

# Son of a Slave

by Howard Rotberg



**Some folks know me as** a retired lawyer, having been very involved in my community.

Other folks may know me for my conversions of unwanted heritage buildings into affordable rental housing for modest income working people, in various cities – which was actual “social justice” work, rather than the “virtue-signalling” with other people’s money which seems to so prevalent today..

A somewhat larger group of folks in Canada and the United States and elsewhere may know me as the author of four books concerning ideologies, political culture and values. They may also know me as founding president of Mantua Books, Canada’s sole conservative values publishing house.

With all the talk these days about “systemic racism” and the current ideologies of cultural and moral relativism, and the effect on our schools and universities of “critical race theory” and doctrines such as “privilege” and

“intersectionality, and the increasing hostility to freedom of speech, I think that I have something to add to the current debate and protests, with their general hostility to western values.

My ancestors many years ago originated in the Middle East and then were exiled by the Romans, living for some years in southern Europe before being exiled again and ending up in Eastern Europe. In the Holocaust, my father's parents and then 8-year old little sister were murdered in the gas chambers. My father was 19 years old in 1939 and like many other Jews of his age was made into a slave labourer working in the industrial zone of Auschwitz concentration camp. Unlike American slaves who were purchased and then cared for with enough food to protect the slave-owner's investment, the Nazis did not feed their slaves but for a daily piece of bread and weak turnip soup. Eventually, if the slave got too weak to work, he or she would be sent to the gas chambers and would be replaced by some poor soul arriving to Auschwitz in cattle cars before the Nazis would decide which would die immediately and which seemed strong enough for slavery.

In the modern world, we have many different ways of looking at our identities.

White people are marching against racism towards Blacks and Blacks are forming alliances with Islamists who, strangely enough, were the group that sold blacks from Africa into slavery (and some in Africa still do, including the Islamist Toureg, so admired by Volkswagen that it named an SUV after them.)

Our fundamental freedoms and sense of personal responsibility are daily under attack. I think I have a good concept of my identity – hardworking Jewish Canadian lawyer and social justice real estate developer and intellectually and morally conservative author and publisher, proud father and grandfather, etc. But in these times, for me, one thing trumps

all:

I am the *son of a slave*.

The Black slavery in America ended not long after Abraham Lincoln emancipated the slaves and America went through a Civil War over this emancipation that resulted in a huge death toll. That was way back in the mid-1800s. After that came Reconstruction, which had only partial success and more lately in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Civil Rights Movement. Today, American Blacks take their places in every field of endeavour and are found in “elite” universities, the best law schools, the best medical schools and senior levels of government. But we are told that white people are racists and we have white privilege. Allegations of privilege have become a way to slander those who, like me, study hard, work hard, take responsibility and try to make the world a better place.

In Canada, some blacks are descended from those who arrived in Canada through the “underground railway”. with a small number arriving here after the American revolution or after the War of 1812. Today, most of our Blacks are descended from black slaves in the Caribbean who moved to Canada and England in search of better economic opportunities. Accordingly, most of our Blacks immigrated to Canada *willingly* and therein lies a big difference with the Blacks in America. And yet copycat protests with Black Lives Matter are numerous.

In Canada, therefore, those concerned about social justice, should focus more on injustices done to our Indigenous People who were here first. The tragedy of the Residential Schools is one that has been tempered with reparations and apologies – but too many northern Indigenous peoples live in dire conditions and too many in large cities carry with them problems of addiction and self-worth.

Most Americans and Canadians know all of this, but the Black Lives Matter protests seem not so much about history as about

current conditions in black poor neighbourhoods, in schools and prisons – and overall we see a culture in crisis. Some 73% of Black babies born in the U.S. are born to single mothers with no father to complete the family. George Floyd had fathered 5 children in Houston before he ran away for a “fresh start” in Minneapolis. Most black victims of crime are the victims other blacks. To me, the focus on police misconduct hides the real purpose of the protests and violent looting, which is to use the Black issues as a screen for the attempts to gain more *power* and so to destroy America as a constitutional republic and replace it with a communist or Islamist or globalist society.

The Left and the Islamists both share the tactic of trying to erase History. The Islamists say there was no Holocaust, no Jews were indigenous to Israel, and all facts prior to 1967 must be erased. The Left wants everything cancelled, taken down or renamed if it doesn't meet its view of identity politics, taking offence, or safe spaces. As reported in *Newsweek* on June 20, 2020, the great-grandson of the most recent woman to appear on boxes and bottles of Aunt Jemima products is angry that the virtue-signalling company making the product, Quaker Oats, is rebranding the product because some black people say it reminds them of slavery although this brand was established well after the end of slavery.

The great-grandson, Larnell Evans Sr., says that his great grandmother became the brand's representative and public relations person and toured the country for some 20 years, making pancakes at events. This great-grandson, a Marine Corps vet says: “This woman served all those people, and it was after slavery. She worked as Aunt Jemima. That was her job... How do you think I feel as a black man sitting here telling you about my family history they're trying to erase?”

I know how he feels. Prior to 1967, when I was 16 and trying to find out the information that my Dad preferred not to talk about – the death camps, the slavery, the genocidal anti-

Semitism, the murder of one million Jewish children by a supposedly western culture in Germany, I could not find any books or other publicly shared information. The main book about the war era then was Shirer's *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, and that was mainly a military and diplomatic history. When I got to university, I discovered that a few years prior the first comprehensive book in English, Raul Hillberg's *The Destruction of European Jewry* had been published. Soon books such as *The War Against the Jews: 1933-1945* by Lucy S. Davidowicz and many others began to appear in time for my curiosity.

Survivors were not encouraged to talk about what had happened and otherwise good people in Canada and the United States perhaps felt too uncomfortable discussing the issues. My father did not talk about what happened to him, his family and friends until the late '80s after being hospitalized with depression. American Jews who lionized FDR did not want to hear about his role in denying Jews refuge in America and thus allowing them to be murdered.

And so I, *the son of a slave*, know how Mr. Evans feels when History is a casualty of politics and culture.

America, or Canada for that matter, are not evil nations. That is why many people around the world want to move here, and not so many want to leave. To me, what is going on is mostly about *power*, The Leftist-Islamist-Globalist alliance has taken power in school curricula, in the Universities, and now sense the opportunity to use the George Floyd tragedy as a way to take political power, if not on the national level, then on the state and local level. The concept of defunding police is not so much a serious policy but a scare tactic, a domestic terrorism. When criminals take over the streets, just as supposed "protesters" and their violent, looting, colleagues have done, the resulting chaos will be useful for the Left as it creates the perfect conditions for a revolution to implement economic, political and cultural Marxism.

It all seems quite clear to me, maybe because I am the *son of a slave*.

Slavery was abolished by Congress in January of 1865 and ratified in December of 1865. Thus abolition constitutes the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

It is clear to me that poor black people are being played by both Blacks and Whites in the Left, who use them, like Sharpton and Jesse Jackson and now BLM do, to empower themselves, their political organizations and their leftist and Islamist allies. The racist anti-Semite Louis Farrakhan is tolerated by those who should know better.

Even the big tech corporations pour money into a loosely run, inadequately vetted organization like BLM for the usual virtue signalling, that helps the signaller more than the folks on the ground, living in gang-run Black ghettos. Soon, if the Democrats win the next election we shall likely see more “autonomous zones” where there is no law, no freedom, and the police are banned.

Just like during the Holocaust, no one wants to talk about some really important matters – poor Blacks are mostly killed or injured by other poor and culturally challenged Blacks, not by Whites. There is a pandemic in black neighbourhoods; drugs, guns and gangs rule, and then the Democrats come around every four years pretending to be their friends and work for their benefit.

We have spoken above of the real cultural crisis among poor and even middle-class Blacks, which is a crisis of morality. In the age of cultural relativism, we are not allowed to discuss issues like this.

It is 155 years since the end of slavery in America. It is time to stop using slavery as an excuse for immorality and crime. It is time, after all the affirmative action, all the

NGO sponsored programs, and after all the Black successes in overcoming historical racism to acknowledge that our *culture* is sympathetic to Blacks, in our entertainment, sports, music and affirmative action programs even if certain individuals are not. It is time for the universities and media to tell the truth about America and so help to strengthen positive values and moral cultures.

I know that a culture can be changed in one generation. I worry about how fast the Leftists, the Islamists and the Globalists and the extremist professors are succeeding in changing our culture of freedom and justice and personal responsibility- because we see historically that the first wave of those seeking totalitarianism and/or Communism are often killed by the more radical power-seekers that follow. I know that a culture based on Justice and Liberty, personal responsibility and morality, is best for all ethnicities and races, and that anyone with a history of slavery in his or her family should understand this better than anyone else. And I want to contribute to a respectful dialogue about the violence and left-wing flight from freedom.

Because I am the *son of a slave*.

**Howard Rotberg** is the author of four books on ideologies and values: *The Second Catastrophe: A Novel about a Book and its Author*; *Exploring Vancouverism: The Political Culture of Canada's Lotus Land*; *Tolerism: The Ideology Revealed*; and *The Ideological Path to Submission... and what we can do about it*. He writes periodically for *Frontpage Magazine*, *New English Review*, *Israel National News*, *Israpundit*, *Jewish Voice of New York* and *The National Telegraph*, and has written for other newspapers such as the *Vancouver Sun*, the *Vancouver Observer*, the *Waterloo Region Record*, the *Hamilton Spectator* and others. He is a retired lawyer and a developer of affordable rental housing in renovated heritage buildings for modest income

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