

Robbing the Jews: The Antisemitic Roots of the Nation of Islam's Belief System

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Abstract

Scholars and commentators generally fail to recognize the antisemitic tropes, pronouncements, and claims of Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam (NOI) as interlocking parts of an antisemitic, supersessionist theology to which the Nation's members have always adhered. This article closely analyzes the NOI belief system, showing that the delegitimization of Judaism has always been at its core. Farrakhan, who identifies as "the lone Messenger of God," preaches that the "white Jews" have been "the enemies of God," the servants of Satan, for the last 4,000 years. He charges them with crafting a "counterfeit Torah" that appropriated the Blacks' birthright and sanctified the Jews' mission not only to conquer the world but also, above all, to subjugate the Black nation. Farrakhan discloses that he has come to earth to reveal this Truth and to announce that the white Jews' "time is up": their "world is through." This article shows how, from the mid-1980s through the early 21st century, prominent broadcast journalists, alternately charmed and confused by Farrakhan, failed to illuminate the nature of the antisemitic ideology he embraces and the "religious war" he endlessly promotes.

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Introduction

For the last 40 years, Jewish organizations have repeatedly labeled Louis Farrakhan, head of the Nation of Islam (NOI) since 1977, America's leading anti-Semite, even as they have, for the most part, failed to identify the core of his (and the NOI's) antisemitic ideology and the reasons for his wide appeal. To be sure, Farrakhan vehemently denies he is antisemitic, even though, as he insists, Jews have been Blacks' worst enemy for the last 4,000 years. He explains that Jewish groups have simply affixed the scarlet letter "A" for anti-Semite on every effective Black leader to cripple him (Newman, 2015). The "real anti-Semites," he teaches, are the Jews in "Palestine," who victimize the Arabs of Palestine, the true Semites (Farrakhan, 2007).

Commentators, including faculty, at the schools at which Farrakhan or other NOI ministers speak, have often joined the effort to obscure their antisemitism. They have assured their campus communities that the students who waited on line for three hours as the Fruit of Islam (the security arm of the NOI) searched each one, and then repeatedly cheered the speaker and purchased the antisemitic literature on display, had come to hear, and applauded only a narrative of "Black uplift" (Pollack, 2011). Whether intentional or not, this characterization – this spin – was far from accurate. The central message of the NOI has always been that uplift means release from the iron grip – or the tentacles – of Jews. As Farrakhan and his surrogates have informed their rapt audiences, the Jews' great success in America (and Israel) has been achieved *only* by sucking the blood of Blacks. Or as Farrakhan (2005) declaims, "Jewish people don't have no hands that are free of the blood of us."

From its beginnings in the 1930s,¹ the NOI crafted a new racialized form of the world's oldest hatred. According to Elijah Muhammad, who led the Nation from 1933 until his death in 1975, the NOI was founded by "Allah in person [...] who came under disguise in the person of Master W. D. [Fard] Muhammad" and "revealed Himself and His purpose to me" (Rhea, 1959). Fard Muhammad, the "Savior [...] of the Negro," was born in 1877, the year the last of the United States Army troops were withdrawn from the states of the old Confederacy, in effect, abandoning the freed slaves to their former masters. It was Fard who conveyed to Elijah, whom he designated his "Messenger," the theological narrative to which the NOI has adhered rigorously ever since. Fard explained that unlike

Black people, who had been "naturally" created by Allah, the white race, which had been "artificially" formed by an evil scientist 6,000 years ago ("in 4004 BC"), was inherently "evil," each white person a "liar and a murderer by nature" (E. Muhammad, 1956b). At the core of Fard's account, however, were the nefarious white *Jews*, who, "from the first day [...] [they] received the Divine Scriptures" 4,000 years ago, soon after they had emerged "naked [from] the caves and hillsides of Europe [...] started tampering with its truth," "converting the Bible [into] the graveyard of my poor people, the so-called Negroes" (E. Muhammad, 1956a).

The NOI's foundational creed stressed that having thereby rejected God, the Jews were destined to serve as the main handmaidens of Satan for the next 4,000 years. Indeed, Farrakhan boasts of having "deciphered the [real] meaning" of the Star of David, with its "6 sides [...] 6 angles [...] each angle 60 degrees [...] Well, you have 6, 6, and 6. So the Bible says, 'Count the number of the beast [...] 600, 3 score, and 6'" (Farrakhan, 2010d). Thus, the Star of David is the symbol of Satan – whose number is 666 – which the white Jews adopted once they became his agents. As Satan's primary agents, from their earliest years, the white Jews were driven not only to rule the world, but, above all, to subjugate and bleed Black people. Drawing on the principles and methods inscribed in their counterfeit Torah – and elaborated on in the Talmud – the white Jews developed racial slavery, becoming what Farrakhan (2010e) identifies as the "architects of White Supremacy" and its main enforcers. According to the NOI, all the wealth of American Jews – or often, all Jews – has been stripped from Black people. Indeed, the NOI traces all the travails of African Americans to the white Jews. Addressing a cheering, screaming audience of African Americans, Farrakhan rails that the Jews are a "Nation of devils. [And] you under the rule of maker – made by Jews into devils. That's why they don't want me to talk" (Farrakhan, 1985).

America's "Most Popular Antisemite"

In December 2018, when three of the cochairs of the Women's March on Washington D.C. (held each January since 2017 to demonstrate opposition to the presidency of

Donald Trump) were revealed to have ties to Farrakhan, it became hard to deny the nature of his appeal. At organizing meetings, several cochairs had explained, quoting from *his* bible, that they were only against "white Jews," and this was leaked to the press. Indeed, after attending the NOI's 2018 Saviour's Day commemoration of the birth of their founder Fard Muhammad – whom they revere as the Mahdi, who "spoke 16 languages and wrote 10," including the language of the people on Mars (Farrakhan, 2019c) – Tamika Mallory, one of the cochairs, had posted a photo of herself on Instagram along with praise for Farrakhan, who had delivered the event's three-hour oration, as a "GOAT": the "Greatest of All Time" (Page, 2018). Mallory acknowledged that she had attended Farrakhan's Saviour's Day addresses for the last 30 years, but it was her tweet after this commemoration that exposed the antisemitic core of his appeal, as she warned, "If *your* leader does not have the same enemies as Jesus, they [sic] may not be THE leader!" (Pagano, 2018). Apparently, Farrakhan, Jesus – and Mallory – shared the same enemy: the "white Jews." The tweet elicited an uproar, albeit brief, led largely by Jewish women activists who were organizers of parallel marches around the country. Farrakhan dismissed the tumult as merely a power play by Jews seeking to replace the Black cochairs of the upcoming Women's March – because Judaism teaches that non-Jewish women "are chattel" (Farrakhan, 2019c). Farrakhan's comments evoked little response, and the turmoil soon subsided. Others resorted to the maxim "Racism equals prejudice plus power" (Pagano, 2018) to deny that the three cochairs could be antisemitic – as women of color, by definition, they lacked power.

Yet, despite attempts by Jewish organizations over the years to limit his influence, Farrakhan has remained America's "most popular antisemite," who routinely fills 10,000-seat arenas (ADL, 2018). As he boasts, "There's not a black organization in America that I have not been invited to address, and have addressed – not one" (Farrakhan, 2019c). In 2005, the Congressional Black Caucus asked Farrakhan to participate in its "legislative weekend," where the now infamous photo was taken of him with then-Senator Obama. The year before, he addressed the National Black Agenda Convention. And in 2015, according to Farrakhan, then-Congressman Keith Ellison, who would soon be chosen deputy chair of the Democratic National Committee, conferred with him in his hotel upon the twentieth anniversary of the Million Man March (Muhammad & Muhammad, 2018).

When Facebook finally banned Farrakhan from its platform in May 2019, a number of Black celebrities blasted Mark Zuckerberg, its (Jewish) CEO, observing, "We already know where *he's* coming from!" And none of them acknowledged Farrakhan's antisemitism. In an Instagram post that went viral, the rapper Snoop Dogg complained, "All he ever do is tell the truth. But y'all gonna ban him [...] For putting truth out there [...] Ban me, mother-fucker!" The rapper Scarface concluded, "They want to keep us in the dark and blinded. I get it, because Minister Farrakhan opens a lot of eyes." Even the president of Martin Luther King Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Dr. Charles Steel Jr., declaimed, Farrakhan is "not a man of hate [...] He's not been recognized in the way he should have in terms of his love for humanity, and I think that says it all" (R. B. Muhammad et al., 2019).

Beginning in the mid-1980s, the mainstream media enabled Farrakhan, albeit unwittingly, to extend the reach of his anti-Semitic message. Leading broadcasters invited Farrakhan to share their platform after 20,000 African Americans turned out on October 16, 1985 to hear his address at Madison Square Garden in New York City. There the crowd responded to each anti-Semitic charge, delivered by Farrakhan and those who introduced him, by "rising to its feet, cheering, arms outstretched at 45-degree angles, fists clenched." And there Farrakhan warned ominously, "I am your last chance [...] Jews," it will be too late "when God puts you in the oven." Farrakhan later claimed that it was at this time, when, with him as their guide, the aroused black masses began to recognize their oppressor, that the crafty Satanic Jews introduced crack cocaine, their weapon of mass Black destruction, into the ghetto (Pollack, 2020). The broadcast media also provided the means to broaden his reach upon the publication in 1991 of the screed, *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews*, anonymously authored by the Historical Research Department of the NOI, which attributed "monumental culpability" for the Atlantic slave trade to Jews. In fact, Jews had only a "very marginal place" in the slave trade, and David Brion Davis, a leading historian of slavery, characterized the volume as "the extreme example of anti-Semitic accusations masquerading as a documented history of Jewish involvement in the slave trade." Still, NOI ministers now made their charges while shouting, "It's right here in the book!" (Davis, 1994; Pollack, 2008). Broadcasters continued to provide Farrakhan

with an additional pulpit when the Million Man March (October 16, 1995), which the NOI organized, drew far more participants (c. 600,000) than the March on Washington (August 28, 1963), at which Martin Luther King Jr. had delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech (c. 250,000). As the NOI distributed masses of anti-Semitic tracts and Marion Barry, the mayor of Washington, announced, "The vision for the Million Man March came from God Himself," the crowd chanted, "We want Farrakhan!" The event culminated in what some dubbed his two-hour coronation speech (Pollack, 2018). Notably, 87% of those in attendance had no difficulty overlooking Farrakhan's obsessive anti-Semitism, reporting that they had only "a favorable impression" of him (*Washington Post*, October 17, 1995).²

Dismissing protests, the National Press Club several times lent Farrakhan its prestige and platform, from which he raged against "the Synagogue of Satan" (Farrakhan, 2004). On television news programs and talk shows, seasoned journalists were inordinately deferential, allowing the NOI leader to expound at length, uninterrupted, as he leveled libelous charges against "the Jews." Although Barbara Walters had been briefed on how to discredit the NOI claim that Jews dominated the Atlantic slave trade, when Farrakhan appeared on her show, she only asked lamely if the Jews of today were responsible for the sins of their ancestors (Walters, 1994a, 1994b). In 1995, when the *Donahue Show* featured Tony Martin, a professor of Africana Studies at Wellesley College, who assigned *The Secret Relationship* as the text in his classes, the trailer for the program, played again and again, pictured only an African American declaring that when she heard about Jews and the slave trade, she knew it was true because wherever there is money, there are Jews. Martin ran circles around the ill-prepared Donahue (Pollack, 2008). Even Mike Wallace proved no match for Farrakhan. Determined to press Farrakhan about his distinction between "good Jews" and "Satanic Jews," Wallace challenged him: "What constitutes a good Jew? Give me a list of a half a dozen of good Jews," to which Farrakhan replied, "Ah no, no, no, only God knows who the good are" (Wallace, 1996). Once again, Farrakhan had won the day. His appearance on the Evans and Novak talk show was nothing short of a lovefest (Evans & Novak, 1997). Interviewed for the third time on *Meet the Press* (1998), Farrakhan, unchallenged by a sycophantic Tim Russert, announced that Jews "are the greatest controllers of black minds, black intelligence,"

that it was the Jews who "put us [blacks] before the world as clowns and as purveyors of filth," and on and on (Pollack, 1998). Clearly, the leading broadcast journalists were unwilling, or unprepared, to systematically confront a Black leader with a large following – even an anti-Semitic one.

At this point, Farrakhan's cancer, which had been in remission, returned and he disappeared from the mainstream media. Farrakhan later announced that he had been hobbled not by the disease, but by the "cure." He explained that he had been treated "at a clinic [near] CIA headquarters," where the "white Jews" or their agents inserted "180 [...] radiated seeds" into his body. "They burnt up my insides [...] half my organs are gone – but I'm still here." "They were [so] sure that I would not survive," he added, that the (Jewish-controlled) media "had written my obituary." The Jews had tried to kill him, he continued, because, with the Talmud as their guide, they knew the way to determine "that you are really from God [is to] poison you, and if you [...] remain alive, that [...] is the witness that you are from God." Thus, in the 7th century when the Jews fed Muhammad "lamb laced with poison [...] the Prophet was ill [...] but he survived." "So, if [...] you know I'm alive – then what should that tell you about who I am!" (Pollack, 2020a).

None of Farrakhan's gentle interlocutors had recognized or posed trenchant questions about the nature of the ideology that shaped his relentless conflict with the Jews. Yet the numerous lectures (sermons, really) that he delivered to massive, riveted audiences of African Americans invariably focused on the idea that he, and they, were positioned on the frontlines of a *religious* war against "the enemies of God" – the Satanic Jews. In 2019, Farrakhan announced that the last battle was approaching, and he promised the Jews, "You finished today, Satan." Addressing what he perceived as the reservations of some of his listeners, he explained, "Some of you say, 'I like Farrakhan, but he seems obsessed with [...] the Jewish community.' I am. But [...] the reason [...] is because *you*" – he points at the audience – "*you* love them, not knowing that you in love with Satan himself," eliciting wild applause (Farrakhan, 2019c).

Farrakhan as the "New Jesus"

A dominant theme of Farrakhan's speeches is his claim to have direct knowledge about the true identity of the Jews, because he is "the lone Messenger of God" or, as he recently divulged to massive rapt audiences in Chicago, because he is Jesus. At times, he seems reluctant to acknowledge it: "You mentioned the minister as your Jesus [...] I didn't say you were wrong" – here he was interrupted by deafening applause – "but you can't hit people in the head with the powerful truth." Nevertheless, later in the speech, he embraced his identity: "I represent the Jesus and I am *that* Jesus [...] If I am not, take my life!" As it was with the original Jesus, so it is with Farrakhan: "Every day they [the Jews] are after me [...] For which of my good works do you stone me?" He confides, "I wasn't auditioning for the role of Jesus [...] [but] my teacher kept calling me, 'Come, come, come, come.' Now I found out that the cross is for me [...] I'm being hoisted up on a cross" (Farrakhan, 2019a, 2019c).

Farrakhan expounded on his relationship to the original Jesus and on why he has reemerged now. He explained that Jesus understood that he "died because he [lived] 2,000 years too soon to bring about the end of the civilization of the Jews." Thus Jesus "decided that he would give [up] his life [...] [certain] that his name would live until the one that he prefigured" – Farrakhan – appeared. Farrakhan then set the scene for the death of the Savior: he was stabbed by a Roman soldier, who wanted the \$2,500 bounty if he "brought him in dead" – it was only \$1,500 if he were taken alive. Notably, this momentous event did not take place on Calvary but "in front of an old Jewish store [...] I don't know why the Jews had the store open on Saturday [...] supposed to have been their Sabbath – [but] they don't give a damn about no Sabbath when it comes to making money" (Farrakhan, 2019c). Although Jesus's body was "embalmed to last 10,000 years," he has reappeared now because "masses of the people are awakening all over the world," and as a result "Satan [the Jews] is very angry" (Farrakhan, 2019a, 2019c). And "God wants to free you from the grip of Satan, that we may build a righteous world" (Farrakhan, 2019b).

By identifying and associating himself with Jesus, Farrakhan's teaching resonated strongly not only with numerous African American Christians, but with many NOI members. Raised in the church by single mothers, the NOI members had become

estranged from the religion when they concluded that its savior had ignored the plight of Black people. As one member confided, the NOI "won me back to Almighty God again" (K. Muhammad, 1985). When Farrakhan informs his audience, "You are the brother of Jesus," who was "a Black man" with "hair like lambswool and feet like burnished brass," sometimes revealing that he was also a Muslim, the response is visceral, with many jumping up and down and cheering wildly (Farrakhan, 1990). The fevered reaction is sustained when Farrakhan points out that, as was the case with the earlier Jesus, when he preaches, "The deaf hear, the dumb speak, the lame walk" (Farrakhan, 2019c).

In identifying himself as Jesus incarnate, Farrakhan dwells mainly on the parallels between Jesus's lethal conflict with the Jews and his own. He reminds his awed listeners that "the Scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees – the Jews of his day" – had become Jesus's eternal enemy when *he* revealed the Truth about them, and now that *Farrakhan* is exposing "the evil [...] [they have] done to *us* as a people [...] this man that you're looking at is a marked man" (Farrakhan, 2019a). When he then challenges his audience to "name me one preacher in America that has talked to the Jews like I do," they roar, "None!" Shouting in response, Farrakhan informs them that, like the original Jesus, "I offered my life if they [the Jews] could find one word of my [...] teaching that is a lie. [Like Jesus,] I'm willing to die to see our people free. Prove that I have lied to my people! Prove that I'm an anti-Semite! [...] Prove it!" (Farrakhan, 2019c). To be sure, many have disproved his claims that the Jews dominated the slave trade, invented racism, created the hole in the ozone layer, injected Black babies with AIDS, that the Elders of Zion drew up the *Protocols*, and more – but he is never deterred.

Frequently citing Christian scripture, Farrakhan stresses that his war with the Satanic Jews is approaching its final hour. This is *the Final Call* – not coincidentally, the name of the NOI newspaper. Farrakhan assures his massive audiences that "Satan is going down, and I'm here to say, 'Your time is up; your world is through'" (Farrakhan, 2018). Evidence of the approaching end of the civilization the Jews created surrounds them. "Every day the weather's getting worse and worse." Glaciers are melting, the seas are rising, "the coasts are gonna be flooded. You heard it first here. Now watch the news bear witness that [...] a man taught by God is telling you things that *are* and things *to come!*" He closes by screaming, "Allah Akbar!" (Farrakhan, 2019a).

"Imposter Jews"

Armed with the knowledge and methods provided by the Mahdi, the NOI has been waging a war targeting "the wicked Jews" – and Judaism itself. From Fard to Farrakhan, the NOI formulated and preaches a supersessionist theology – a racialized monotheism – which, they are certain, reveals the Satanic roots of the belief system of those who "call themselves Jews": "the Imposter Jews," the white Jews (R.A.M. Muhammad, 2013). Although in the late 19th century, as religious belief waned in Western Europe, anti-Semites, determined to keep Jew-hatred alive, delineated a secularized form of the virus, the NOI has restored its theological origins, albeit with a new racial twist. And where Christianity long tied Jews' singular power, intellect, and evil to their pact with Satan, for the NOI, the "Synagogue of Satan" has always been obsessed, above all, with subjugating and bleeding the Black people, especially African Americans. The Jews' evil genius, the cunning intellect they share with Satan, is deployed in an unrelenting effort to exploit *them*. Nazis taught that the Jews were bent on dominating Aryans, but the NOI's reading of Jews' sacred texts revealed that their focus was always on Blacks. Indeed, it was through such textual analysis that Farrakhan uncovered that their belief system has always revolved around *Jewish* supremacy, more than *white* supremacy (Norwood & Pollack, 2020).

Still, even when confronted directly with the NOI's denunciations of those they call "modern-day Scribes and Pharisees," interviewers failed to recognize that they were waging a battle to delegitimize Judaism – the religion of the "so-called Jews" (R.A.M. Muhammad, 2013). In 1984, broadcasters played and replayed the audiotape of Farrakhan screaming, "Now that nation called Israel never has had any peace in 40 years and she will never have any peace – because there can *be* no peace structured on injustice, thievery, lying and deceit, and using the name of God to shield your gutter religion." But the questions that followed focused strictly on Farrakhan's insistence that "I never used the word 'gutter.' I use the word 'dirty'" (Freeman, 1984); he was adamant that he said "dirty religion" because those were Elijah Muhammad's words, conveyed by the Mahdi. Journalists' confusion only increased when he emphasized, "I never said Judaism," adding, "I am prepared to offer \$100,000 and my life if [...] anyone can examine that tape and come up with the fact that I said 'Judaism is a gutter religion'" (Freeman, 1984).

Interviewers missed the crucial point. They failed to recognize that Farrakhan and the NOI taught that those whom they, and the world, have always considered Jews are only the "false Jews," who worship a false god and adhere to a falsified text – to a bogus Judaism. As Farrakhan has stressed to his audiences again and again, they "are Satan, *masquerading* as a covenanted people of God – [who] must be exposed" (Farrakhan, 2014). He asks, "You [...] think that those who refer to themselves as Jews are the real Children of Israel? No. You have made a real *theological* mistake" (Farrakhan, 2013). Informed by the Qur'an, Farrakhan and the NOI had learned that soon after receiving the Torah, "a party from among the Jews [...] heard it, understood it, then [intentionally] altered it," radically changing the "testimony from Almighty God" (Farrakhan, 1985). Applying its own racial spin to the Islamic paradigm, the NOI added that these Jews, "the white Jews," had expressly structured the counterfeit text around "thievery, lying and deceit" as the means to rob *Black* people of the promise of God (Freeman, 1984). Convinced that the NOI alone recognizes the origins and true nature of what the so-called Jews call the Torah, Farrakhan has repeatedly challenged "the Board of Rabbis in any city in America" to a debate (Wallace, 1996). Notably, Farrakhan and the NOI's claims about Jews' supposed acts of oppression of Blacks are often based more on extrapolations from their understanding of the altered sacred texts than on any facts on the ground. For the NOI, believing is seeing.

Indeed, in April 1984, when an interviewer informed the NOI leader that she had just been notified that the U.S. Senate had passed a resolution repudiating "the sentiments and expressions of hatred made by Mr. Farrakhan" by a 95–0 vote, he responded by repudiating the Senate. After all, he explained, "My repudiation of the Senate carries more weight *with God* than the Senate's repudiation of me [...] I warned the Senate and I warned the government [...] My voice is the voice of God in your midst and you are doing to me just what you did to all the prophets [...] before me [...] The Roman Senate repudiated [Jesus], but today you worship him. What will you do for *me* tomorrow?" (Freeman, 1984).

Through their singular exegesis of the Bible, the NOI discovered – and Farrakhan teaches – that they had discerned the origins of the perfidy of the Jews, and the trajectory of their relentless oppression of Blacks. They trace the beginnings of the arc of injustice to the book of Genesis, when Rebecca, the wife of Isaac, is told that "two *nations* are

within your womb [...] two *manner of people* shall be separated from that bowels." As Farrakhan explains, Esau is the first to emerge, and so "the birthright falls on [him]," but Jacob immediately begins scheming to steal it. The plot culminates when Isaac is nearing death, and Rebecca conspires with Jacob to secure the birthright for him. She dresses Jacob in Esau's garments and covers his hands with hair, so he would be mistaken for his "older," hirsute sibling; she even provides him with the venison her husband had requested of Esau. Given Isaac's failing sight, the ruse succeeds, and he bestows his blessing on Jacob, promising that he will "*rule* the nations. They all will be your servants." When Esau, the firstborn, finally arrives and the deception is exposed, it is too late, and Isaac can only inform his elder, albeit stronger, son that henceforth, "You gonna have to serve your [younger, weaker] brother" until it will come to pass when "the yoke of your brother will be broken" (Farrakhan, 2010b).

Instructed by the Mahdi, that is, by God himself, the NOI understood that Esau, the older, stronger son, represented the Black Nation – Original Man – who had thrived without sin or disease for millions of years before the evil genius Yakub, whose name Jacob would bear, created the white race. Thus, it was the Black Nation – Original Man – the firstborn, who was the authentic Chosen People of God, and it was Jacob, the progenitor of "the white Jews," who contrived to steal the Black Nation's birthright and has "hidden [this] from the world" (A. Muhammad, 2010). While Christianity taught that Jews *lost* their status as the Chosen as punishment for their disobedience to God, the NOI discovered that the Jews were *never* the Chosen at all. It was Jacob, the "master deceiver," patriarch of the "so-called Jews," who initiated the corruption of the Torah out of his overweening drive "to rule" – to "enslave," not to serve – the nations (E. Muhammad, 1959). Jacob even cunningly substituted Satan for God, who would bless his treachery and "wicked" designs; hence, the "gutter," or "dirty" religion. And when Jacob wrestled with the angel and the angel told him, "Your name shall no longer be [...] Jacob [...] [you] shall be known as Israel," Farrakhan divulged that Israel means "the supplanter," the usurper, one who takes "by devious [...] means [...] something that don't belong to you" (Farrakhan, 2010c). After all, the white Jews had stolen the birthright of the Black Nation. "The Holy Land don't belong to [...] a white Jew." "Abraham [...] ain't promised you a damn thing!" he shouts at the so-called Jew

(Farrakhan, 2017b; Kelly, 2017). Certain the NOI received "the invincible truth," he challenges any scholar to a debate (A. Muhammad, 2010).

Conclusions: Robbing the Jews' Foundation Text

For the NOI, the release of Blacks from Jacob's clutches requires not only the erasure – and arrogation – of Jews' status as the Chosen and the dispossession of Zion, but also the appropriation of their foundation narrative. The NOI maintains that the bulk of the biblical accounts of the history of the Jews is *not* about Jews at all. They are, instead, prophecies about Black people – for the most part, the Blacks of the United States. They reached this conclusion because Fard Muhammad, the Mahdi, had chosen Detroit as his destiny, traveling "9,000 miles" from Mecca to reach the African Americans. In reality, the distance he traversed was shorter – he had come from San Quentin, the maximum-security prison in California. Thus, no Jews, or forebears of Jews, had ever been "in bondage in Egypt." This was only an "outlandish claim" "put over [...] by a smart, crooked deceiver" (Farrakhan, 2010a; J. Muhammad, 2012). The biblical tale only foretold that Black people, not Jews, would be enslaved "in a strange land, among strange people, being afflicted in this country, for 400 years;" it is not "Moses [...] [who] warned Pharaoh of Jehovah's anger," but Farrakhan who warns the Jews to let his people go (Freeman, 1984).

Having learned from the Torah the duration of their bondage, the NOI dates African American enslavement from 1555, when Blacks allegedly first landed at Jamestown, to 1955, when Farrakhan, then age 21, arrived – landed – at his first NOI meeting. When Farrakhan at last learned that Jamestown was not founded until 1607 and that blacks first disembarked there in 1619, he resolved the discrepancy by observing that it had taken "64 years to break us from an African people of high civilization and intelligence [...] [and] make us completely savage, living the life of the beasts of the field" (Farrakhan, 2019c).

More important, the NOI had inferred from their study of the corrupted Torah that it was the "so-called Jewish community," driven to subjugate Black people, who "brought our fathers out of Africa, owned the slaves, owned the plantations, were the Number 1 buyers of slaves" (Farrakhan, 2019c). Moreover, the first Black Africans came

on "the ship of the notorious slave trader John Hawkins," which, the NOI contends, "was commissioned by Jews, supplied with African human cargo by Jews, and guided across the Atlantic by Jewish pilots, his African captives sold to Jewish buyers in the Caribbean" (T. Muhammad, 2018). Farrakhan adds that the clever Jews had even christened the ship "Jesus," but as soon as it left port, "they took the sign of 'Jesus' down and ran up the skull-and-crossbones" (Farrakhan, 2019c).

Similarly, Wesley Muhammad, a member of the NOI's Executive Council and Research Group, determined that the biblical saga in which Pharaoh, fearing "the children of Israel" were "multiplying" and might "become numerous [and] join unto an enemy and fight against us," and therefore "hatched a secret plot to keep the people of God [...] from increasing in number," was "not a tale of some ancient Egyptian conspiracy against some Jews 4,000 years ago" at all. It was only a prophecy about plots to keep African Americans from multiplying. Alerted by the Torah, the NOI uncovered that it is the "Jews [who] are the principal architects of the [U.S.] governmental plot to interfere with the reproductive habits and capabilities of the [true] People of God" (W. Muhammad, 2019). Indeed, Farrakhan converted the birth control advocate Margaret Sanger, of Irish-Catholic origins, who "didn't want black babies in the world," into a "so-called Jewish woman" (Farrakhan, 2019a).

According to Wesley Muhammad (2019), "Jewish genius" has also obstructed the growth of the Black population by "laying the foundation for the scientific production of homosexuality and transgenderism among black people." As Farrakhan explained, "Homosexuality can be produced through chemistry." And the Black man is now "being chemically programmed against [his] nature" (Farrakhan, 2017a, 2018). The "Synagogue of Satan" has developed a new grade of marijuana that, Wesley Muhammad (2019) asserts, was formulated expressly to "de-masculinize" and "feminize the black male in America." To Farrakhan, this is just the latest means by which so-called Jews have "made us [Blacks] unfit to be recognized as the People of God" (Farrakhan, 2019a).

Thus, it is through antisemitism – that all-purpose poison, now tinged with a strong racial hue – that the Nation of Islam exposes the Blacks' demonic oppressor and finds the promise to free the descendants of Esau – of Original Man – from 4,000 years of Jacob's satanic hold.

Notes

- 1 The NOI found its first adherents among Blacks who had recently migrated from the cotton fields of the Deep South into the large Midwestern cities, where they had found work – at best – as laborers or as unskilled workers in nonunionized industrial plants. Already disoriented, the Great Depression was particularly destabilizing and dispiriting, as they were among the first employees to be laid off.
- 2 President Clinton chose to be far from Washington D.C. on the day of the March, pointedly distancing himself from "one man's message of malice and division." But on August 31, 2018, at the funeral of Aretha Franklin, the "Queen of Soul," Clinton no longer found it necessary to separate himself from Farrakhan – and shared the dais with him (Pollack, 2018).

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