



Jews and the American Slave Trade

Saul S. Friedman

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The Nation of Islam's *Secret Relationship between Blacks and Jews* has been called one of the most serious anti-Semitic manuscripts published in years. This work of so-called scholars received great celebrity from individuals like Louis Farrakhan, Leonard Jeffries, and Khalid Abdul Muhammed who used the document to claim that Jews dominated both transatlantic and antebellum South slave trades. As Saul Friedman definitively documents in *Jews and the American Slave Trade*, historical evidence suggests that Jews played a minimal role in the transatlantic, South American, Caribbean, and antebellum slave trades.

Jews and the American Slave Trade dissects the questionable historical technique employed in *Secret Relationship*, offers a detailed response to Farrakhan's charges, and analyzes the impetus behind these charges. He begins with in-depth discussion of the attitudes of ancient peoples, Africans, Arabs, and Jews toward slavery and explores the Jewish role in colonial European economic life from the Age of Discovery to Napoleon. His state-by-state analyses describe in detail the institution of slavery in North America from colonial New England to Louisiana. Friedman elucidates the role of American Jews toward the great nineteenth-century moral debate, the positions they took, and explains what shattered the alliance between these two vulnerable minority groups in America.

Rooted in incontrovertible historical evidence, provocative without being incendiary, *Jews and the American Slave Trade* demonstrates that the anti-slavery tradition rooted in the Old Testament translated into powerful prohibitions with respect to any involvement in the slave trade. This brilliant exploration will be of interest to scholars of modern Jewish history, African-American studies, American Jewish history, U.S. history, and minority studies.

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