

“Slavery, the Left and Truth”

This article is from the “Edifying the Body” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website (churchofgodbigandy.com). It was posted for the week-end of April 29, 2023. (A version of the article was posted at townhall.com on April 18.)

By Dennis Prager

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—A generation of Americans is being raised on half-truths and lies about the history of slavery in America. They are given the impression that America was uniquely bad and that American slavery was uniquely bad. They learn nothing about slavery elsewhere. Among the many lies they are told are that “black slaves built America” and that America is systemically racist.

Since the mortal enemy of the Left is truth, here are some truths about slavery.

America’s slavery compared to slavery elsewhere

If you are interested in morality and committed to truth, you do not ask, “Who had slaves?” You ask, “Who ended slavery?”

■ Who had slaves?

Every civilization throughout history had slaves: Asian societies, Africans, Native Americans and other Indigenous peoples around the world, and the Muslim/Arab world, which may have the most slaves of all.

■ Who ended slavery?

There was only one thing unique about slavery in the West: It raised the issue of the morality of slavery, ferociously debated it and finally abolished it there, before it was abolished in any other civilization.

If you care about moral truth rather than, for example, promoting America-hatred, you must recognize—and you must teach—that America was one of the first slave-holding societies to abolish slavery.

This even includes Africa. Cornell professor Sandra Greene, a black scholar of African history, notes, “Slavery in the United States ended in 1865, but in West Africa it was not legally ended until 1875, and then it stretched on unofficially until almost World War I.”

■ The number of slaves

According to the authoritative SlaveVoyages.org, the total number of black slaves imported from Africa into America was 305,326.

The number of black slaves other countries imported from Africa into the rest of the New World (into the Caribbean and South America) was 12,521,337.

In other words, other countries imported 41 times the number of black slaves into the Western Hemisphere than the United States did (including the years before American independence).

Yet, the American Left never mentions this important moral point—because the Left-controlled education system suppresses facts it finds inconvenient, and the Left is not interested in morality or truth, but in vilifying America.

And then there is Arab/Muslim enslavement of blacks. Professor Paul Lovejoy, in his *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), reveals that, from the beginning of Islam in the 7th century through the year 1600, the estimated number of Africans enslaved by Muslims was about seven million. After 1600, it was about a million per year.

Do American students ever learn about the Arab/Muslim slave trade?

How many know, for example, that a great percentage of the African male slaves were castrated so that they could not have families?

“Black slaves built America”

This is another lie of the Left.

Those who make this argument point to the lucrative cotton manufacturing and trade in the 19th-century—the industry in which black slaves were primarily used in the American South.

But University of Illinois professor of economics Deirdre McCloskey answered this: “Growing cotton, unlike sugar or rice, never required slavery. By 1870, freedmen and whites produced as much cotton as the South produced in the slave time of 1860. Cotton was not a slave crop in India or in southwest China, where it was grown in bulk . . . That slaves produced cotton does not imply that they were essential or causal in the production . . . The United States and the United Kingdom and the rest would have become just as rich without the 250 years of unrequited toil. They have remained rich, observe, even after the peculiar institution was abolished, because their riches did not depend on its sinfulness.”

But one need not know anything about cotton to understand how false “black slaves built America” is. All you need is common sense.

■ First, even if slavery accounted for much of the wealth of the South, the Civil War, which brought slavery to an end in the United States, wiped out nearly all that wealth and cost the Union billions (in today’s dollars).

■ Second, if slavery built the American economy, the most robust economy in world history, why didn’t Brazil become an economic superpower? Brazil imported four million black slaves, about 12 times as many as America.

Why did the slave-owning American South lag so far behind the North economically?

Why did England (which, though it played a major role in the transatlantic slave trade until the beginning of the 19th century but had almost no slaves) become the most advanced economy of the 19th century?

“Black slaves built America” is left-wing propaganda to vilify America and to discredit capitalism.

“America is systemically racist”

This is the Great Left Lie.

Four million black people have emigrated to the United States since the 1960s—and tens of millions more would if they could.

Are they all fools?

Why would anyone move to a country that is systemically bigoted against them?

Did any Jews emigrate to Germany in the 1930s?

Blacks have emigrated to the United States because they know what Ayaan Hirsi Ali, the black woman who fled her homeland of Somalia and now writes and lectures in America, knows: “What the media do not tell you is that America is the best place on the planet to be black, female, gay, trans or what have you.”

Blacks emigrating to America know what Algerian writer Kamel Daoud, writing in *Le Monde* and *Le Point* knows: “It is forbidden to say that the West is also the place to which we flee when we want to escape the injustice of our country of origin, dictatorship, war, hunger, or simply boredom. It is fashionable to say that the West is guilty of everything.”

As regards American slavery and everything else, always remember this: Truth is a liberal value, and truth is a conservative value. It is not a left-wing value.”