to fully identify with southern mores” and led them to “a greater intimacy and familiarity between blacks and Jews than existed by white Southerners and blacks.” Goldstein recognizes the role Southern rabbis like Montgomery’s Bernard Ehrenreich, Mobile’s Alfred G. Moses, and New Orleans Max Heller in taking the risk of speaking out against lynching. Their successors like Lazar Palnick of Little Rock—who rebuked parents who sent their children to “lily white” private academies in order to circumvent court-ordered integration during the 1950s—risked violence like the fifty sticks of dynamite that in 1958 blew up Atlanta’s oldest synagogue housing the congregation presided over Rabbi Jacob Rothschild, a close friend of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.³⁰

After World War II, we have public opinion surveys showing that ordinary Southern Jews, who publicly avoided controversy, were privately more than twice as likely as other Southern whites to believe that the end of segregation was both inevitable and desirable, and were also only a third as likely to view blacks as inferior. A higher expectation of Jews partly explains why Jewish-owned department stores were often the first target of black boycott campaigns demanding better treatment as consumers and also more job opportunities.³¹

Myth No. 6: When KKK Victimized Jews for Sympathizing with Blacks—“their Jewishness Was Probably Not a Factor”

Particularly shameful is the treatment by Farrakhan’s pseudo-scholars of the Jews who paid the ultimate price for their advocacy of black rights. They claim that—for Southern Jews—the Klan was only “a vague annoyance.” The annoyance was fatal for S. A. Bierfeld, the young Tennessee storekeeper who in 1868 became one of the first whites murdered by the Klan. He was blamed for selling guns to black freedmen to defend themselves, but his real crimes may have been hiring a black freedman, Lawrence Bowman who was also killed, and fraternizing with his black customers whom he encouraged to assert their political rights.³²

In 1869 in Northern Florida, it was the turn of storekeeper Samuel Fleishman, identified by the newspaper that targeted him for murder as “an Israelite,” and leaving behind a pregnant wife who had to flee the state. Fleishman came to America as part of the immigration following the European revolutions of 1848. There is every reason to believe that he proud to be both a Jew and a liberal. Refusing to fight for slavery, he emerged as a major supporter of the postwar Republican party, a generous patron of his black customers whom he refused to charge high interest rates, and a champion of the black freedmen. Again the Klan’s charge was that Fleishman was arming blacks, but the real complaint was that he was politically empowering them. Scores of blacks were killed by Klansmen during the same time in a local reign of terror

that, for the Jews, ended in 1871 with the murder of M. H. Lucy, another merchant judged too friendly with African Americans.³³

The NOI historians devote a convoluted page arguing that their being Jewish had nothing to do with the murder of these Jewish friends of black rights. The argument is reminiscent of the claim

that Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, murdered alongside black Mississippian James Chaney in 1964, should not be considered Jewish because they were given a religious education and did not attend synagogue. Who made Farrakhan the arbiter of Jewish identity?³⁴

The lynching in 1915 of Atlanta businessman Leo Frank, who moved South to open a pencil factory, is often treated as an aberration. Instead, it was the culmination of a generation or more of violent Southern anti-Semitism. The treatment of the case by the Farrakhanites is revealing. First, they fail to mention its Black-Jewish dimension. The prosecution initially arrested black janitor, Jim Conley, but ultimately decided to try Frank using Conley's testimony against him. The decision to go after an affluent Northern Jew rather than a low profile Southern black man showed that the prosecutor Hugh M. Dorsey was interested in a publicity triumph that would pay off politically. Frank's trial in 1913 was a sham; the courtroom seethed with cries of "kill the kike!"³⁵

Second, Frank was pardoned by Governor John M. Slaton—but then lynched by an elite mob of 26 Georgians, many of whom belonged to "Knights of Mary Fagan." Within months, the same white Knights congregated on Stone Mountain, Georgia, to found the second Ku Klux Klan and burn a cross (something that had not been done before). In other words, the creation of the second KKK was a direct outgrowth of Frank's murder—a fact hard to square with the Farrakhanites' claim that the KKK and the Jews were a mutual admiration society.³⁶

Frank's trial and lynching—which precipitated the founding of the Anti-Defamation League—was a fire bell in the night for both Jews and African Americans. It showed the terrible results that were likely to occur if the two groups failed to learn to work together for civil rights. Of course, Farrakhan's camp interprets it differently. They cheer Frank's lynching, which they justify with the tongue-in-cheek argument that, at least he received a trial, unlike many black victims of lynchings. In fact, it's impossible to suspect that—one pogrom wasn't enough for Farrakhan's followers—who seem to be sorry that more Jews were not been lynched.³⁷

One must remember that the real "secret relationship" occurred in the early 1960s when representatives of Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam, including Malcolm X, met with representatives of the Ku Klux Klan and American Nazi Fuhrer George Lincoln Rockwell. They were seeking a common strategy to re-segregate America. This objective—to turn back the race relations clock to 1913—is still the goal of Louis Farrakhan, whether or not he admits it. Volume

2 of *The Secret Relationship* is a malignant attempt to destroy the Black-Jewish alliance that has contributed to so much civil rights progress since then.³⁸

Conclusion

The first volume of Farrakhan's *Secret Relationship* (published in 1991) took up where Henry Ford's *The International Jew* left off seventy years before. Ford, within a decade, was forced to repudiate his handiwork after revelations that it was based on *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, an anti-Semitic forgery by the Czar's secret police. Yet despite refutations, Farrakhan continues to regurgitate and embroider upon the same old libels.³⁹

What seems to gall Farrakhan most is not the sins committed by a relative handful of American Jews decades before the massive Jewish exodus from Eastern Europe to America began. Rather, it's the *good deeds* done by Jews in the context of the modern civil rights movement. Jews were 3 percent of the U.S. population in the 1960s; yet as much as two thirds of the Northern white college students who put their lives on their line during Mississippi Freedom Summer in 1964 were Jews. Rather than admit that they were motivated by altruism or enlightened self-interest or both in combination, Farrakhan is obsessed with "proving" they were really engineers of an insidious conspiracy to "brainwash" African Americans into believing that integration was really an achievable goal in America. All the African American success stories since the 1960s—culminating in Barack Obama's election with 78 percent of the American Jewish vote—matter not one whit to Farrakhan whose hatred of whites, and Jews in particular, is impervious to reality or progress.⁴⁰

In New Orleans exactly 100 years before Obama's election, young Louis Armstrong bought his first cornet with money he made doing odd jobs for an immigrant Jewish family of junk haulers of whom he subsequently wrote: "I was only seven years old but I could easily see the ungodly treatment that the White Folks were handing the poor Jewish family whom I worked for." Later, he wore in remembrance of the Karnofskys' kindness a Star of David pendant given him by his longtime manager and friend, Joe Glaser. No doubt Farrakhan would consider the Star of David around the jazz great's neck as just another insignia of slavery. But then—as a musician and a man—Louis Farrakhan has never measured up to Louis Armstrong.⁴¹

Louis Farrakhan had his chance for redemption at the Million Man March on Washington in 1995. Rather than seize it, he squandered it by regaling a national audience with three hours of anti-Masonic conspiracy theories larded with mystical numerology. His Nation of Islam never carried through on the March's promise of a grassroots movement to strengthen families and restore personal responsibility. Today, with the NOI largely an empty shell, Malik "Zulu" Shabazz of the extremist New Black Panther Party waits impatiently to assume the failing

Farrakhan's demagogic mantle without understanding that for African American leaders anti-Semitism remains what it has always been: a dead end.⁴²

Both volumes of *The Secret Relationship* are road signs destined to lead the historically naïve to that dead end.

NOTES

¹ Andreas Dorpollen, *Heinrich von Treitschke* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957); Robert S. Wistrich, *A Lethal Obsession: Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad* (New York: Random House, 2010), pp. 879-929.

² "Poll: 31% of Europeans Blame Jews for Global Financial Crisis," *Haaretz*, October 2, 2009, <<http://www.haaretz.com/jewish-world/news/poll-31-of-europeans-blame-jews-for-global-financial-crisis-1.269834>>; Robert Singh, *The Farrakhan Phenomenon: Race, Reaction, and the Paranoid Style in American Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2007).

³ Seymour Drescher, "The Role of Jews in the Transatlantic Slave Trade," in Maurianne Adams and John Bracey, eds., *Strangers and Neighbors: Relations between Blacks and Jews in the United States* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), pp. 105-15; Saul S. Friedman, *Jews and the American Slave Trade* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1998); Eli Faber, *Jews and the Slave Trade: Setting the Record Straight* (New York: New York University Press, 1998). Harold Brackman's *Farrakhan's Reign of Historical Error* (Simon Wiesenthal Center, 1992) is now available under the title *Ministry of Lies: The Truth Behind The Nation of Islam's "The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews"* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1994).

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