

Fighting “The World’s Enigma:”  
The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, The International Jew,  
and the Rise of American Anti-Semitism

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## ABSTRACT

### Fighting “The World’s Enigma:” The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, The International Jew, and the Rise of American Anti-Semitism

A thesis presented to the Department of History

Graduate School of Arts and Sciences  
Brandeis University  
Waltham, Massachusetts

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Between May 22, 1920 and January 14, 1922, *The Dearborn Independent* published a series of anti-Semitic articles entitled “The International Jew.” The articles, warnings about Jewish control of nearly every facet of American life, were largely inspired by the themes of the infamous Eastern European forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. This thesis will examine *The International Jew*, comparing it to the older *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and analyze its influence on the creation of a distinctive American anti-Semitism before, during, and immediately following World War II. Utilizing primary sources in the form of the original printings of *The International Jew* and *The Protocols*, it will analyze the similarities and distinctive differences between the two documents. Further, memoirs, newspaper articles, and published propaganda materials are used in order to understand the popular reception of the documents, arguing that *The International Jew* was responsible for disseminating the ideas found in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to the broader American public by reactionary political and religious leaders of the early to mid-twentieth century.

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## Introduction

On Thursday March 8, 1923, the *Chicago Tribune* published an interview with the leader of a small nationalistic German group named Adolf Hitler. Within the article, the future Führer pledged his support for “Heinrich” Ford, a man whom Hitler saw as “the leader of the growing Fascisti movement in America.” Hitler highlighted Ford’s anti-Semitism as the source of his admiration to the automobile mogul, saying, “We have just had his anti-Jewish articles translated and published. The book is being circulated to millions throughout Germany.”<sup>1</sup>

The articles “Herr Hittler [*sic*]” referred to are collectively known as *The International Jew*. Originally serialized within Ford’s company newspaper the *Dearborn Independent* from May 22, 1920 until January 14, 1922, *The International Jew* seemingly rehashed Jewish stereotypes that had existed for centuries. The true source material for the articles, however, lies in the controversial *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the infamous anti-Semitic book foretelling of an international Jewish conspiracy aimed at world domination.

This thesis will study both the *Protocols* and *The International Jew*, comparing the documents to each other and examining their tremendous effect on the state of anti-Semitism within the United States. While the stereotypes of Jewish association with money, education, mass media, and other powerful organizations have existed for millennia, the *Protocols* officially codified anti-Semitic clichés into one single widely read, albeit unfocused and illogical, document. When Henry Ford discovered the *Protocols*, his newspaper efficiently simplified and

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond Fendrick, “‘Heinrich’ Ford Idol of Bavaria Fascisti Chief,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 8, 1923.

Americanized the material, thus bringing the image of the evil scheming Jew into the borders of the United States. This image spread rapidly in the decades after the initial publication thanks to anti-Semitic political and religious ideologies stirred by the Great Depression and World War II.

For this thesis, I have utilized specific versions of both *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and *The International Jew*. Depending on the source, the title of the first book has many variations, including *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, *The Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion*, and *The Protocols of the Meetings of the Learned Elders of Zion*. For consistency, this examination will refer to the work as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* or simply *The Protocols*. The version utilized in this analysis is a translation by Victor Marsden, an account Robert Singerman calls the “standard English Text,”<sup>2</sup> and was printed by the Christian Nationalist Crusade, a now defunct anti-Semitic organization. The version of *The International Jew* I utilized comes from the Forgotten Books Classic Reprint Series. This publication company uses technology to reproduce manuscripts of historic importance. All four volumes of *The International Jew* are a part of this series.

The secondary literature surrounding Henry Ford is vast. Contemporary accounts of Ford did not hide his rampant anti-Semitism. In his 1923 book *The New Henry Ford*, official biographer Allan Benson published candid quotations from the tycoon that suggested his Judeophobic prejudices survived his apologies and William C. Richards called Ford a “storm trooper, American style” in his 1948 biography *The Last Billionaire*.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps even more damning is the memoir of the head of Ford’s service department, Harry Bennett. His 1951 book *We Never Called Him Henry* paints the auto pioneer as an impressionable simpleton tainted by the bigotry of those around him.

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Singerman, *Antisemitic Propaganda: An Annotated Bibliography and Research Guide* (New York: Garland, 1982), 41.

<sup>3</sup> William C. Richards, *The Last Billionaire: Henry Ford* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1948), 87.

More recently, historians both professional and amateur have devoted many pages to the subject of Henry Ford's anti-Semitism. Neil Baldwin's *Henry Ford and the Jews* provides a comprehensive overview of Henry Ford's relationship with both Jews and bigots domestically and abroad. Many articles have also been written on the subject, highlighted by Leo Ribuffo's "Henry Ford and 'The International Jew.'"

The definitive history of anti-Semitism in the United States is Leonard Dinnerstein's *Antisemitism in America*, a tremendous work that stretches from 1607 until 1992. Other sources include Michael Berenbaum's anthology *Not Your Father's Anti-Semitism* and David Gerber's *Anti-Semitism in American History* collection.

## **Chapter I: The Protocols of the Elders of Zion**

*The weapons in our hands are limitless ambitions, burning greediness,  
merciless vengeance, hatreds, and malice – Protocol IX*

*The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is a short booklet outlining the plans for Jewish world domination. The titular “Elders” are made up of the most powerful Jews of the world; representatives come from world governments, the press, and the banking industry among others. The writing style of the booklet is unfocused, accusatory, and wholly illogical, but over the course of twenty-four “protocols,” the tome tells the story of the supposed Jewish plot to conquer the world. The first person tense of the book shows the Elders speaking in pejorative terms about non-Jews, frequently invoking the word “goyim” in a derogatory sense. This chapter will provide a summary of the twenty-four protocols. But first, to better understand and refute the allegations the *Protocols* presented, an understanding of their origins is necessary.

### **Origins**

While complete details about its origins are murky, scholars have determined that *The Protocols* were written in Eastern Europe as a response to liberalism and anti-Czarist sentiment. Norman Cohn suggested they were penned under the supervision of the Okhrana, the secret police force of Czarist Russia. The organization maintained a special office located in Paris, headed by an ultra-rightist man named Pyotr Rachkovsky, who utilized his position to quash anarchist Russian groups outside of Russia. One of the major ways he did this was through

forging documents. By writing fake editorials, letters, and pamphlets, Rachkovsky assumed the role of disillusioned revolutionaries; he provided an inside look at the inner workings of these radical groups and his writing often containing claims that Jews were the head of these terrorist organizations.<sup>4</sup>

While liberalism had always been a dirty word within the elites of Europe, Rachkovsky helped to connect Jews with the ideology. In 1892, he published an essay entitled *Anarchism and Nihilism*, a work that can be viewed as an outline for the *Protocols*. Here, he claimed that because of the French Revolution, the Jew had established himself as “governing by discrete means both monarchies and republics” throughout the world. When revolutionary activities intensified in Russia in 1905, Rachkovsky published pamphlets advocating violence against Jews, and he also founded the Union of the Russian People, an anti-Semitic league whose membership vastly increased during the troubles of the first two decades of the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup>

Actual authorship of the *Protocols* has been attributed to a Russian exile named Mathieu Golovinski, an expert forger living in Paris. Golovinski was commissioned by Rachkovsky to create a manifesto proving that the Jews were responsible for the revolutionary fever sweeping through Russia. Plagiarizing largely from a book called *The Dialogue in Hell Between Machiavelli and Montesquieu* by the mid-nineteenth century French satirist Maurice Joly, Golovinski successfully produced the work that became *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.<sup>6</sup>

*Reactions and Legacy*

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<sup>4</sup> Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide* (New York: Harper & Row, 2006), 86.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 88, 90.

<sup>6</sup> Will Eisner, *The Plot: The Secret Story of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 57-59.

Though the *Protocols* were released early in the twentieth century, they did not receive international prominence until the conclusion of World War I. Within Russia, however, the *Protocols* caused a sensation, particularly within the circle of the Romanovs. Nicholas II owned a heavily annotated copy of the book, reportedly writing, “Our year 1905 has gone as though managed by the Elders. There can be no doubt as to their authenticity.”<sup>7</sup> As it was disseminated through the world, many high-ranking government officials, including Winston Churchill, spoke of their belief in the Jewish conspiracy.<sup>8</sup>

Not long after the first publication of the *Protocols* in 1905, many dismissed the book as a hoax. This heterogeneous mix of Jews, Protestants, Catholics, government officials, and journalists discovered the textual similarities between the *Protocols* and other sources.<sup>9</sup> Philip Graves, the Constantinople correspondent for the London newspaper *The Times*, was among the first to actively write on the likeness of wording, sometimes verbatim, between the *Protocols* and Maurice Joly’s work, thus establishing the document as a forgery.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the almost immediate consensus that the document was a forgery, the *Protocols* have experienced a lasting impact in the world of anti-Semitism. Because of its immediate translation into every major language in the world, the *Protocols* have grown to become the most circulated anti-Semitic text of all time. In its heyday of the early twentieth century, the writing was popular in areas that had sizable Jewish populations such as Poland and Russia and even those that had virtually no Jews, such as China and Japan.<sup>11</sup> Today, the *Protocols* are more accessible than ever; the text is free from many websites, most of them affiliated with conspiracy

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<sup>7</sup> Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide*, 125.

<sup>8</sup> Eisner, *The Plot*, 70.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 73-89.

<sup>10</sup> Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide*, 78.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Berenbaum, *Not Your Father’s Antisemitism: Hatred of the Jews in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Paragon House, 2008), 165.

or hate groups, it is cheaply available in book form from online shopping websites such as Amazon, and there is evidence that the themes of the book are taught in textbooks in schools in certain areas of the Middle East.<sup>12</sup>

## **Themes**

There are a number of themes that occur throughout the *Protocols*, so for simplicity and organization, chapters are summarized and supported by direct quotes from the work.

### *Protocol I*

The *Protocols* depict the Jew as deceiving and evil. Protocol I highlights the division between two groups, the Jew and the goyim. This divide is an important one, as the Elders claim that non-Jews are “alcoholised animals” indoctrinated by their “special agents.” The Jewish plot is aimed not at “what is good and moral” but “what is necessary and useful,” mentioning that they will resort to bribery and deceit. The first chapter also establishes the connection between the Elders and liberalism, citing the slogan “Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity” as a Jewish creation. In this case, liberalism can best be described as any philosophy that is anti-autocratic, any attitude contrary to the political status quo. The *Protocols* name liberalism as the vehicle through which world domination is reached; it was via the creation of democracy that the Jews were able to rise to power. According to the Elders, the old aristocracy was the “class which [were] the only defense peoples and countries had against us.” In its place, a “new aristocracy” would emerge, staffed by the educated and wealthy, a reference to the relatively new and ever

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<sup>12</sup> For more, see Itamar Marcus and Barbara Crook’s chapter “The Protocols of the Elders of Zion: An Authentic Document in Palestinian Authority Ideology,” from *The Paranoid Apocalypse: A Hundred-Year Retrospective on the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 152-160.

growing middle class brought about by capitalism, another Jewish invention according to the *Protocols*.<sup>13</sup>

### *Protocol II*

Protocol II is an important chapter within the *Protocols*, referencing three specific components of the Jewish plot. The first says that Jews are committed to waging economic warfare within the world, with the end result being financial supremacy. The second references Jewish control of education, with leaders creating “facts” and introducing the world to the ideas of Darwin, Marx, and Nietzsche, all dangerous philosophies to established regimes. Finally, Protocol II concludes with the idea of the Jewish controlled media, saying whomever controls the world’s media controls the world’s gold. The Jews only gained control of this resource, however, from “oceans of blood and tears,” a reference to the violence and tragedy the Elders have exploited.<sup>14</sup>

### *Protocol III*

Protocol III addresses the ideology of socialism. As previously described, socialism and communism had long been associated with Judaism and the mythical Elders write how they use it to their advantage. By claiming to be the “saviors of the worker,” the Jews successfully recruit the populace into their ranks, what they dub their “fighting force.” This force, made up of organized groups of Socialists, Anarchists, and Communists, unwittingly fight for the ultimate cause of the Elders, the complete destruction of the goyim.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 11-17.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 17-19.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 19-24.

#### *Protocol IV*

With Protocol IV, a new concept is introduced. Previous stereotypes for Jews were based on the charge of deicide and the killing of Christians. Now, the Elders state their desire to kill Christianity and other faiths as a whole. “It is indispensable for us to undermine all faith, to tear out of the minds of the goyim the very principle of the Godhead, and the spirit, and to put in its place arithmetical calculations and material needs.” By destroying the institution of religion, Jews can effectively promote the educational and business establishments they control. They do this to distract non-Jews from their plot, and in this way also separate themselves from the rest of the human race.<sup>16</sup>

#### *Protocols V, VI, VII*

These chapters highlight certain aspects of both the plan for takeover and administration of the world. According to Protocol V, Jews have already infiltrated various governments around the world thanks to their wealth. They also utilize their control of the press to keep the public apathetic towards government, thus ensuring an unchallenged ascent towards power.<sup>17</sup> In Protocol VI, the Jews plan the creation of large monopolies and deny non-Jews land through speculation in order to destroy that group’s credit and savings. In order to trick the goyim into thinking they are benevolent, the Jews will raise wages while simultaneously raising prices of vital products.<sup>18</sup> Protocol VII explains how the Elders have used the press to create “public

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 22-25.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 25-29.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 29-30.

opinion” to sway world governments in moving in a progressive, liberalist direction, advocating for “universal war” in the event of opposition.<sup>19</sup>

#### *Protocol VIII, IX*

Protocol VIII suggests Jews inform themselves about every aspect of Gentile life, thereby “arm[ing] ourselves with all the weapons which our opponents might employ against us.” This includes learning languages, both the lexicon of groups of people and professions, as well as surrounding themselves with specialists such as “bankers, industrialists, capitalists and – the main thing – millionaires [*sic*].”<sup>20</sup> Within Protocol IX, the Elders discuss how they orchestrate acts of anti-Semitism as it increases sympathy towards Jews, thereby increasing their power. Speaking on the type of nation they will establish, the Elder’s use the word “super-state,” thereby implying that they will be in control of every aspect of their citizen’s lives, speaking candidly about their control of non-Jewish children. From this chapter comes one of the memorable quotes from the document: “The weapons in our hands are limitless ambitions, burning greediness, merciless vengeance, hatreds and malice.”<sup>21</sup>

#### *Protocol X*

Protocol X provides more information about the process the Elders will use to take over the world. They advocate universal suffrage without discrepancy towards race, gender, or economic class, a radical proposition in a world where many actively kept disenfranchised people from voting. The Elders reasoned that they needed to expand voting rights so that they might receive a majority in elections, demonstrating that world domination will come through political, not

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 31-32.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 32-33.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 33-35.

violent means. Again, they emphasize that liberalism has caused the end of the “safeguard of the goyim.” Jews will install puppet governments headed by presidents with dark pasts. By blackmailing leaders, they will enact new legislation to further the end goal of the Jewish controlled world.<sup>22</sup>

### *Protocol XI*

Once in power, the Elders will strip non-Jews of rights, notably freedom of the press, assembly, and voting. The Jews are predatory, and here reference the destruction of non-Jews, saying, “the goyim are a flock of sheep, and we are their wolves. And you know what happens when the wolves get hold of the flock?” Another important theme, the Jewish connection to Freemasonry, is introduced within this chapter. The Masons have long been a distrusted organization with many conspiracy theories attributed to them in their own right. Here, however, the Elders claim that they have recruited non-Jews into Masonic Lodges in order to create an army of faithful followers that will fight for the Elders unquestionably.<sup>23</sup>

### *Protocol XII*

As mass media became a powerful influence in the political, economic, and social life of the world, many leaders recognized the danger newspapers and other broadcasting outlets potentially had. Indeed, newspapers had long been utilized to push radical agendas and ideologies aimed against the ruling class.<sup>24</sup> In Protocol XII, the Elders write, “Not a single announcement will reach the public without our control.” According to the *Protocols*, Jews control nearly every

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 36-41.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 41-43.

<sup>24</sup> For examples of media’s use in past revolutions, see Jane Abrey’s “Feminism in the French Revolution” (1975) and Gordon Wood’s “Rhetoric and Reality in the American Revolution” (1966).

form of mass communication available. Their audience is from “aristocratic, republican, revolutionary, even anarchical” backgrounds, and the content produced changes depending on the reader. Everything that is written, however, is aimed at furthering progress towards the ultimate goal of world domination.<sup>25</sup>

#### *Protocols XIII, XIV*

Protocol XIII explains how the Jews have introduced distractions such as games and other fleeting amusements in order to keep the masses docile and subservient. This chapter further describes the true conclusion of “progress,” the obscene philosophy that “obscure[s] truth.”<sup>26</sup> Protocol XIV deals with the destruction of other faiths. According to the Elders, once the takeover is complete, “it will be undesirable” for religions other than Judaism to exist. Jews will point out the flaws of world faiths while not allowing others to criticize Judaism’s shortcomings.<sup>27</sup>

#### *Protocol XV*

Protocol XV returns to two major themes of the overall work. The first relates to the dominance of centralized authority over the Elders. Before liberalism as a philosophy took hold in Europe, the aristocracy kept the Jews in check. Within the book, the Elders specifically name the Russian aristocracy and the Papacy as the two major forces that prevented the Jews from carrying out their plan. Second, the Elders return to their discussion about Freemasonry. In this chapter, they advocate the creation and expansion of Masonic lodges internationally, as well as

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<sup>25</sup> Marsden, *Protocols*, 43-48

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 48-50.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 50-52.

the centralization of leadership headed by the Elders. Besides establishing additional lodges, the Elders advocate the recruitment of every powerful and influential figure in the world into the organization, which serves not only to legitimize the Masons but also enlist the world's leaders into their ranks. Should any person, especially those affiliated with the Freemasons, attempt to stop the plot for world domination, clandestine executions will occur.<sup>28</sup>

#### *Protocol XVI*

Jews recognize the power and influence of education. Protocol XVI advocates the infiltration and takeover of universities for the purpose of “re-educating” the masses “in a new direction.” Classes in politics would not be taught, as “large numbers of persons with questions of polity creates utopian dreamers and bad subjects.” Jews will also teach a revisionist history omitting facts “undesirable to us.”<sup>29</sup>

#### *Protocol XVII*

Protocol XVII discusses two important points of the Elders' vision of their future society. First, they plan to discredit and eliminate the need for non-Jewish religious officials. This specific part of the plot entails inciting schisms within various churches, thereby destroying the organizations from the inside. This chapter also details how the Elders plan to keep social order within their new empire, saying “one-third of of our subjects will keep the rest under observation...It will be no disgrace to be a spy and informer, but a merit.” This Orwellian future

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 52-59.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 59-61.

wherein people cannot fully trust their fellow citizens will serve to keep the subjects in check, thereby assuring the Elders' continued dominance.<sup>30</sup>

#### *Protocol XVIII, XIX*

Protocol XVIII speaks of the Elders' role in the assassination of various politicians by "blind sheep of our flock, who are easily moved by a few liberal phrases..." The ultimate leader of the coming Jewish new world order will not be in any danger of assassination, as the subjects of their empire will harbor no negative thoughts towards him. Thus, the Elders plan to create a cult of personality around the eventual leader of the administration.<sup>31</sup> Protocol XIX speaks on sedition and the martyring of many "sedition-mongers," accomplished through the Elders' reinterpretation of history. This act has "increased the contingent of liberals and has brought thousands of goyim into the ranks of our livestock cattle."<sup>32</sup>

#### *Protocol XX*

Protocol XX offers an important examination of the economic side of the Elder's plot. The Elders begin by proclaiming that in order to fund the new state, a progressive tax is best, as "state needs must be paid by those who will not feel the burden and have enough to take from." These funds are then used for public works and other aspects of the welfare state. The Elders also claim responsibility for all economic crises the world has ever experienced, an elaborate ploy to force governments to remove capital from circulation, thus furthering the divide between the wealthy (in this case, Jews) and the lower classes, whom the Elders maintain are slaves to capitalists.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 61-64.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 64-66.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 66-67.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 67-74.

This chapter is an important one when examining the contradictory nature of the *Protocols* and anti-Semitism. The progressive tax has long been associated with socialism, with staunch opposition coming mostly from rightist politicians and thinkers who criticize the burden placed on the upper class.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, while this chapter implies the Jewish connection to socialism, it also associates the Jew with capitalism.

#### *Protocol XXI, XXII, XXIII, XXIV*

In the final chapters of the book, the Elders reinforce previous themes. Chapter XXI details how the new government will fix prices within industry, meaning “all industrial undertakings will come into dependence” of the Elders. In chapter XXII, the Jews say that they hold “the greatest power of [the] day,” gold, claiming that within two days they can gather, “any quantity [they] may pleasure” from their reserves. As the *Protocols* have previously established the connection between Jews and both capitalism and socialism, this chapter helps to reinforce the greatest weapon the Jews hold in their quest for supremacy: economic power. The book concludes with the Elder’s thoughts on blind obedience to authority, Kingship, and how leaders will be chosen in the new world.<sup>35</sup>

### **Interpretation**

Arguably the single most important aspect of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* lies in its style. Aside from antiquated terms and ideas, the non-specific writing style makes the *Protocols*

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<sup>34</sup> For more on the economic and political side of progressive taxation, see Walter J. Blum and Harry Kalven, Jr.’s “The Uneasy Case for Progressive Taxation,” (1952).

<sup>35</sup> Marsden, *Protocols*, 74-80.

a timeless and spaceless work, meaning it could be applied to any scenario in any region of the world in any decade. The *Protocols* rely on centuries old anti-Semitic stereotypes combined with the political zeitgeist of the day. The supposed connections of Jews to money, mass media, education, and other fields was therefore not invented by the authors of *Protocols*, but instead updated to include contemporary institutions and philosophies such as stock exchanges and socialism. The Elders frequently refer to non-Jews in animalistic terms, often “cattle,” leading the tract to undertake a confrontational tone.

Ultimately, the *Protocols* read as an anti-liberalist tract. The nineteenth century saw many prominent leaders and places attacked by anarchists, exemplified by the murder of Russian Czar Alexander II and terrorist attacks at Barcelona’s Liceu Opera House and Chicago’s Haymarket Square. While anarchism had long been the target for hate and mistrust by ruling conservatives, these acts sparked major international backlash against all people and groups not affiliated with the political status quo.

## **Chapter II: Henry Ford – the Man, the Newspaper, the Lies**

For ninety-one uninterrupted weeks, Henry Ford’s personal newspaper printed a series of articles that vilified Jews.<sup>36</sup> This chapter will examine the cause of Ford’s anti-Semitism as well as the origins of the newspaper that was the medium of expression.

### **Henry Ford’s Anti-Semitism**

Anti-Semitism has existed within the United States since before the Revolutionary War, existing in two forms that William Pencak called “a preexisting, largely latent popular one, and an emerging elite political one.”<sup>37</sup> These two sentiments survived to influence the life and career of Henry Ford; his childhood education and experiences within his business and personal life account for the reactionary anti-Semitism he would promote later in life.

Born in rural Michigan in 1863, Ford entered the world in a location deeply affected by populist politics. Agrarian anti-Semitism, fueled by economic hardships experienced in the period immediately after the Civil War, emerged as a popular sentiment throughout the American South and Midwest. Farmers distrusted Jews as they were closely aligned with banks and unpopular economic policies. The Populist Party, a political organization advocating for farmers and laborers, utilized this anti-Semitic emotion in its political campaigns; William Jennings Bryan’s famous “Cross of Gold” speech equated the detested economic program

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<sup>36</sup> Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 81.

<sup>37</sup> William Pencak, *Jews and Gentiles in Early America: 1654-1800* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 212.

associated with Jews to the crucifixion, echoing the age-old accusation of Jewish deicide.<sup>38</sup> The rural communities of America, already distrustful of the city, found the explanation for their plight in the form of the urban Jew.

In the late nineteenth century, anti-Semitism was ingrained in primary education. School children learned about the dangers of the Jew through “Readers,” books compiled by esteemed educator William Holmes McGuffey. McGuffey collected literature from different sources in order to demonstrate themes of morality and Christian reverence. Stories included retellings of Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*, Biblical passages denouncing Judaism, and parables of Jews trying to corrupt virtuous Christian boys. The *McGuffey Readers* proved a dangerous tool in the spread of anti-Semitism; the popularity of the readers was so great that in 1870, forty-six million copies of the readers were sold, appearing in the bookcases of children across the country.<sup>39</sup> Like countless other Christian schoolchildren, Henry Ford was educated by McGuffey’s compilations, implanting the seed of anti-Semitism that would intensify later in life.<sup>40</sup>

These two powerful factors help to explain Henry Ford’s ingrained anti-Semitism; the political climate of his birth and adolescence combined with the bias in his education resulted in an entrenched dislike of Jews. However, this does little to explain Ford’s later, rabid anti-Semitism. Why did Ford transition from a man who seemingly had little interest in proselytizing his anti-Semitic beliefs to the man in charge of the *Dearborn Independent*? There are several theories as to why his later, vocal hatred of Jews emerged.

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<sup>38</sup> Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America*, 49-50.

<sup>39</sup> Robert Rockaway and Arnon Gutfield, “Demonic Images of the Jew in the Nineteenth Century United States,” *American Jewish History* 89, no. 4 (2001): 362.

<sup>40</sup> Neil Baldwin, *Henry Ford and the Jews: The Mass Production of Hate* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001), 3-4.

One hypothesis suggests that Ford's Judeophobia stemmed from his massive distrust for banking establishments, a consequence of his populist upbringing. *My Life and Work*, Ford's 1922 autobiography, presents several instances of the man's disgust for banks and Wall Street.

I determined absolutely that never would I join a company in which finance came before the work or in which bankers or financiers had a part...For my own short experience, together with what I saw going on around me, was quite enough proof that business as a mere money-making game was not worth giving much thought to and was distinctly no place for a man who wanted to accomplish anything...For the only foundation of real business is service.<sup>41</sup>

The derogatory connection between Jews and the institution of banking has existed in the arsenal of anti-Semites for millennia. The first published article of *The International Jew*, "The Character of the Jew in Business," speaks at length on Jewish control of banks and stock exchanges. These industries are the antithesis of what Ford viewed as true American industry, manual labor either in an agrarian or industrial sense. Ford claims that the Jew "exhibits a decided aversion to industrial employment."<sup>42</sup>

Another possible explanation stemmed from Ford's isolationist and pacifist viewpoints related to the First World War. Ford believed that the blame of the Great War belonged solely to "Jewish financiers" and journalists, the damning evidence taken directly from the *Protocols*. Chapter XIV of *The World's Foremost Problem*, entitled "Did the Jews Foresee the World War," includes a quote from Protocol XX: "I have endeavored to indicate carefully the secrets of past and future events, and of those momentous occurrences of the near future toward which we are rushing in a stream of great crisis." The chapter continues with a quote from Protocol II: "...wars should bring no territorial advantages. This will shift war to an economic footing, and nations will perceive the strength of our superiority in the aid we render."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Henry Ford, *My Life and Work* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1922), 40-41.

<sup>42</sup> *The International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem* (London: Forgotten Books, 2015), 10.

<sup>43</sup> *The International Jew: the World's Foremost Problem*, 153-154.

Distraught by the First World War, Ford met with activist Rosika Schwimmer, a pacifist Hungarian born Jew who proposed a publicity event that would end the conflict. After decrying the fault of German-Jewish bankers, Ford agreed and commissioned an expedition of peace in 1915. Dubbed “the Peace Ship,” Ford and an entourage of civilian emissaries sailed to Norway in a bid for the great powers to end the conflict. Bugged down by a lack of enthusiasm by prominent Americans, money troubles, and an illness that forced Ford to prematurely return home, the Peace Ship project was a failure that hurt Ford’s ego. He blamed all the misfortunes on Schwimmer, leading the New York World to publish a damning article entitled “Jewess Tricked and Fooled Ford” in which the paper claimed, “It was she who persuaded him to undertake the Peace Expedition. It embittered him. Hence his attacks on the Jewish Race. Perhaps it is not anti-Semitism at all. Perhaps it is Rozika [*sic*] Schwimmer.”<sup>44</sup>

A third explanation is that Ford was preparing for a presidential campaign and sought the support of prominent anti-Semites. Just prior to his acquisition of the *Independent*, Ford was a candidate on the Republican Party of Michigan’s presidential ballot, winning the primary in that state and nearly taking Nebraska as well. Several months later the Republican National Convention included him on their first ballot, though he did not continue to the next round.<sup>45</sup> Ford unsuccessfully ran for United States Senator for Michigan as a Democrat in 1918, receiving 49.13% of the votes. This foray into politics is remarkable due to the fact that despite Ford’s declination to attend debates or make a single speech, he lost the election by only a slim majority.<sup>46</sup>

By 1922, Ford hinted to his inner circle that he was considering running for president. According to journalist and official Ford biographer Allan Benson, “Ford made statements to me

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<sup>44</sup> Baldwin, *Henry Ford and the Jews*, 64-66, 161.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, 68.

<sup>46</sup> “Senate General Elections, All States, 1918 Summary,” CQ Press Voting and Elections Collection.

in September, 1922, that made me feel he might be a dangerous President.”<sup>47</sup> Ford’s lack of political experience and rapidly changing opinions on political issues were certainly cause for alarm, but Benson also includes a discussion about Ford’s disgust of Jews. Even after he ceased publication of the *International Jew* articles, Benson notes that Ford “stands where he stood when he was bombarding them. He mentions them frequently in conversation about public affairs.”<sup>48</sup>

A final theory is that Ford’s entourage shifted his views on Jews. In 1951, Harry Bennett, the head of the Ford Motor Company’s Internal Security Department, wrote a book describing his close relationship with Henry Ford. In *We Never Called Him Henry*, Bennett states that he personally witnessed Ford’s gradual slide into rampant anti-Semitism. Blaming his boss’ impressionable mind, Bennett recalls many instances of two high-ranking *Dearborn Independent* personnel, Ernest G. Liebold and William J. Cameron, exaggerating the image and danger of Jews, conceptions that certainly remained with Ford.<sup>49</sup>

It is important to note, however, that Ford did not let his prejudices interfere with his business, maintaining a highly diverse factory that included people of all races and religious backgrounds, including Jews. In September 1916, the Ford Motor Company granted Jewish workers leave so they could celebrate High Holidays. Ford later encouraged other business owners to do the same, thus appearing as a role model of religious tolerance. This act earned Ford great praise from the Jewish community of Detroit, particularly from his neighbor and friend Rabbi Leo Franklin.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Allan Benson, *The New Henry Ford* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1923), 350.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, 358.

<sup>49</sup> Harry Bennett, *We Never Called Him Henry* (New York: Fawcett Publications, 1951), 49.

<sup>50</sup> Sidney Bolkosky, *Harmony and Dissonance* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 79.

## **The Dearborn Independent**

In 1919, Henry Ford sued the *Chicago Tribune* for libel in retaliation for a series of articles calling the automobile manufacturer an anarchist. According to Sarah T. Bushnell, a great admirer of Ford that published a praising biography of the tycoon, Ford “believed that his suit would have a salutary effect upon the press in general and serve as a warning that ‘free speech’ does not shield the slanderer...he was not fighting the newspapers; he was fighting falsehood.”<sup>51</sup> Ironically, it was this very trial that led Ford to acquire his own newspaper and begin publishing *The International Jew*.

Over the course of the trial, the Tribune’s lawyers made it their mission to discredit Henry Ford. Elliott Stevenson, lead attorney for the Tribune, interrogated the automobile tycoon over his knowledge of basic American history, recalling Ford’s infamous quote “History is more or less bunk.” In this examination, Ford failed to remember the year of the signing of the Declaration of Independence or identify Benedict Arnold. This embarrassing experience turned even more so when the court awarded him only six cents of the one million dollars he was suing for.<sup>52</sup>

Following the *Chicago Tribune* trial, the humiliated Ford became reclusive and ceased interacting with the general public. His secretary, Ernest G. Liebold, took control of all correspondence, including reading and responding to Ford’s mail and issuing official statements on behalf of the company. Even in this state of isolation, however, Ford wished to advertise his views and morals to the country. Fearing censorship by the “world’s channels of information,” more than likely code for his perception of Jewish control of media, he purchased a struggling newspaper called the *Dearborn Independent* in 1919.

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<sup>51</sup> Sarah T. Bushnell, *The Truth About Henry Ford* (Chicago: Reilly & Lee Co., 1922), 136-137.

<sup>52</sup> Robert Aitken and Marilyn Aitken, “The Dark Side of Henry Ford,” *Litigation* 32, no. 1 (2005): 54.

Presented as a family publication, the paper was nominally headed by Ford, his wife Clara, and his son Edsel. A friend of Ford named E.G. Pipp, formerly of the *Detroit News*, served as editor while William J. Cameron, also an alumnus of the *Detroit News*, wrote articles. Initially, the paper printed nothing remarkable. Serious news stories about the Treaty of Versailles and Prohibition received the same or less attention than “fluff” pieces, local feel-good stories.<sup>53</sup>

Just how much influence and oversight Ford exercised over the paper is a matter of debate. In 1927, prominent Jewish lawyer and activist Aaron Sapiro sued Henry Ford for libel based on portions of *The International Jew*. As told by Harry Bennett, when William Cameron was called to testify, he firmly stated “Mr. Ford had had no knowledge of the Sapiro articles at the time they were published...Cameron took all responsibility for everything that had ever appeared in the *Dearborn Independent*, and said, in effect, that Mr. Ford had no connection whatsoever with the editorial policy of the paper. He testified, ‘I run the paper and use my own judgment.’”<sup>54</sup>

## **Initial Response**

Regardless of who actually wrote the material, the fact remains that Ford’s name was on every newspaper. Because of this, he became the subject of harsh criticism during the ensuing backlash against *The International Jew*. Immediately after the articles were published, various newspapers, magazines, and politicians condemned the messages expressed within the *Dearborn Independent*. In an article bemoaning the rise anti-Semitism within the United States, the long-

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<sup>53</sup> Leo Ribuffo, “Henry Ford and ‘the International Jew,’” *American Jewish History* 69, no. 4 (1980): 444.

<sup>54</sup> Bennett, *We Never Called Him Henry*, 46-48, 51.

The Sapiro case proves a fascinating examination into the legal ramifications of *The International Jew* and indeed hate literature as a whole. For more on the case, see Victoria Saker Woeste’s *Henry Ford’s War on Jews and the Legal Battle Against Hate Speech* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012).

running magazine *The Nation* proclaimed “the chief responsibility for the survival of this hoary shame among us in America attaches to Henry Ford.”<sup>55</sup>

The Jewish response to the paper was mixed. Many Jews protested the anti-Semitic literature by boycotting Ford products and openly speaking against the automaker.<sup>56</sup> The aforementioned Rabbi Leo Franklin of Detroit’s Temple Beth-El was among the most prominent members of Detroit’s Jewish community that took an active role in the fight against the *Independent*. A close friend to Henry Ford, the two men were neighbors for a number of years and Ford so respected the rabbi he gifted Franklin a total of seven new Ford automobile throughout the 1910s. However, in June of 1920, Franklin returned the gift to his friend as a result of the anti-Semitic attacks that “must inevitably tend to poison the minds of the masses against the Jews.”<sup>57</sup> Franklin spent the next two decades appealing to Ford and his associates to not only end the publication of *The International Jew* but also to pull all copies from circulation and issue a formal apology.

Despite the organized resistance against Ford, other Jews, especially those working in Ford factories, continued to praise the industrialist. This curious development can be attributed to the altruism Ford showed his workers; as discussed previously, both his employees and much of the world viewed Ford as a benevolent employer who granted to his workers benefits such as religious holidays and equality in the form of equal pay regardless of race.<sup>58</sup> Even though Ford’s name was attached to the anti-Semitic propaganda, many Jewish workers actively protested

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<sup>55</sup> Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America*, 83.

<sup>56</sup> Baldwin, *Henry Ford and the Jews*, 299.

<sup>57</sup> Anne Jardim, *The First Henry Ford: A Study in Personality and Business Leadership* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1970), 143.

<sup>58</sup> While it is true that Ford’s “Five Dollar Day” program ensured equal pay for whites and blacks, African Americans experienced poor working conditions and strenuous labor as compared to their white coworkers. For more information, see Beth Tompkins Bates’ *The Making of Black Detroit in the Age of Henry Ford* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

harsh statements made against their employer; “He treated them kindly, so they defended him,” recalled Jewish News journalist Philip Slomovitz. These workers also wrote off Ford’s anti-Semitism as a result of ignorance and other superficial factors.<sup>59</sup>

Following both the Sapiro libel trial and years of immense pressure to issue a public apology for *The International Jew*, Henry Ford mailed a written apology to Louis Marshall,<sup>60</sup> President of the American Jewish Committee, on June 30, 1927. In it, Ford maintains that he had nothing to do with the content, writing “Although both publications are my property, it goes without saying that in the multitude of my activities it has been impossible for me to devote personal attention to their management or to keep informed as to their contents.” Continuing, he wrote he laments the discomfort and suffering his unwarranted attacks triggered and the fact that his paper gave credence to the “gross forgeries,” *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Marshall accepted this apology and published both Ford’s letter and his own response a month later.<sup>61</sup>

Despite Ford’s promise to remove copies of the *Independent* and *The International Jew* from circulation, both controversial documents continued to spread and accrue international readership and influence.

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<sup>59</sup> Bolkosky, *Harmony and Dissonance*, 80-81.

<sup>60</sup> Interestingly, the Dearborn Independent devoted an unflattering article on the president entitled “America’s Jewish Enigma – Louis Marshall.” See *The International Jew: Aspects of Jewish Power in the United States*, 174-191.

<sup>61</sup> “Statement by Henry Ford Regarding Charges Against Jews Made in His Publications, The Dearborn Independent, and a Series of Pamphlets Entitled “The International Jew,” Together With an Explanatory Statement by Louis Marshall, President of the American Jewish Committee and His Reply to Mr. Ford,” (New York: The American Jewish Committee, 1927), 1-4.

### Chapter III: The International Jew

*The Jew is the world's enigma. Poor in his masses,  
he yet controls the world's finances. Scattered abroad without country or government,  
he yet presents a unity of race continuity which no other people has achieved.*

As discussed previously, though Henry Ford was in control of the *Independent* and theoretically approved all articles within the publication, true authorship of *The International Jew* is generally attributed to the *Independent's* staff. However, while he did not physically write the articles, the opinions expressed within originated straight from the anti-Semitic mind of Henry Ford. Or, more appropriately, originated straight from the pages of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

After a close reading of *The Protocols*, it is clear that the material within *The International Jew* stems from the famous anti-Semitic tract. The authors do nothing to hide the source; the first mention of the document is found in the July 10, 1920 issue of the *Independent*,<sup>62</sup> the July 24, 1920 edition of the paper is entitled "Introduction to the Jewish Protocols,"<sup>63</sup> and explicit references and quotes of the "Wise Men" are found throughout subsequent articles.

A key fact to note, however, is that *The Protocols* were not cited in articles prior to "An Introduction of the Jewish Protocols;" from May 22 through July 3, 1920, the *Independent* made no mention of the document. Even though the *Protocols* first appeared in 1905, it proved slow in

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<sup>62</sup> *The International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem*, 92.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, 109.

coming to the United States; Norman Cohn points to several articles that printed excerpts from the document that appeared as early as October 1919, with the first full printing of the book following sometime in 1920.<sup>64</sup>

The authors of *The International Jew* were certainly convinced of not only the truth of *The Protocols*, but also the progress the plot had made; the article devoted completely to the document, entitled “An Introduction to the Jewish Protocols,” reads, “The program announced in these Protocols is being steadily carried out not only in France, but throughout Europe, and very noticeably in the United States.”<sup>65</sup>

*The International Jew* is divided amongst four volumes and contains articles in chronological rather than thematic order. This format presents a challenge in summarization, so the following synopsis is divided into overarching themes that emerge within the books.

### **The Jew in Business and Economics**

Given the long held association of Jews and money, it is only fitting that the *Dearborn Independent* devotes many pages to the tiresome stereotype. One might argue that every theme discussed within the *Independent's* articles somehow relate to monetary gain. In fact, the first article written on the Jewish question, printed on May 22, 1920, is entitled “The Jew in Character and Business.” This chapter reads as an excellent introduction to the ensuing eighty articles, with discussions revolving around business, press, morality, and other themes.<sup>66</sup>

The *Independent* divides the Jewish menace into two groups, the German Jewish elites such as the Guggenheims and the Schiffs, and the Russian and Polish Jews representing the “lower ranks of trade and industry.” In the mind of the newspaper, these two groups represent

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<sup>64</sup> Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide*, 174.

<sup>65</sup> *The International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem*, 109-110.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, 9-22.

every level of the economy, from the greedy factory owners and bankers to the workers that take jobs from deserving Americans.<sup>67</sup>

In the May 21, 1921 editorial “Angles of Jewish Influence in American Life,” the *Independent* claims that Jews are not concerned with *making* money, but rather *getting* money. This distinction proves the reason why Jews are always “‘financiers’ instead of ‘captains of industry.’”<sup>68</sup> The centuries old canard of Jews not contributing to business shaped the anti-Semitic attitudes of populist leaders throughout the country.

The *Independent* also claimed it was not just banks that Jews controlled. The paper asserted that popular music was a Jewish monopoly, citing an unreferenced government document that maintained that “80 per cent of these popular songs [were] under the control of seven Jewish music houses.”<sup>69</sup>

### **Jewish Control of Press**

In the September 11, 1920 article “Does Jewish Power Control the World Press,” the *Independent* makes the claim that Jews harnessed the power of information and media centuries ago as a means to stay abreast of new discoveries that could be exploited for monetary gain, pointing specifically to patriarch of the European banking dynasty Nathan Rothschild. The newspaper’s conclusion is that this monetary motive was the driving force behind the initial Jewish control of the press throughout the world. The paper cites *The Protocols* to validate this claim. As previously noted, the press was of major concern to the Elders of Zion, and the *Independent* spent dozens of pages quoting the anti-Semitic publication.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> *The International Jew: Jewish Influence in American Life*, 94-95.

<sup>68</sup> *The International Jew: Aspects of Jewish Power in the United States*, 42.

<sup>69</sup> *The International Jew: Jewish Influence in American Life*, 65.

<sup>70</sup> *The International Jew: The World’s Foremost Problem*, 187-200.

The *Independent* continued the subject several months later, stating all Jews mandate “a slurring headline a day” and that Jews control the young teenagers selling newspapers on the streets through mafiaesque means.<sup>71</sup> This declaration concludes that news agencies under Jewish control exercised control at every level, from writing to publishing to distribution; it was therefore impossible to consume information without the taint of the Jew.

Besides control for financial gain, the *Independent* declares multiple times throughout the serialization of *The International Jew* that the Jew is a propagandist.<sup>72</sup> Early in the printing, the paper declares, “The means of power of the State of All-Judaan are capital and journalism, or money and propaganda.”<sup>73</sup> Therefore, according to the *Independent*, Jews utilize the two influences of money and media in order to secure their power; Ford’s newspaper, along with many anti-Semites across the nation, are weary of both.

### **American Jewish Ties to Bolshevism**

Following the First World War, a great feeling of nationalism entered the United States consciousness. Fear of communist revolution instilled by Russia’s October Revolution of 1917 led to anti-Bolshevik rhetoric. Indeed, the very word “Bolshevik” became a slanderous epithet that reactionary Americans applied to any person or cultural phenomena deemed “un-American.” The Red Scare lasted for decades, culminating in Joseph McCarthy’s infamous House Un-American Activities Committee.

The origin of the canard of Jews and Communists as synonymous can be attributed to Zionist Occupation Government (ZOG) conspiracy theories. The central theme of the *Protocols* is the claim that the Elders wish to create a unified government led by Jews. The document itself

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<sup>71</sup> *The International Jew: Jewish Activities in the United States*, 210.

<sup>72</sup> *The International Jew: Aspects of Jewish Power in the United States*, 42.

<sup>73</sup> *The International Jew: The World’s Foremost Problem*, 30.

utilizes words associated with Communism; Protocol VI, for example, details the means by which the Elders will “throw all the goyim into the ranks of the proleatriat [*sic*],” and Protocol II cites Marx directly as Jewish supported.<sup>74</sup>

The *Dearborn Independent* charges Jews with conspiring with Russian Bolshevism in their quest to create a ZOG America. Making dubious claims such as “There are more Bolsheviks in the United States than there are in Soviet Russia”<sup>75</sup> and “Practically every big American city is represented in the Bolshevik government of Russia,”<sup>76</sup> the *Independent* links the activities of Lenin with Jewish communities in New York City, suggesting that Bolshevism flourished with the aid of American Jews.

The May 28, 1921 article “Will Jewish Zionism Bring Armageddon?” continues the condemnation of Communism by linking it with Zionism, claiming that Zionism and Bolshevism both originated in Russia and matured with the aid of the *Kehillah*, the New York City based religious communal organization led by prominent Orthodox and Reform leaders. The *Independent* states “Zionism is challenging the attention of the world today because it is creating a situation out of which many believe the next war will come”<sup>77</sup> and that Zionism is the unifying factor between the Jews of the United States and Europe.<sup>78</sup>

While not pertaining to the United States, *Independent* makes other inaccurate claims about the leadership of Communist Russia. Leon Trotsky is frequently referenced as Jewish, with

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<sup>74</sup> Marsden, *Protocols*, 30, 18.

<sup>75</sup> *The International Jew: Jewish Influence in American Life*, 102.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 120.

<sup>77</sup> *The International Jew: Jewish Influences in American Life*, 114-115.

Many adherents to the publication considered this quote prophetic, as it seemingly foreshadowed World War II and the ensuing conflicts throughout the Middle East. See Gerald L. K. Smith’s commentary in his abridged version of *The International Jew: the World’s Foremost Problem* (Mansfield Centre, Connecticut: Martino Publishing, 2011).

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, 118.

many articles including a version of his birth name, “Braunstein.”<sup>79</sup> By referencing a major leader within the Bolshevik party by a Jewish name, the *Independent* suggested a larger tie between Jews and the Soviet Union. The *Independent*’s quest to put Jews at the head of the Soviet Union continues with the erroneous claim that Vladimir Lenin and his wife spoke Yiddish with their children.<sup>80</sup> However, Lenin and his wife Nadezhda Krupskaya were childless, the result of the latter’s struggle with Graves Disease.<sup>81</sup>

Ultimately, the *Independent* concludes that it is the duty of the paper to inform the public of the dangers of Bolshevism and the Jewish influence in American life, writing “If it is ‘anti-Semitism’ to say that Bolshevism in the United States is Jewish, so be it; but to unprejudiced minds it will look very like Americanism.”<sup>82</sup>

### **Jewish Corruption of American Culture and Morality**

Not just restricted to economics and politics, the *Independent* decried the perceived Jewish presence in, and destruction of, popular culture. The *Dearborn Independent* frequently calls into question the moral character of Jews. Ford was a staunch opponent of alcohol, tobacco, and other vices, and his newspaper highlights the supposed Jewish control of industries of pleasure.<sup>83</sup> The paper allows three articles on the topic of Jewish control of alcohol, all of which were published in the year immediately following the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment. The *Independent* used its position to praise Prohibition and condemn the ensuing illicit bootlegging, crimes they claimed were overwhelmingly perpetrated by Jews.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> *The International Jew: The World’s Foremost Problem*, 72.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, 214.

<sup>81</sup> Robert Service, *Lenin: A Biography* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 200), 199.

<sup>82</sup> *The International Jew: Jewish Influences in American Life*, 107.

<sup>83</sup> *The International Jew: The World’s Foremost Problem*, 39-40.

<sup>84</sup> *The International Jew: Aspects of Jewish Power in the United States*, 34.

The paper continues, accusing the Jew of instilling “looseness in Gentile youth today” through “sport clothes,” motion pictures, popular music, and “coney [*sic*] islands.”<sup>85</sup> The *Independent* decries suggestive lyrics in “Jewish jazz,”<sup>86</sup> films produced by Jewish studios that are “slimy with sex plays,”<sup>87</sup> and “vulgar and sacrilegious” Jewish theater productions.<sup>88</sup>

The paper devoted two articles to the examination of America’s pastime, baseball. In both “Jewish Gamblers Corrupt American Baseball” and “Jewish Degradation of American Baseball,” the *Independent* judges that “Jews are not sportsmen” and that Jewish presence in sporting events stem from the fact the “The Jew set out to capitalize rivalry and to commercialize contestant zeal.” The paper charges that Jewish gamblers orchestrated the infamous “Black Sox” incident of the 1919 World Series, wherein several members of the Chicago White Sox team plotted with gamblers to intentionally lose the contest.<sup>89</sup> Because the paper considers the game tainted by Jewish influence, it advises the public not to support a sport that has “become a rendezvous for the gangs that now fill the Jew-controlled burlesque houses.”<sup>90</sup>

In a discussion of the Soviet Union, the *Independent* claims that the Bolsheviks began a curriculum of sexual education within their schools, a subject Ford’s newspaper considered shocking and inappropriate.<sup>91</sup> As the writers of the articles already made the claim that all Communists are Jewish, this scandalous program reinforced the notion of the Jew as morally bankrupt and perverted.

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, 136.

<sup>86</sup> *The International Jew: Jewish Influences in American Life*, 70, 72.

<sup>87</sup> *The International Jew: Jewish Activities in the United States*, 118.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, 90.

<sup>89</sup> *The International Jew: Jewish Influences in American Life*, 38-45.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*, 55.

<sup>91</sup> *The International Jew: The World’s Foremost Problem*, 217.

## Jewish Ties to African Americans

In discussing race relations within the United States, the black-white binary is at the center of the dialogue. While never considered “black,” white supremacist Americans fought to prove that Jews existed outside of white society, remaining in a volatile position that threatened the very nature of “whiteness.”<sup>92</sup> In the August 6, 1921 article entitled “Jewish Jazz Becomes Our National Music,” the *Independent* makes note of the “organized eagerness of the Jew to make an alliance with the Negro” due to the development of Jazz from the black tradition of ragtime.<sup>93</sup> Dubbed “racial collusion,”<sup>94</sup> the *Independent* bemoans how the Jew and the African American contributed to the decline of American music, beginning with the “African period...which swiftly degenerated into a rather more bestial type than the beasts themselves arrive at.”<sup>95</sup>

The racist assumptions of black criminality were explained by Jewish influence in the liquor trade. The *Independent* claimed that Jews produced “Nigger gin,” inexpensive alcohol marketed towards poor African Americans, which was said to increase lawlessness. Bearing labels featuring “highly indecent portraiture of white women,” the alcohol was suspiciously absent in establishments catering towards whites.<sup>96</sup>

The *Independent* suggests that this alliance between Jews and blacks is a part of their strategy of “Divide-Conquer-Destroy.”<sup>97</sup> By encouraging lawlessness and immorality within African American communities, Jews could exploit the ever-growing division between whites

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<sup>92</sup> Eric Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jew, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006), 126.

<sup>93</sup> *The International Jew: Jewish Influences in American Life*, 70.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, 66.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, 78.

<sup>96</sup> *The International Jew: Aspects of Jewish Power in the United States*, 26-28.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

and blacks, benefiting greatly by providing a distraction while they put into effect their nefarious schemes.

## Chapter IV: The Influence of the International Jew

In 1920, the *Independent* circulated 72,000 copies a week. Just two years later, the readership had more than quadrupled and by 1924, the Dearborn *Independent* was one of the most read newspapers in the country with 700,000 copies in circulation a week.<sup>98</sup> Its spread can be attributed to its price, just a nickel per issue or a one-year subscription for one dollar, as well as the sensational content. When *The International Jew* was released as a book, it proved a huge success, ultimately selling ten million copies and being translated into sixteen languages.<sup>99</sup> This chapter will examine the massive success Ford's articles had within the United States at the local as well as national level.

### Dissemination

*The International Jew* was soon published into four volumes and sold to great success both domestically and abroad. Despite pleas from his friend Rabbi Leo Franklin to distance himself from the material, the book appeared in Europe and South America in 1927 brandishing Ford's name and picture.

In 1938, Henry Ford accepted the Grand Cross of the Supreme Order of the German

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<sup>98</sup> Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America*, 81.

<sup>99</sup> Sidney Bolkosky, *Harmony and Dissonance* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 80.

Eagle, the highest honor Nazi Germany bestowed on non-German citizens. This award was incredibly significant as it officially fused American and German anti-Semitism, cementing a mutual respect that began years earlier.<sup>100</sup>

In 1933, a Congressional committee investigating Nazi propaganda within the United States admonished Ford for publishing and promoting *The International Jew*. The committee also investigated allegations that Ford gave pecuniary support to Hitler's government, though no action was ever taken. Because of Ford's flirtation with Nazism, he found many rightwing supporters. Overtime, a number of hate groups began to distribute Ford's book and ideas, such as the pro-Nazi anti-Semitic racist organization the German-American Bund, which began giving out copies of the book after 1936.<sup>101</sup>

While the newspaper spread across the country, the city of Detroit, the capital of Ford's empire, and the surrounding area stands as the center in tracing the influence of the *Dearborn Independent*. Social historian Olivier Zunz argues that Detroit, more than any other American industrial city, was defined by its self-segregating populace.<sup>102</sup> Jews lived separately from the rest of the city, fearing anti-Semitism from both blue and white-collar workers. Jews were also barred from joining social clubs and schools instilled a quota system. On a visit to the city, Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis declared, "Anti-Semitism seems to have reached its American pinnacle here."<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 241.

<sup>101</sup> Bolkosky, *Harmony and Dissonance*, 172.

<sup>102</sup> Olivier Zunz, *The Changing Face of Inequality: Urbanization, Industrial Development, and Immigrants in Detroit, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 403.

<sup>103</sup> Bolkosky, *Harmony and Dissonance*, 78-79.

## Nativist Organizations

Many new nativist organizations began to form in tandem with the publication of *The International Jew* articles. In the 1920s, the Ku Klux Klan was experiencing a major revival and slowly was becoming centered not in the American South, but in the Midwest. By 1921, Michigan had the distinction of having the largest number of Klansmen in the nation, with roughly 875,000 in their ranks.<sup>104</sup>

Another white supremacist group emerged soon after. The Black Legion, an anti-black, Jewish, and Catholic offshoot of the Klan, began utilizing vandalism, assault, and other intimidation tactics throughout Michigan and northern Ohio. Amassing an army of between sixty and one hundred thousand members, the Black Legion's creed was "We regard as enemies to ourselves and our country all aliens, Negroes, Jews and cults and creeds believing in racial equality or owing allegiance to any foreign potentate. These we will fight without fear or favor as long as one foe of the American liberty is left alive."<sup>105</sup>

Though it would be improper to link the rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan or the formation of new hate groups to Henry Ford's newspaper, it is important to note that the Klan did become increasingly anti-Semitic in the time. As a consequence, Ford's name was often preached by these organizations; the Ku Klux Klan cited his ideas until he threatened to sue in 1944.<sup>106</sup> These nativist organizations wielded tremendous power at this time, and many American politicians, religious figures, and other influential leaders of depression era America started their careers with these groups. One such example is found in Gerald L. K. Smith, the "Dean of the Anti-Semites."

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 82.

<sup>105</sup> Peter H. Amann, "Vigilante Fascism: The Black Legion as an American Hybrid," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 25, no. 3 (1983): 491, 497.

<sup>106</sup> Bolkosky, *Harmony and Dissonance*, 243.

*Gerald L. K. Smith*

At ten o'clock on the morning of January 30, 1948, the House of Representatives Committee on Un-American Activities convened in Washington, DC to hear testimony from Gerald L. K. Smith, "America's most raucous purveyor [*sic*] of anti-Semitism and of racial and religious bigotry."<sup>107</sup> This was not the first time Smith appeared before a Congressional committee; less than four years before, he was called to defend his reactionary America First Party's 1944 election expenses before the House Committee to Investigate Campaign Expenditures.<sup>108</sup>

The HUAC hearings demonstrate how polarizing Smith was; even before he testified, a number of House Democrats led by Emanuel Celler of New York went on record to call Smith a fascist and condemn his "disruptive activities" while others, such as well-known Mississippi bigot Representative John E. Rankin, labeled these attacks "usual Communist propaganda."<sup>109</sup>

Gerald Lyman Kenneth Smith was born in Pardeeville, Wisconsin in 1898. After graduating from both Valpariso and Butler Universities, Smith became a minister in Indiana. After his wife became sick, he moved to Shreveport, Louisiana, where he continued his career as a preacher. Upon moving to the South, Smith began making radio broadcasts and speeches in which he spoke in favor of worker's rights and against unfair economic practices. He soon

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<sup>107</sup> U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Un-American Activities, *Investigation of Un-American Activities in the United States (Gerald L. K. Smith)*, 79<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., January 30, 1948.

<sup>108</sup> U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee to Investigate Campaign Expenditures, *Campaign Expenditures: America First Party (Gerald L. K. Smith, Witness)*, 78<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., October 4, 1944.

<sup>109</sup> U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Un-American Activities, *Investigation of Un-American Activities in the United States (Gerald L. K. Smith)*, 2-3.

resigned from the pulpit in order to pursue a career in politics, becoming a close friend and confidant to his political idol populist demagogue Huey P. Long.<sup>110</sup>

Following Long's assassination in 1935, Smith spoke to a crowd of over one hundred fifty thousand people at his funeral, an opportunity that served to eternally fuse the name Smith and Long. Smith later took over the reins of his hero's "Share Our Wealth" program, the infeasible welfare program aimed at bridging the gap between rich and poor, but was soon pushed out of Louisiana politics by a newly created political faction.<sup>111</sup>

Smith further alienated himself within U.S. politics by maintaining a rabid abhorrence of Franklin Roosevelt and New Deal policies, pledging to "drive that cripple from the White House" by endorsing racist, populist candidates.<sup>112</sup> This led many influential figures to label Smith a fascist, a fact that he vehemently denied. What he could not deny, however, was his background. It was a well-known fact that Smith was an active member of the Indiana chapter of the Ku Klux Klan<sup>113</sup> and had exhibited behavior Leo Ribuffo dubbed "polite anti-Semitism" such as telling insensitive jokes.<sup>114</sup>

Moving to Detroit in 1939, Smith found thousands of supporters eager to donate time and money to his rightwing campaign. One of the most prominent individuals was Henry Ford. Smith seemed to have unrestricted access to the auto tycoon; Ford instructed his secretary that Smith could see him whenever he wanted and Smith was a frequent guest at Ford's estate.<sup>115</sup> Soon,

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<sup>110</sup> David Bennett, *Demagogues in the Depression: American Radicals and the Union Party, 1932-1936* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1969), 114-117.

<sup>111</sup> Leo Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right: the Protestant Far Right From the Great Depression to the Cold War* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), 140.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*, 142.

<sup>113</sup> Bennett, *Demagogues in the Depression*, 115.

<sup>114</sup> Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right*, 147.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*, 155.

however, the firebrand preacher was becoming too controversial for a man of influence like Henry Ford and his entourage urged him to distance himself from Smith as much as possible.<sup>116</sup>

Smith's reputation as "dean of the anti-Semites" originated from the company he kept. While he refrained from using racially charged language himself, Smith's supporters freely resorted to name calling and violence at demonstrations, the word "kike" being a fan favorite. He wrote that among his biggest supporters were "old-fashioned Gospel preachers," an accurate statement considering how the conservative California Pastors Association aided his quest.<sup>117</sup>

Smith's monthly publication, *The Cross and the Flag*, was utilized to present his political and theological beliefs. Articles discussed a variety of topics such as Hollywood, the dangers of race mixing, and Smith's idea of repatriating African Americans to Africa. In the early 1950's, Smith claimed that his monthly publication circulated over 100,000 copies but the Anti-Defamation League repudiated this claim, placing it around 25,000.<sup>118</sup>

Despite refusing to discuss the "Jewish question" and publically denying his anti-Semitism for years, Smith changed his opinions drastically after 1945. Pointing to the influx of Jewish refugees during World War II, Smith's nativist rhetoric became more pronounced in the early 1940s. He paradoxically labeled the Anti-Defamation League a "Gestapo organization" and claimed that it was Jews within the United States that promoted anti-Semitism.<sup>119</sup>

In the 1944 presidential election, Democrat Franklin Roosevelt was seeking a fourth term in office, running against Republican Thomas Dewey. Always active in politics, Smith remarked

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<sup>116</sup> Max Wallace, *The American Axis: Henry Ford, Charles Lindbergh, and the Rise of the Third Reich* (London: Macmillan Publishing, 2003), 315.

<sup>117</sup> Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right*, 168.

<sup>118</sup> Bennett, *Demagogues in the Depression*, 286.

While no longer published as a magazine, [www.thecrossandflag.com](http://www.thecrossandflag.com) serves as a website devoted to Gerald L. K. Smith and includes several original articles written for the publication that outline Smith's political and theological beliefs. Also included is a link that takes visitors to [www.truthfromgod.com](http://www.truthfromgod.com), an anti-Semitic conservative Christian organization that maintains Smith's page.

<sup>119</sup> Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right*, 172.

that “Practically everybody that goes to church regular, is willing to work hard, and takes a bath once a week is against Roosevelt.” Initially supportive of Dewey, Smith changed his opinion after the Republican candidate dismissed the demagogue’s endorsement.<sup>120</sup> As he did not support either contender, Smith formed his own political party, the America First Party,<sup>121</sup> and began campaigning. Running on an anti-Communist, Jewish, and immigrant platform, Smith won 1,781 votes, 1,530 of them in Michigan.<sup>122</sup>

Smith’s popularity within Michigan proves an interesting investigation. As previously noted, Henry Ford had largely severed all ties with the controversial preacher by 1944, yet Smith continued to flaunt his association with the automobile baron, using Ford’s recognizable name to advance his own career. Further, Smith’s populist message resonated with many lower-class white Americans dissatisfied with the melting pot of post-Depression America, and his nativist pro-Christian platform echoed the beliefs of this demographic living in the shadow of the heterogeneous, industrialized Detroit.

Seeking to continue and justify his anti-Semitism, Smith jumped at the opportunity to spread Henry Ford’s *The International Jew*. After the automaker’s death, Smith printed an abridged version of the book published by his ultra-rightwing organization the Christian Nationalist Crusade. In the introduction, Smith decried the “reprisal and abuse” Henry Ford endured after the publication of the articles and insisted that Ford’s apology was a forgery signed by his subordinate Harry Bennett. Smith claimed that Ford “showed no signs of regret for having published [*The International Jew*] in the beginning” and that the industrialist hoped to republish

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<sup>120</sup> Glen Jeansonne, *Gerald L. K. Smith: Minister of Hate* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 152, 154.

<sup>121</sup> The modern America First Party, while professing a similar platform, is unaffiliated with Smith’s 1944 Party.

<sup>122</sup> "1944 Presidential General Election Results." Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections. <http://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/>.

the book before his death in 1947. Smith's organization also sold copies of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* for \$.50.<sup>123</sup>

In *The International Jew*, Smith found all of the supporting evidence for the wild claims he made during the 1944 election and his testimony during his HUAC hearing. In Smith's mind, disseminating the publication would prove his theories related to the "Jewish problem" within the United States, and his full embrace of conspiratorial anti-Semitism seems to have given him a slight boost in both confidence and influence; Smith began publishing a tremendous number of inflammatory articles rebuking liberal elements of American society and utilizing fear mongering techniques and ludicrously sensational stories not unlike modern tabloids that drove readership of *The Cross and the Flag* to above 30,000 households during the 1960s.<sup>124</sup>

Gerald L. K. Smith provides a clear example of the political influence of Henry Ford's *The International Jew*. The document provided tremendous sway to Smith's populist, xenophobic, and anti-Semitic views, giving him the tools and motivation to spread the message of hate across the country. And though Henry Ford himself avoided any connection with Smith at the end of his life, Smith made sure to cite the automaker with zeal; concluding his introduction to a reprinting of *The International Jew*, Smith states "I agree completely with Mr. Ford in his expressed convictions that all America and the world needs is to know the truth, 'and the truth shall set us free.'"<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Henry Ford and Gerald L. K. Smith, *The International Jew: the World's Foremost Problem* (Mansfield Centre, Connecticut: Martino Publishing, 2011), 5.

<sup>124</sup> John George and Laird Wilcox, *Nazis, Communists, Klansmen, and Others on the Fringe: Political Extremism in America* (Buffalo, New York: Prometheus Books, 1992), 305.

<sup>125</sup> Ford and Smith, *The International Jew*, 6.

## Evangelical Responses

The principle audiences of the Dearborn *Independent* were rural Americans who had little knowledge or personal experience with Jews. This fact is significant. Because many readers had never met a Jew before, their entire perception of Judaism came from previously discussed anti-Semitic sources. Christian leaders warned that Jews were Christ killers and many rural American seemingly lived in fear of the crafty urban Jew. This religious indoctrination affected both whites and blacks; Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois are two examples of noted African American leaders who expressed vehement anti-Semitic opinions, though they recanted their views later in life.<sup>126</sup> Religious leaders of the Christian right utilized both *The Protocols* and *The International Jew* in order to further their ministry and political goals.

### *Gerald B. Winrod*

The new wave of religious anti-Semitism produced prominent fundamentalist leaders that soon entered the national stage. One such man, Gerald B. Winrod, utilized his group, the Defenders of the Christian Faith, in order to promote anti-Semitic conspiratorial beliefs very much in line with the rhetoric of Henry Ford. Admired by Gerald L. K. Smith as a “sincere patriotic Christian American,” Winrod was an evangelical Christian conspiracy theorist. By 1932, he became convinced of the threat from the “hidden-hand,” a phrase pulled directly from *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*; Winrod decried Jewish involvement in New Deal policies and Communism as a “world-wide conspiracy...to dethrone God.”<sup>127</sup>

By 1936, Winrod’s monthly journal *The Defender* reached an estimated 100,000 readers across the country. His popularity drove him to run for United States Senator from Kansas; he

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<sup>126</sup> Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America*, 81.

<sup>127</sup> Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right*, 110, 167.

managed to earn twenty-two percent of the vote, coming in third. While he initially considered communism and fascism equally dangerous, Winrod soon became a leading apologist for Nazi Germany, garnering the nickname “the Jayhawk Nazi.”<sup>128</sup>

Popular anti-Semitic literature certainly influenced Winrod at the pulpit. The firebrand preacher frequently incorporated anti-Semitism into his sermons, reading sections of *The Protocols* and *The International Jew* alongside passages from the Books of Daniel, Ezekiel, and Revelation.<sup>129</sup> By juxtaposing these anti-Semitic works alongside several prominent examples of apocalyptic literature from the Bible, Winrod preached the message that the coming apocalypse would be the result of the international Jew.

Winrod differed from Henry Ford on one important issue, however. *The International Jew* indiscriminately attacked Jews as a whole, criticizing everyone with a Jewish heritage as being a member of the conspiracy. Winrod rejected this; he preached that a vast number had no involvement or even knowledge of the plot against Christendom, and it would be “absurd” and “horrible” to condemn and punish all Jews for the deeds of the few, and promised, “to defend the religious liberties of good Jews with the same zeal that I would defend my own.”<sup>130</sup>

This break with Ford and other anti-Semites neither won Winrod followers nor redeemed him in the eyes of Jews and their allies. His once powerful ministry crumbled after his indictment for sedition in 1942 and he died in relative obscurity in 1957. However, his ministry is significant towards the development of rightist anti-Semitic religious organizations today. Many organizations within the Christian right utilize his theology, and his family has continued to play a major role in the distribution of anti-Semitic literature; his son Gordon was a vocal Christian Identity leader who sold copies of *The International Jew* until his arrest for kidnapping

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<sup>128</sup> George and Wilcox, *Nazis, Communists, Klansmen, and Others on the Fringe*, 34-35, 206.

<sup>129</sup> Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right*, 111.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid*, 115.

his grandchildren in 2000. Further, Gerald's grandson David established Our Savior's Church of the Wilderness in rural Alaska where he published "anti-Jewish manifestos" and sent out copies of *The International Jew* in bulk to mailboxes across the town of Ward Cove, Alaska.<sup>131</sup>

### *Charles Coughlin*

Ford's influence was not constricted to protestant denominations. Within the area of Detroit, Ford's paper touched a religious leader whose name would soon be known to an untold number of citizens throughout the world. Father Charles E. Coughlin latched onto the anti-Semitism of the day and became a leading commentator on the Jewish question and other problems plaguing anti-Semitic audiences of the 1930s.

Born and ordained in Canada, Father Coughlin moved to Royal Oak, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit, in 1923 and established the Shrine of the Little Flower parish soon after. Coughlin faced many challenges with his church, most due to Royal Oak's small Catholic population and an active and increasingly anti-Catholic Klan. In an effort to increase the size of his congregation and curb anti-Catholic sentiment, the priest began broadcasting his sermons on public radio. Because Detroit was 52% Catholic, Coughlin had no trouble securing a time on the city's WJR radio station.<sup>132</sup>

Beginning on October 17, 1926, "The Golden Hour of the Little Flower" was broadcasted for 156 consecutive Sundays. Within three years his audience expanded to metro Chicago and Cincinnati and by 1932 his radio addresses reached twenty-seven states with an estimated thirty million listeners. Content shifted dramatically; while originally airing sermons, Father Coughlin

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<sup>131</sup> "The Winrod Legacy of Hate," Anti-Defamation League (2012), 1, 2.

<sup>132</sup> Ronald H. Carpenter, *Father Charles E. Coughlin: Surrogate Spokesman for the Disaffected* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998), 30-31.

changed to propagating lessons aimed at children then slowly drifted into politically charged messages.<sup>133</sup>

A staunch opponent of Roosevelt and the New Deal, Coughlin joined fellow firebrand Gerald L. K. Smith in founding the Union Party in 1936. This third party fielded a candidate, William Lemke, in the 1936 Presidential election, and Coughlin made a national speaking tour, denouncing Roosevelt and Wall Street. Despite his earnest campaigning, the Union Party failed to take any electoral votes. The party imploded following the poor performance.<sup>134</sup>

Following the political disaster that was the Union Party, Coughlin returned to the airwaves with speeches that were increasingly anti-Semitic. This shift in tone to antagonistic has been credited to Coughlin's loss of popularity resulting from the election. In 1938 he founded the Christian Front,<sup>135</sup>

Coughlin first became acquainted with Ford's entourage in 1933 when he met Ernest Liebold. They discussed a variety of topics, among them Jewish control of Wall Street. Coughlin and Ford shared a number of conspiratorial beliefs about Jews, especially the group's involvement with the First World War. The two men became close in their fight to spread their message of the dangers of Jews, and Ford helped subsidize and distribute Coughlin's anti-Semitic journal *Social Justice*.<sup>136</sup>

By late 1938, Coughlin organized a reprinting of *The Protocols* and came out as a supporter of the document. In the editorials that followed, the priest cited Henry Ford and his work numerous times. Liebold even supplied Coughlin with the *Independent's* sources. Even with his immense popularity and widespread audience, criticism followed immediately. Former

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<sup>133</sup> Carpenter, *Father Charles E. Coughlin*, 32.

<sup>134</sup> Donald Warren, *Radio Priest: Charles Coughlin, the Father of Hate Radio* (New York: The Free Press, 2006), 85, 93

<sup>135</sup> Carpenter, *Father Charles E. Coughlin*, 114.

<sup>136</sup> Warren, *Radio Priest*, 148.

Okhrana member and private investigator for Ford Casimer Palmer wrote to the priest, calling *The Protocols* “clumsy forgeries” and lamenting that “if an ignorant house painter like Hitler falls for stuff like that it is not surprising...but if an educated man like yourself pretends not to know...then it is time that you vacate the editorial chair of *Social Justice*.” Further, the Jewish community of Detroit hastened to meet with Coughlin in an effort to convince him to cease printing the articles. To their dismay, the priest replied that anti-Semitism “can never happen [in the United States]” and that Jews should not be so sensitive.<sup>137</sup> Coughlin’s embrace of *The Protocols* and Ford drew international response as well. *Der Stürmer*, Nazi Germany’s tabloid-esque weekly magazine, celebrated the priest, praising him as “one of the few men in the United States who has the courage to speak his conviction that National Socialism is right.”<sup>138</sup>

Eventually, the Catholic Church, weary of the negative press Coughlin was attracting, forced the Radio Priest to cease broadcasting. With his final newscast, Coughlin renounced his ties to *Social Justice* and the anti-Semitic groups it spawned.<sup>139</sup> After his death, Coughlin was included in Willis Carto’s *Profiles in Populism*, a publication of Carto’s reactionary political group Liberty Lobby.<sup>140</sup>

Coughlin is an extremely important case study in the examination of *The Protocols*, *The International Jew*, and American anti-Semitism as a whole; the priest utilized a new, popular technology, radio, in order to diffuse his material, his partnership with Ford helped to fund his ventures and provide credibility to his cause, and his efforts were recognized by millions within the United States and nationally. Though he later distanced himself from the material, Father

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<sup>137</sup> Warren, *Radio Priest*, 150-152.

<sup>138</sup> Bennett, *Demagogues in the Depression*, 281.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid*, 282.

<sup>140</sup> Warren, *Radio Priest*, 301.

Coughlin's legacy as the "Radio Priest" and a poster child of right wing populism has eternally merged the man and the material together.

## Conclusion

When examining the articles, it is clear that the *Dearborn Independent* sought to antagonize and condemn Jews for their perceived threats against Gentiles. According to the paper, this menace existed in every component of life, and white Christians could not enjoy leisure activities without the influence of the Jew. Over the course of eighty articles, the *Independent* defamed and vilified Jews within the United States through the use of popular anti-Semitic rhetoric and, after July 10, 1920, by *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

*The International Jew* maintains historical significance as it brought *The Protocols* to the attention of the American public; because the articles were written by professional journalists, the convoluted document was simplified and Americanized, thereby organizing the series into a document that was portioned to readers in a more organized and readable form than the original. The content of the articles, as well as Henry Ford himself, served as a major influence to anti-Semites throughout the tumultuous twentieth century. The legacy of *The International Jew* is still present today; extremist religious and political organizations continue to quote and reprint the libel with updated commentary.

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