

Power, Ignorance, and Anti-Semitism: Henry Ford and His War on Jews

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This paper traces the anti-Semitic activities of automobile manufacturer Henry Ford. Ford first voiced his anti-Semitic leanings in 1915, around the time of his "Peace Ship" episode. Eventually, his belief that the "International Jew" was the source of the world's problems led him to conduct a campaign against them in the pages of his newspaper; *The Dearborn Independent*. The articles in Ford's newspaper blamed the Jews for everything from the Bolshevik Revolution and the First World War to bootlegged liquor and cheap movies. They also accused the Jews of conspiring to enslave Christianity and destroy the "Anglo-Saxon" way of life. The articles were later gathered into book form and published under the title: *The International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem*. This book was translated into 16 languages, and was to have a profound influence upon the growing Nazi movement in Germany. Eventually, Ford publicly apologized for the articles in light of a legal suit. However; he continued to express his anti-Semitic beliefs in his private circles. In the 1930's, he hired many fascist sympathizers, accepted an award from Hitler; and engaged in business ventures in Nazi Germany. In the 1940's, the Ford Motor Company was transformed into a more tolerant organization through the efforts of Ford's son and grandson. However; Ford himself never abandoned his deep-rooted anti-Semitism. His anti-Semitic literature can still be found in great abundance, more than fifty years after his death. While Ford is considered to be a great man by many Americans, he spawned an ugly legacy of hatred and bigotry that still has ramifications today.

Anti-Semitism has been described as being a disease of the soul. It is a prejudice that has gained particular notoriety in the 20th Century-- the century of Treblinka and Auschwitz. However; this phenomenon of hate has not just been confined to the continent of Europe. In 1920, a small newspaper in Dearborn, Michigan began publishing a series of articles entitled: "The International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem." The newspaper was owned by the famous automobile manufacturer; Henry Ford. Through a combination of influence, power; and ignorance, he was able to unleash the largest and most damaging campaign against Jews ever waged in the United States.

By 1915, the Great War had been going on for well over a year. Henry Ford's attitude towards the conflict was well known to the public. He had told the *Detroit Free Press* that he would give all of his money to stop it and that the building of armaments by the U.S. was "wasteful and war breeding."¹ At the time, the 52 year old Ford was one of the richest and most popular men in America. More than half of the automobiles in the nation came from the Ford Motor Company. Many Americans saw him as a champion of the working class; the previous year; he had made national headlines by raising the minimum wage for his workers to \$5 a day. It came as no surprise when a steady stream of pacifists soon began courting Ford, hoping to utilize his finances and his prestige. One such hopeful was a Jewish Hungarian named Rosika Schwimmer; who called upon Ford in November of 1915. Mine. Schwimmer proposed to Ford her plan to stop the war by sending a delegation of pacifists to Europe on a chartered "Peace Ship." Ford was enchanted with the idea, and organized a group to book passage on a Scandinavian-American vessel, the *Oscar II*. Before he set sail, Ford granted an interview in which he proudly boasted, "We're going to stop the war... We're going to get the boys out of the trenches by Christmas."² At the same time, however; Ford admitted that that he did not exactly know where the ship was going. Nor did Ford reveal any specific plans of the operation. The ship eventually docked in Oslo, Norway on December 18, 1915. No one greeted the ship in the freezing temperatures of --12 E Ford gave his first, and only, press conference of the "campaign" four days later. It was a confusing speech in which Ford mainly talked about a new tractor he had on the market. He expressed his belief that it would be wiser for the munitions factories of Europe to produce tractors instead of weapons. One newsman sarcastically noted that Ford "must be a very great man indeed who permits himself to utter such foolishness."³ Ford then booked passage on the first steamer returning to New York and returned the next morning, weakened by a nasty cold. The ill-conceived Peace Ship venture, which accomplished nothing, soon ended in disaster and embarrassment.

One of those who came to Ford's defense in the aftermath was Philadelphia rabbi, Joseph Krawkopf, who declared that it was better "a thousand times Lto] be branded a fool in the service of humanity than be hailed a hero for having shed rivers of blood."⁴ Ironically, Ford had made a strange statement to Mine. Schwimmer before their Peace Ship departure-- a statement that she found "cheap and vulgar." "I know who caused the war-- the German-Jewish bankers. I have the evidence here," Ford declared, slapping his pocket. "Facts. I can't give them out yet because I haven't got them all. But I'll have them soon."⁵

Ford found himself in the press spotlight again in 1919, when a \$1 million libel suit he had filed against the Chicago Tribune went to court. A June 23, 1916 editorial, entitled "Ford is an Anarchist," had characterized Ford as an "ignorant idealist," an "anarchist enemy of the nation," and as being "so incapable of thought that he cannot see the ignominy of his own performance."⁶ In Ford's defense, the article was based on a false report that Ford would not guarantee the jobs of workers who were called away for military operations. However; this did not prevent Ford from enduring one of the most embarrassing episodes of his career. When Ford took the stand, Tribune lawyer Elliott Stevenson took issue with his influence on the public. "You call yourself an educator;" he noted to Ford. "Now I shall inquire whether you were a well informed man, competent to educate people."⁷ Stevenson then launched into a series of questions which Ford's lawyer; Alfred Lucking, had been dreading:

"Have there ever been any revolutions in this country?"

"There was, I understand."

"When?"

"In 1812."

"Did you ever hear of Benedict Arnold?" "I have heard the name."

"Who was he?"

"I have forgotten just who he is. He is a writer; I think."⁸

Eventually, Ford was forced to admit to Stevenson that he was "ignorant about most things."⁹ After enduring the cross-examination for a grueling six days, Ford left the witness stand, vowing, "Never again." The jury eventually ruled in favor of Ford, but awarded him, as damages, the insulting sum of \$.06. The press had a field day over the trial's outcome. One paper described Ford as "a man with a vision distorted and limited by his lack of information," while The Nation commented that "the unveiling of Mr. Ford has much of the pitiful about it, if not the tragic."¹⁰ Most brutal of all had been Stevenson's closing remarks to the jury, in which he declared that he had never been so shocked as he was in this case "when Henry Ford disclosed the pitiable condition of his mind."¹¹

Ford, however; was not in court to hear Stevenson's comments. He had departed on a camping trip with his good friends Thomas Edison, Harvey Firestone, and naturalist John Burroughs, their third such outing together. During this particular trip, Burroughs noted in his diary that: "Mr. Ford attributes all evil to the Jews or Jewish capitalists-- the Jews caused the war; the Jews caused the outbreak of thieving and robbing all over the country, the Jews caused the inefficiency of the navy which Edison talked about last night."¹²

By now, it was not just close acquaintances to whom Ford was expressing such anti-Semitic beliefs. An executive at the Ford Company was up late one night and decided to tide himself over with a candy bar. Ford walked up to the man, started some small talk, and took a bite of the man's snack. A look of dissatisfaction came over his face. "This stuff isn't as good as it used to be, is it?" The executive replied that he had not noticed any change. "The Jews have taken hold of it," Ford replied. "They're cheapening it to make more money out of it." Since it happened to be the fourth anniversary of the ill-fated Peace Ship expedition, the subject came up in their ensuing conversation. "What did you get out of that trip, Mr. Ford?" the executive enquired. "I know who makes the wars," Ford responded. "The international Jewish bankers arrange them so they can make money out of them." He then cryptically added, "I know it's true because a Jew on the Peace Ship told me.. .That man knew what he was talking about-- gave me the whole story. We're going to tell the whole story one of these days and show them up!"¹³

By this time, Ford had been in possession of The Dearborn Independent for several months. A typical small country newspaper of the time, it was Ford's intention to use it as his public mouthpiece. He had "practical" ideas that he wanted to give to the public "without having them garbled, distorted, or misrepresented." ¹⁴ In order to promote its absolute purity against outside influences, Ford refused to accept advertising among its pages. He hired as Editor-in-Chief E.G. Pipp, who had served for 12 years as manager and editor of the Detroit News. Pipp shared Ford's outspoken liberalism and was quite pleased with the chance to work with him.

Ford also hired William J. Cameron, another veteran of the Detroit News, to ghostwrite "Mr. Ford's Own Page." The bookish Cameron had been nicknamed the "Walking Dictionary" at the News. He was unflatteringly described by one Ford associate as a "short, stout, round-faced man; he looked and talked a lot like W.C. Fields, with the difference that Fields was funny."¹⁵ Cameron was also liberal in his outlook, and had formerly been a village preacher for six years in Brooklyn, Michigan.1~ He was also well known among prominent local Jews. Philip Slomovitz, editor of the Detroit Jewish News, recalled that "he always appeared at Jewish meetings back then and was always supportive of our community."¹⁷

Ford addressed his newspaper to the "common people." When he began to expand its circulation, two-thirds of its readers lived in small towns or in the country. Ford himself had been born and raised on a farm outside of Dearborn and was extremely proud of his origins. An early article in the Independent claimed that the real United States was located outside of the cities. "When we stand up and sing 'My Country 'Tis of Thee,'" the article noted, "we seldom think of the city. Likewise, rural Americans looked affectionately to Ford as one of their own. Significantly, it was rural publications that had defended Ford after his disastrous trial testimony. The Ohio State Journal admitted Ford's ignorance, but added, "We sort of like old Henry Ford, anyway," while the Nebraska State Journal chided that "The Tribune was silly."¹⁹

Stevenson had ridiculed Ford's efforts at being a public educator. However; the rural communities still largely admired and believed in Ford. They were the true Americans in his eyes and they would understand him when he proclaimed in his pages that the world was sick and showing tokens of delirium. "We shall have to save ourselves before we can hope to save anyone else," the Independent announced. "Americanism still has a mission to the world."²⁰ Ford was out to prove that he could and would educate these "real" Americans. The recent World War; the Bolshevik Revolution, the urbanization of America, the economic slump-- these things seemed to be jeopardizing the American way of life as Ford saw it. However; he was convinced that all of this was traceable to one source, and he was going to reveal it to the nation.

E.G. Pipp had known Ford for several years prior to his tenure at the Dearborn Independent. However; he soon began to notice a change in the man. Ford was "bringing up the Jews frequently, almost continuously in conversation, blaming them for almost everything.... At first he talked only about the 'big fellows' and said he had nothing against Jew in ordinary walks of life. Later he stated; 'They are all pretty much the same.'"²¹ Early in 1920, Ford made his views known to the public for the first time in an interview with J.J. O'Neil of the New York World. Ford proclaimed that "The international financiers are behind all war. They are what is called the International Jew-- German Jews, French Jews, English Jews, American Jews. I believe that in all these countries except our own the Jewish financier is supreme... Here the Jew is a threat."²²

However; even with this audacious announcement, few could foresee what Ford had in mind for dealing with this "menace." They found out, however; on May 22, 1920 when the front page of Ford's newspaper carried the headline: "The International Jew: The World's Problem." It was the first in a series of articles which were to last for 91 consecutive issues. Ford gave an unenthusiastic Cameron the job of actually writing the articles. "Ford has been at me to commence writing on those cursed Jewish articles," Cameron complained to Pipp, "I don't know what to write."²³ He went to the Detroit Public Library to do research and reported back to an equally unenthusiastic Pipp. "He told me what a wonderful race they were," Pipp later reflected, "and how little he had known of their history, and what a magnificent history it was."²⁴ Pipp resigned in disgust the month before the first article on the "International Jew" appeared. Ford named Cameron as his replacement. By 1922, only two of the Independent's original eight staff members were still working for Ford.

Cameron soon found a source for his anti-Jewish articles in the form of The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion. The Protocols was a work that purported to be a transcription of plans concocted at an 1897 Zionist conclave. At this secret meeting, high ranking Jewish officials, the "Elders of Zion," came up with 24 Protocols which were designed to enslave the Christian world through various sinister means. The Tenth Protocol represents a typical excerpt, proclaiming that it was the duty of Jews "to wear everyone out by dissensions, animosities, feuds, famines, inoculation of diseases, want, until the Gentiles see no other way of escape except to appeal to our money and power."²⁵

If The Protocols appeared outlandish, it may have been because they were a Russian forgery plagiarized from a 1869 German novel which, itself, was plagiarized from a 1864 French political satire. The original French work, entitled Dialogue aux enfers entre Machiavelli et Montesquieu, was intended by its author; journalist Maurice Joly, to be a savage indictment of Napoleon III. ²⁶ The German novel, To Sedan by Herman Goedsche, replaced Joly's world domination plan of Napoleon III with one schemed by a group of Jews in Prague. Eventually, Czarist agent, Sergei Nilius incorporated this work into his 1905 effort entitled The Great in the Small. Nilius' work was designed to deflect the misery of Nicholas II's policies onto a scapegoat--the Jews of Russia. This work was, in turn, further elaborated on in 1917 by a group of Czarist officers living in Berlin and re-titled The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion.²⁷

The Protocols made their way to Detroit in the hands of a certain Madame Pacquita de Shishmarov, who had invented a false genealogy for them in order to pass them off as genuine.²⁸ Although some 37 editions of the work were to be found in Europe at the time, they were relatively unknown in the United States. After they had gained exposure through Ford's efforts, many readers were decidedly unimpressed. "The Protocols are about the strangest jumble of crazy ideas that ever found its way in print," was the verdict of The New York Times.²⁹ Former president William H. Taft stated that the tales of

Baron Munchausen were the only things in literature that should be classified with The Protocols, "for they are nor much more preposterous."³⁰ However; Ford himself was convinced of their accuracy: "The only statement I care to make about The Protocols is that they fit in with what is going on.. .They have fitted the world situation up to this time. They fit it now."³¹ Novelist Upton Sinclair would later bitinglly remark, "Henry said that 'history is bunk,' but of course he hadn't meant such history as The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion."³²

Madame de Shishmarov had brought The Protocols to Ford's attention through the efforts of his personal secretary and general manager of The Dearborn Independent, Ernest G. Liebold. Liebold had been discovered by the Ford Industry as a teller at a Dearborn bank in 1912. He soon rose through the ranks and became responsible for; among other duties, signing Ford's checks, responding to Ford's mail, controlling access to Ford, and acting as Ford's personal spokesman to the press. Liebold, whose father had emigrated from Germany, possessed a cold, rigid, "Prussian" personality. Ford once related that Liebold made his eight children march around the dinner table in military fashion and, when they had reached their places, would shout "Sitzen sie!"³³ When an employee once wished him a "Merry Christmas," Liebold looked up, paused a moment, and grumpily responded, "Well, all right."³⁴ Liebold acted as Ford's "chief executioner;" dirtying himself in work others would not touch. According to Frank Black, an associate on the Independent, Ford liked Liebold because he carried out orders: "He was one of the persons Mr. Ford could ask to do things he wouldn't ask other people to do. Mr. Ford knew the others weren't hard enough..."³⁵ Liebold certainly made no effort to hide his role, explaining that he made it a rule not to have any friends in the company: "You are then in the position where you don't give a goddamn what happens to anybody."³⁶ Ford himself defended Liebold and his cold personality with the explanation that you don't "hire a watchdog to like people."³⁷ Unlike many of Ford's associates, who went along with his anti-Semitic directives only with reluctance, Liebold approached the campaign with great enthusiasm. His anti-Semitism was no secret at the Ford Company. He once had a box full of 100 swastika pins shipped to his office from Germany.³⁸ He was later quoted as saying of the Independent campaign, "When we get through with the Jews, there won't be one of them who would dare raise his head in public."³⁹ It became Cameron's job to write the articles while it was Liebold's job to supply the "evidence."

In order to accomplish this, Liebold set up a special detective agency for Ford at 20 Broad Street, New York City. Ford poured thousands of dollars into the operation, which was designed to investigate the private lives of prominent and suspected Jews. In other cases, liberal Gentiles were investigated in the effort to trace their "Jewish backers." Some of the detectives employed were former Secret Service agents. Others were quite prominent in government affairs, such as C.C. Daniels, brother of the former Secretary of the Navy, and Dr. Harris Houghton, former head of New York City's Army Intelligence-Gathering Bureau.⁴⁰ The rest were made up of ex-cons, amateur detectives, racist fanatics, and, in surprisingly large numbers, exiled White Russians. Liebold would often correspond with the agents in coded messages. "ACADAM," for example, meant "Mr. Ford says, 'OK.'"⁴¹ All of the operatives were identified with a code number. Liebold was 121X, while Ford was, presumably, No.1. The budget for the agency was quite extravagant. The chief of staff alone received a salary of \$1000 a month; for the single week of April 23, 1922, his expenditures ran to the sum of \$678.⁴² The average correspondent, it was reported at the time, "if he digs deep and earnestly, will be amazed at the elaborate spy system in Henry Ford's organization. The spy system of the Kaiser's German Government had nothing on it."⁴³

The most notorious employee of Ford's detective agency was Boris Brasol, a Russian monarchist who had immigrated to the United States in 1916. Brasol was a rabid anti-Semite who once boasted that he had written books "which have done the Jews more injury than would have been done to them in ten pogroms."⁴⁴ Brasol was a former member of an anti-Semitic society known as the Russian Black Hundred. In 1911, Brasol and his fellow Black Hundred members had attempted to blame the gang related murder of a youth named Andrey Yuchinsky on an innocent Jewish boy. The boy, Brasol claimed, had killed Yuchinsky in order to drain his blood for ritual purposes. After a two year ordeal, the boy was finally declared innocent by the courts, much to Brasol's eternal disappointment. After arriving in America, Brasol was able to gain a high level of influence in the U.S. Government. He was appointed to a position in the Department of Justice during the tenure of Henry C. Doherty. He was utilized by Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer as an "authority" on Russian radicalism. Brasol also had connections to Dr. Harris Houghton, a member of U.S. Army intelligence. It was Dr. Houghton's Russian secretary, Natalie De Bogory, whom Brasol had translate The Protocols into English.⁴⁵ Brasol represented an extremely sinister aspect of the Ford detective agency. As an anti-Semite, he verged on the psychotic. "There are going to be the biggest pogroms and massacres here and elsewhere," he once bragged, "I will write and I will precipitate them."⁴⁶ Brasol was "officially" employed by Ford for two years, but remained in contact with him until 1939. He would later become a writer for the anti-Semitic priest, Charles Coughlin, and a Nazi agent, visiting German officials "to give rather than receive advice."⁴⁷

Another agent employed by Ford was Stanley W Finch, a former aid to U.S. Attorney General George W. Wickersham. Finch first came to Liebold's attention when he claimed to have discovered that Jews were responsible for the abduction of women used in prostitution and burlesque. He was soon employed to study the shady operations of finance and "big money." Finch assembled a manuscript which linked powerful institutions, such as corporations and banks, through their directors, all of whom were Jews. Finch was eventually fired by Liebold for his expenses. He claimed, for example, that he needed an expensive fur coat to infiltrate the money--obsessed Jew he was investigating.⁴⁸ Equally bizarre was Lars Jacobsen, a German "secret agent" sent to Europe in an attempt to gain support for Ford's campaign from the ex-Kaiser. Jacobsen was convinced that he was involved in a serious "cloak and dagger" operation. On June 11, 1921, Jacobsen wrote to Liebold from Berlin: "I will ask you to use a great deal of care in communicating with me, and use all possible care that the letters are not intercepted, because while I dislike to think of myself as a coward, on the other hand I have no delusions about what the Jewish Revolutionary Party in Germany will do to me if they find me communicating with the Hohenzollerns on behalf of Mr. Ford in order to secure information that will show the Jews up. If that happens, I am certain that you will not hear from me any more..."⁴⁹

One of Ford's agents, a Russian immigrant named Serge Rosdionov, went to Mongolia in an effort to find 13 additional Protocols "in the original Hebrew."⁵⁰ Other agents worked closer to home, investigating, for example, whether Jewish Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis had a secret phone line to the White House through which he gave orders to the gravely ill President Wilson.⁵¹ Not surprisingly, both of these investigations turned up empty handed. Perhaps the most bizarre investigation (and that is saying a lot) was conducted years later by Ford himself. Ford was fascinated with a 1907 book entitled *The Escape and Suicide of John Wilkes Booth, or The First True Account of Lincoln's Assassination, Containing a Complete Confession by Booth Many Years After his Crime*. Its author alleged that Booth had actually been hired by Vice President Andrew Johnson to assassinate Lincoln. After he committed the crime, Booth had fled to California and went by two possible names, John St. Helens or David E. George. A mummy in Tennessee, often used as a circus attraction, allegedly represented his true remains. Ford accepted this account, but believed that Jewish bankers were the ones actually behind the assassination plot. He became obsessed with this theory and traveled to 14 states in an effort to prove it.⁵² Needless to say, he also came up empty handed.

The articles that began to pour out of Dearborn were, not surprisingly, quite remarkable for their bizarre accusations. According to Ford and his lackeys, the Jews were responsible for everything that was wrong with society. A look at some of the article titles gives a good indication of their content: "The Scope of the Jewish Dictatorship in the U.S.," "When Editors were Independent of Jews," "The Jewish Element in Bootlegging Evil," "Jewish Hot-Beds of Bolshevism in the U.S.," "Jewish Power and America's Money Famine," "Jewish Degradation of American Baseball," "Jew Wires Direct Tammany's Gentile Puppets," "Dr. Levy, a Jew, Admits his People's Error," "Will Jewish Zionism Bring Armageddon?"

According to the Independent, Jews concocted "nigger gin" that led to "Negro outbursts and subsequent lynchings."⁵³ It was the Jews who were bootlegging the liquor during the current prohibition. Jewish professors were the ones who corrupted "Anglo-Saxon" minds at college. Jewish film producers saw nothing wrong with making lewd "sex" films: "This Oriental view is essentially different from the Anglo-Saxon, the American view."⁵⁴ Jazz, "moron music," was actually derived from Jews: "The mush, the slush, the sly suggestion, the abandoned sensuousness of sliding notes, are of Jewish origin."⁵⁵ Songwriters such as Irving Berlin were a threat to listening audiences, because "Jews did not create the popular song; they debased it."⁵⁶ The Jews ruined baseball because "The Jew saw money where the sportsman saw fun and skill."⁵⁷ Jews themselves were poor in sports because of "physical lethargy"; "It is a Jewish characteristic to avoid, if possible, the pain of contest, just as it is characteristic to avoid unnecessary effort."⁵⁸ This was proven with the example of boxer Benny Leonard. Leonard had no scars because "he will not let anyone hit him."⁵⁹ According to the Independent, the Jews were responsible for everything from flashy jewelry and short skirts to rising rents and the manufacture of cigarettes.

Ford and his paper offered quite an interesting history lesson for a man who thought the American Revolution had occurred in 1812. Christopher Columbus was actually financed and later betrayed by "secret Jews" from the Spanish Court. Benedict Arnold had been "set up" to betray his country by a Jewish aid named David Franks. The World War and the Bolshevik Revolution had both been precipitated and directed by Jews. The Soviet Union was referred to as "the present Jewish government of Russia." This Jewish conspiracy against the world flourished, according to the Independent, because people could not see how it could exist. Ford was trying to wake up the "boob Gentiles" in an effort to save America from Jewish domination. In order to prove that these things existed, the paper would precede many of the articles with a "Protocol" similar to what was being described. This proved that the Jews were conspiring to make slaves of Christianity and gain world domination, because it had all been adumbrated by The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion.

The Dearborn Independent articles made a point of slandering individual Jews by name. For example, Bernard Morris Baruch was labeled the "Pro-Consul of Judah in America," a "Jew of superpower" who took a leading role in Jewish activities to bring America's downfall. When reporters asked Baruch to comment on the charges, he replied, tongue in cheek, "Now boys, you wouldn't expect me to deny them would you?"⁶⁰

Other Jews did not have the opportunity to be as flippant. For example, exArmy Captain Robert Rosenbluth was accused by the Independent of murdering Maj. Alexander Pennington Cronkite in 1918. The army had officially ruled Cronkite's death to have been a tragic accident. Rosenbluth, in the meantime, had gone to work for Hoover's American Relief Administration throughout Europe and Russia. However; when the Independent discovered that Rosenbluth had been present when Cronkite was killed, it labeled him both a "dirty German Jew spy" and, in light of his Russian service, a Bolshevik agent. As a result of a steady stream of articles in Ford's paper; Rosenbluth was put on trial by the Justice Department. He was eventually cleared of all charges, but, in the mean time, had been labeled the "American Dreyfus" by the press.⁶¹

Some Jews responded to the ridiculous charges with legal suits. In February of 1921, theatre producer Morris Gest filed a \$5,000,000 damage suit against Ford for an article which had referred to him as "a Russian Jew who has produced the most salacious spectacles ever shown in America," and which accused him of abandoning his Russian parents. Mr. Gest was livid, saying to the press, "I'll make that Peace Ship Henry pay dearly for what he said, and more, I'll make him eat his own words."⁶² In an official response, Liebold responded simply, "Mr. Gest will be ignored."⁶³ The suit was eventually abandoned.

The Dearborn Independent was sold in newsstands and on the street. It also had displays at State Fairs, received advertisement through two promotional films, "The Dearborn Independent" and "Romance of Making a Modern Magazine," and was even hawked at churches and schools. However; street sales only averaged .009% of the paper's total circulation.⁶⁴ The Independent gained its real audience through Ford dealerships across the country. Ford felt that the paper needed a "boost" in order for it to reach as many Americans as possible. Therefore, the Ford General Sales Manager sent out a memo instructing dealers to think of the Independent as a "standard Ford product."⁶⁵ In California, one director recalled, "We had continual directives that they wanted the subscriptions of The Dearborn Independent increased and that everything possible should be done to give it the best possible ~~~"⁶⁶ As a result, dealers were expected to sell a certain number of newspaper subscriptions in addition to their quota of cars. Some dealers sent free subscriptions to family, friends, and names picked randomly from a phone book. Most simply factored the subscription fee into the price of a Model T, giving all of their Ford buyers an automatic subscription. Not all dealers, however; actually sent out the papers. Recalled Ford employee Jack Davis, "We had many Jewish dealers and they used to throw the things in the trash without even untying the bundles. They weren't the only ones. There were a lot of other dealers who were disgusted with the whole thing."⁶⁷

Some Ford dealers gave up their business rather comply with the directive. Most, however; tried to make due as best they could. One unfortunate dealer in Virginia wrote to the company that his Jewish landlord was threatening him with eviction over the articles. An unsympathetic Liebold wrote back: "Does it not appear to you that a Ford agent should own his own building to place him beyond the exertion of such pressure! We naturally expect, and our agents must also feel, that the Jews will endeavor to make victims of them whenever possible." Despite any protest, Ford's so-called "lead pipe" circulation accomplished just what he had desired. When Ford first gained control of the Independent in 1919, it was distributed only in Dearborn. When the first anti-Semitic article appeared, it had a circulation of 72,000 per week. By 1922, the figure had increased to 300,000. In 1924, the Independent reached its peak with 700,000 subscribers. The largest daily newspaper in America at the time, the New York Daily News, had a circulation of only 50,000 more.⁶⁹

In the meantime, certain members of the press began to keep track of Ford and his activities. Norman Hapgood kept monthly updates on Ford in the pages of Hearst's International Magazine. Hapgood had visited Ford in Detroit and was shocked by what he found. On any subject unrelated to the manufacture of automobiles, Ford's head seemed to be "full of wheels," while his overall mentality was like "that of a child."⁷⁰ Hapgood was convinced that Ford had been corrupted by the former Czarist agents working for him, and was the first to reveal the activities of Ford's detective agency to the public.

The most active opponent of Henry Ford in the press, however; was his own former editor. After resigning from his position on the Independent, E.G. Pipp formed his own newspaper entitled Pipp's Weekly. His advertisements promised that: "Inside Facts About Henry Ford and his Activities are Always Printed Faithfully and Fairly in Pipp's Weekly." Pipp's paper offered the most regular and complete updates on Ford's sordid campaign against the Jews and went to great lengths to prove its falsehood. "There is always something strong in knowledge," Pipp proclaimed, "and every Jew and every Gentile

is better equipped to answer and beat back the Ford charges by being posted on what his men are doing and propose doing."⁷¹

Despite the Independent's large circulation, Ford often pointed out that he lost hundreds of thousands of dollars on it annually due to its low price and lack of endorsements. Ford implied that such things did not bother him; he would gladly donate millions if it meant exposing the public to the truth. Pipp, however; revealed that Ford recorded these as "business losses," deducted them from his taxes, and reduced his income tax accordingly. One year; for example, Ford actually suffered a personal loss of only \$57,652 from the Independent. The government, in the meantime, had absorbed \$226,348 out of the total \$284,000 lost on the paper.⁷² As Pipp once pointed out, "All of his roads lead either to wealth, to power; or to self glory, or to all three- for himself."⁷³

It was Pipp's belief that Ford's anti-Semitism was largely the result of the company he kept with shady Jew-baiters such as Liebold and Brasol. However; Pipp also believed that Ford used anti-Semitism as a tool for possible political ambitions. Various polls in newspapers had revealed that Ford stood a good chance of winning the office of President if he chose to run. A 1920 survey of college students had even ranked Ford as the third greatest man who ever lived, behind Jesus Christ and Napoleon.⁷⁴ Pipp, therefore, believed that Ford hoped to win votes by attacking the Jews. "He knew there were about 3 million Jews in the United States," theorized Pipp, "and he figured he would gain three or four or five votes of non-Jews for every Jewish vote lost. He knew the feeling existent in thousands of small towns because he was a small town boy himself."⁷⁵

Jews responded to the charges Ford leveled against them in various ways. Some, such as author and lecturer John Spargo, instructed fellow Jews to "leave him alone; let him talk. Invite him to the Town Hall and let him tell you why he is opposed to the Jews, if he will."⁷⁶ Others, such as lawyer Samuel Untermyer; were more vocal in their outrage. Declaring Ford a "mad hatter;" Untermyer violently proclaimed that he was "densely ignorant" on every subject except automobiles and was "blinded by a depth of bigotry that belongs in the dark ages from which he has not yet emerged.... Why can't the people realize that a cheap, petty, ignorant man who has grown rich can get just as crazy as any poor devil of an inmate of a lunatic asylum? The only difference is that is that one is locked up for the public safety while the other is permitted to roam at large to the great peril of the public."⁷⁷

By mid 1921, The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion had been publicly exposed as a forgery. Philip Graves had researched the subject for The London Times and Herman Bernstein had written a book on the subject entitled The History of a Lie.⁷⁸ Bernstein, editor of The Jewish Tribune, wrote to Ford on the matter; stating that he was "on the wrong track" and was promoting nothing but a fraud. The matter; however; only got as far as Liebold. Regarding The Protocols, Liebold responded, "If you will carefully read our articles, you will find that we have at no time guaranteed their authenticity. We have merely stated what they contain and have paralleled this with what actually took place and are leaving it to the mind of the public to judge."⁷⁹ In regards to Bernstein, Liebold added that he had no objections whatever to talking with him, "except I have found that the moment we open ourselves and extend interviews to the Jews, it is only used for the purpose of misquoting and publicity which has no bearing on the issue...."⁸⁰

In their understandable anger and frustration, Jews began to boycott Ford products in droves. Humorist Will Rogers quipped that the boycott "may not be a complete success yet-- but it will be as soon as someone learns how to make a cheaper car."⁸¹ Meetings were held in synagogues across the country to come up with ways in which to address the attacks that the Independent was leveling. Every effort on the part of Jews to meet with Ford and clear things up, however; was ignored.

Many members of the Protestant community were just as baffled by the attacks sanctioned by Ford. The Reverend Charles Francis McKoy of Brooklyn announced from the pulpit that Henry Ford did not represent the true Christian sentiment of America: "If he did, I should be heartily ashamed of my brethren."⁸² Upton Sinclair blamed Ford's ignorance of history, proclaiming that Ford should have studied the history of the Jewish people and then he would have changed his view on these things: "But he never took the trouble...."⁸³ Some Gentiles noted that, while Ford was protesting the World War; Jewish soldiers had bravely served their country and earned five percent of the awards given for valor on the battlefield. Other protestors included the famous lawyer Clarence Darrow, Salvation Army head Evangeline Booth, Stanford University President David Jordan, President Woodrow Wilson, former President William H. Taft, and future President Warren G. Harding. These public figures, along with numerous other statesmen, clergymen, writers, lawyers, and professors, signed a document in protest of recent anti-Semitism in the United States that was clearly aimed at Ford.⁸⁴ Taft went even further; commenting in an address to The Anti-Defamation League that one of the chief causes of suffering and evil in the

world was race hatred, "and any man who stimulates that hatred has much to answer for.... How much of the article is due to Mr. Ford's initiative and how much he has yielded to the representatives of others in consenting to its publication, one cannot say. But of course he is responsible for the effect...."⁸⁵ The Independent responded with an article entitled "Taft Once Tried to Resist Jews-And Failed," and argued that Taft had "become one of those 'Gentile fronts' which the Jews use for their own defense."⁸⁶

Others, Jews and Gentiles alike, protested Ford's paper by preventing its public distribution. Libraries in Paterson, New Jersey and in Portland, Maine both removed the Independent from their files in February of 1921. Chicago, Columbus, St. Louis, Cleveland, and Cincinnati all temporarily barred the paper from public sale. The American Civil Liberties Union found itself in a particular bind. In some cities, its branches condemned the sale of Ford's paper as promoting anti-Semitism. In others, the ACLU felt compelled to protest bans on the paper as a violation of Ford's freedom of speech. Certain cities allowed the Independent to be sold, but instructed news criers to refrain from quoting its anti-Jewish references. On the corners of Broadway in New York, however; news vendors could be heard shouting, "Read all about the traitor Ford! Read all about the liar Ford!"⁸⁷ There were riots and fights between those selling Ford's paper and those protesting it. In Michigan, a bill was passed by the House, but defeated in the Senate, which would have made it illegal for a newspaper to attack a religious sect. It was called the Welsh Newspaper Libel Bill and was proposed by Representative George Welsh, who admitted that it was specifically aimed at Ford.⁸⁸ A New York Times editorial of the day declared that "outside of his business affairs, Mr. Ford is nowhere seriously considered except as a cause of merriment."⁸⁹

However; this statement seriously underestimated the power of Ford's message on the rural elements of the country. Rabbi Leo Franklin of Detroit underscored its effect when he stated that Ford's publications "have smirched the name of Jews in the minds of the great majority, and especially in the small towns of the country, where Ford's word is taken as gospel."⁹⁰ While Ford was denounced from the pulpit in many of the East Coast cities, he was often praised from it in the Midwest. A number of ministers sent letters of support and encouragement to Ford and requested copies of his articles. Colonel Charles S. Bryan of the War Department expressed his approval for Ford's attack on "East Side scum" while The Christian Science Monitor, following Ford's lead, published an editorial on "The Jewish Peril."⁹¹

An emerging factor in the country at the this time, whose anti-Semitism seemed to mirror Ford's own, was the Ku Klux Klan. The Grand Lodge Order of B'rith Abraham announced their belief that Ford was behind the organization and was their sponsor.⁹² It is certainly true that Ford had the Klan's support. Klansmen used his publications in speeches and distributed them at rallies. An official Klan announcement in 1923 proclaimed that the Klan knew of "no better fitted man in America for the office of president than Henry Ford."⁹³ Ford's position on the Klan was more ambiguous. "I think the Ku Klux Klan is un-American," he was quoted as saying, "and if I were to join any organization it would be one that wouldn't require me to wear a mask."⁹⁴ However, when a reader wrote to the Independent inquiring whether Ford favored the Klan, he was referred to a November 5, 1921 article. The article presented the Klan in a sympathetic light as a misunderstood organization. The Independent had received a personal thank you note from the Imperial Emperor King Kleagle for that particular article.⁹⁵ Another issue of the Independent pointed out that "it was not without reason" that the Klan was undergoing a revival in Georgia "and that Jews were excluded from membership."⁹⁶

The relationship between Ford and the Klan was perhaps best summed up by Patrick H. O'Donnell, in a 1923 editorial for the Chicago anti-Klan publication Tolerance. O'Donnell pointed out that Henry Ford, "by reason of the prestige of his great name and fortune," had fanned the flame of anti-Semitism and made racial hatred bear the false semblance of respectability. "Under his cunning tillage," wrote O'Donnell, "the vast areas of this country that are superstitious have become fertile for the upbuilding of the Ku Klux organization. He has sown broadcast a motive for the Klan's existence. He must stand accused of having sedulously nurtured the development of the Ku Klux power. Futile indeed is it for Henry Ford to declare that he is not of the Invisible Empire after he has furnished by his intolerant publications its strongest weapon and its rallying cry."⁹⁷ O'Donnell went on to point out that the Klan was "insignificant in numbers" when Ford had begun his campaign. In the two years since, however more than one hundred hate publications had been established.

One morning early in 1922, William Cameron arrived at his news office to find Henry Ford waiting for him. "You're late aren't you," Ford commented. "I want you to cut out the Jewish articles. Put all your thought and time to studying and writing about this money question. The Jews are responsible for the present money standard, and we want them on our side to get rid of it." Liebold arrived moments later and tried to dissuade Ford: "We can deal with both subjects." "No we can't," Ford retorted. "The Jewish articles must stop, and Cameron must go to work on the money question."⁹⁸

Ford officially announced his intentions to the press while in Washington D.C. on January 17, 1922. He explained that The Dearborn Independent campaign "leads us naturally into the money issue, because the 'International Jew' is the greatest money merchant in the world." Ford had become convinced some time before that the money question was "tremendously more important." Therefore, he was determined to close up the campaign on the Jews and move on "to the next line of attack."⁹⁹ Others, however, weren't convinced that Ford ended his campaign solely to concentrate on the "money issue." E.G. Pipp provided two alternate motives. One was that the articles stopped as the result of a conference Ford had with Gaston Plantiff, who was his representative in New York City. While Ford sales had been satisfactory as a whole, they had dropped dramatically in areas with a large Jewish constituency. Others had already pointed this out, including Ford's own son, Edsel. However, Ford greatly respected Plantiff and listened to him when he brought up the problem. "Whatever his reputation may be," Pipp pointed out, "the dollar appeals to Ford as strongly as to any man on earth."¹⁰⁰

Another, perhaps even more important, factor involved Ford's hopes for a possible Presidential bid. It appeared that Ford, in trying to appeal to popular sentiment through anti-Semitism, had overlooked the electoral vote. In 1922, New York had the most electoral votes with 45, while Ohio had 20, Illinois had 29, and Pennsylvania had 38; there were more in these four states than in the whole solid South. "Running through New York City, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Chicago are strong Jewish influences," Pipp observed at the time. "They seldom unite or act concertedly on political matters, but with Ford attacking them, they naturally would be solid against him.... They are human and would not fall for putting their greatest enemy into a high office."¹⁰¹

Upton Sinclair offered another explanation. Apparently, Ford's detectives had begun to investigate Jewish film producer William Fox in their ongoing efforts to connect Jews in the entertainment industry with the decline of morals. In the mean time, Fox had decided to conduct an investigation of his own. He soon reported to Ford that he had footage from "hundreds of cameramen all over the country" of accidents and fatalities involving defects in Ford automobiles. Fox planned to go through the footage and put the "best" clips into the newsreels. "The effect of this notice was immediate. Henry sent word to William that he had decided to stop the attack on Jews."¹⁰²

Still other, somewhat less likely, possibilities have been suggested. These include the influences of Ford's good friend Thomas Edison and of Ford's son Edsel, as well as a private request from President Harding through mutual friend Judson C. Welliver.¹⁰³ Whatever his motive, Ford halted a devastating campaign that had gone on for 21 consecutive months. For those who thought that Ford's paper was totally through with the subject of Jews, however, Ford had issued a foreboding statement in his January 17 address: "We have enough material on the 'International Jew' to keep up the campaign for five years. We have had offers of a great deal more important material since I have been in Washington."¹⁰⁴ Not surprisingly, many people felt that the halt in the anti-Semitic articles signified no change on Ford's part. Pipp warned in his publication, "The old hatred is there, the old influence is there, and all we have to say to the Jews is, if Ford ever gets into power, look out!"¹⁰⁵

Part of the reason that Ford persisted in his beliefs was because he felt, incredibly, that his articles were not anti-Semitic. He had once laughed at a news dispatch which announced that he was trying to "make peace with the Jews," explaining that he had never made war on them.¹⁰⁶ He had always possessed a number of Jewish friends, though most of them severed the relationship after the Independent campaign. Ford's old friend and neighbor, Rabbi Leo Franklin, denounced Ford's actions in the press even as he vainly tried to communicate with Ford on a personal level. For several years, Ford had annually presented Franklin with a Ford automobile. However, Franklin returned Ford's 1920 gift, writing to Ford that: "You are determined to continue the series of articles that must inevitably tend to poison the minds of the masses against the Jews. Under such circumstances, I cannot in self-respect continue to be the beneficiary of your well-meant courtesy. You claim that you do not intend to attack all Jews, but whatever the thought in your own mind, it stands to reason that those who read these articles -inspired and sanctioned by you- will naturally infer that it is your purpose to include in your condemnation every person of the Jewish faith..."¹⁰⁷ Franklin received a typically smug reply from Liebold: "It is of course to be regretted that you have seen fit to... sever the relations of friendship which have heretofore existed between you and Mr. Ford. I sincerely hope, however, that conditions will so adjust themselves as to eventually convince yourself that Mr. Ford's position is correct... the world and all its people may benefit thereby. No man can follow a principle unless he is ready and willing to make whatever sacrifices are necessary."¹⁰⁸ Ford himself was more direct, asking innocently, "What's wrong Dr. Franklin? Has anything come between us?"¹⁰⁹ Recalled one acquaintance of Ford, "Though he hated Jews in theory, he truly loved Izzy Straub, a local store keeper, and I can see them now cackling away like two cronies over a cracker barrel in a general store."¹¹⁰ Ford's company artist, Irving Bacon, remembered a story Ford liked to tell concerning a visit he had made to a pawn shop in Washington D.C.: "The

elderly pawnbroker kept looking at me. He said, 'Hey you're Henry Ford, aren't you.' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'Well, I been reading that Dearborn Independent of yours. It's all right. It tells the truth about'"¹¹¹

The truth is that a few Jews, mainly Ford employees, did give interviews to the press which supported Ford. However, their numbers were so small as be almost insignificant. "He didn't understand why the Jews didn't understand what he was trying to do for them," recalled employee Jack Davis. "Oh, he was so inconsistent!"¹¹²

The hypocrisy of Ford's attitude was clearly evident in his press interviews of the time. In October of 1922, he emphasized "When I do say that I have no hatred in my heart for the Jew I mean it. In fact, I do not blame the Jew moneylender for bunking humanity just as long as humanity lets him get away with it. However, that does not wipe out the fact that the Jew... is the very foundation of the world's greatest curse today- war. He is the 'cause' of all the abnormalities in our daily life because he is the money maniac."¹¹³ Other quotes that Ford gave to the press were even less "charitable." In an interview with Judson C. Welliver Ford claimed that "The Jew is a mere huckster; a trader who doesn't want to produce, but to make something out of what someone else produces."¹¹⁴ In an interview with Montreal reporters, Ford stated that the only way to achieve world peace would be "to get the fifty leading Jewish financiers of the world together and render their manipulations of money impossible." In the same statement, Ford referred to Wall Street as a "Jewish Mecca," adding "You know what that means."¹¹⁵ When he received word that some of his tractors had been seized in Berlin, Ford told a Syracuse newsman, "I'll blame it on the Jewish business men-- you blame it on anyone you want."¹¹⁶

Ford amazed Charles W Wood of Collier's with his Jewish obsession. "We have made no references to the Jews," Wood wrote of the session, "yet no interview is complete without one. Naturally, I wanted to side step it entirely. It really can't be done. References to 'the Jews' were sprinkled throughout our entire talk." Among Ford's observations: "When the Jews take hold of anything, it goes down"; "These Jew financiers are not building anything. They wait until things begin to decay; then they get into them.... You will find them injecting their wonderful embalming fluid into it which they call 'finance'"; "You probably think the labor unions were organized by labor, but they weren't. They were organized by these Jew financiers. The labor union is a great scheme to interrupt work. It speeds up loafing. It's a great thing for the Jew to have on hand when he comes around to get his clutches on an industry."¹¹⁷

Ford had a curious habit of viewing all things that he disliked as being "Jewish." A relative later noted that Ford would call "all the moneylenders of the world 'Jews' regardless of their religion"¹¹⁸ By that same rationale, if Ford liked someone who happened to be Jewish, he would say "Oh, he's mixed, he's not all Jewish."¹¹⁹ Ford would say to interviewers, "No, I have no hatred for the Jew, and those Jews who play hardest at the money game are very much in the minority."¹²⁰ In private, to Liebold, however, he would say, "You can't single them out. You have to go after them all. They are all part of the same system."¹²¹

Ford gave two lengthy statements during this period which were designed to explain his attacks. The first was an interview in December of 1921 in which he pinpointed their alleged inspiration: "It was the Jews themselves that convinced me of the direct relation between the international Jew and war. In fact, they went out of their way to convince me." Ford then related that it had taken place during his Peace Ship mission of 1915: "On that ship were two prominent Jews. We had not been out to sea 200 miles before these two Jews began telling me about the power of the Jewish race, how they controlled the world through control of gold and that the Jew, and no one but the Jew, could stop the war. I was so reluctant to believe this and said so-- so they went into detail to tell me the means by which the Jew controlled the war, how they had the money, how they had cornered all the basic materials needed to fight the war and all that, and they talked so long and so well that they convinced me. They said, and believed, that the Jews had started the war; that they would continue it as long as they wished and until the Jew stopped the war it could not be stopped. We were in mid-ocean and I was so disgusted that I would have liked to have turned the ship back."¹²²

Ford went on to explain that he investigated the Jews' allegations when he got back to America and found much to substantiate them. However, "It seemed there was no newspaper in the United States that dared print the truth." Ford then added, rather self-servingly, "surely some place in the United States there should be a publisher strong and courageous enough to tell the people the truth about the war. If no one else will, I'll turn publisher myself, and I did."¹²³

Ford's explanation raises some questions. First of all, if the Jews on the Peace Ship truly believed that the war "could not be stopped," then why were they on the mission to begin with? More obviously, there was the recollection Mine Schwimmer had of Ford's anti-Semitic outburst before the ship had even set sail.

Ford's second major statement on the subject was found in his 1922 autobiography written with Samuel Crowther, *My Life and Work*. In it Ford again denied any overt anti-Semitism on his part: "Readers of our articles will see at once that we are not actuated by any kind of prejudice, except maybe prejudice in favor of the principles which have made our civilization."¹²⁴ However, Ford went on to state that "There had been observed in this country certain streams of influence which were causing a marked deterioration in our literature, amusements, and social conduct.... A general letting down of standards was felt everywhere. It was not the robust coarseness of the white man..., but a nasty Orientalism which has insidiously affected every channel of expression-- and to such an extent that it was time to challenge it. The fact that these influences are traceable to one racial source is a fact to be reckoned with, not by us only, but by the intelligent people of the race in question."¹²⁵ Ford continued, and revealed his obvious religious prejudice in the process: "For the present, then, the question is wholly in the Jews' hands. If they are as wise as they claim to be, they will labour to make Jews American instead of labouring to make America Jewish. The genius of the United States is Christian in the broadest sense and its destiny is to remain Christian." He ended his defense on the arrogant note that "Time will show that we are the better friends to the Jews' best interest than those who praise them to their faces and criticize them behind their backs."¹²⁶

Ford's autobiography revealed an anti-Semitism that had been commonplace in the rural Michigan of his youth. In the mid-late 1800's, Jews were seen as non-Americans by "nativist" Populists, as racially inferior human beings by Social Darwinists, and as the murderers of Christ by Bible Belt Protestants. Jews had not been a common sight in Ford's boyhood Dearborn, except for an occasional roaming salesman. However; stereotypes of them abounded. During the Civil War; The Chicago Tribune attacked "Belmont, the Rothschilds, and the whole tribe of Jews, who have been buying up Confederate bonds."¹²⁷ General Grant even attempted to expel all Jews, including women and children, from Union occupied Tennessee and Mississippi for "violating every regulation of trade established by the treasury" The order was later overturned by President Lincoln.¹²⁸ In a 1921 interview, Ford would state that "one of the great factors behind the Civil War; that brought it on and made peaceable settlement of the issues impossible, was the Jew."¹²⁹ Anti-Jewish stereotypes also flourished in popular entertainment of the era. The Charles Dickens novel, *Oliver Twist*, featured the menacing figure of Fagin. On the stage, Edwin Booth and Henry Irving both traveled the Midwest in productions of "*The Merchant of Venice*," a play famous for its evil Jewish character of Shylock.¹³⁰

Beginning in the 1870's, a large number of Jewish immigrants began to arrive in the United States from Eastern Europe. One of the places in which they settled in large numbers was Detroit. These new immigrants were often characterized as being either petty criminals or lecherous merchants and were blamed by many for the economic slump of the 1890's. This seemed to mirror the accusations Ford leveled against Jews during the economic decline of immediate post World War America. The very first issue of the *Independent* under him stated that "We ought to double our guard against any of the old dangerous things creeping back to their former places."¹³¹

A depiction of Jews typical of the late 19th century America which molded Ford can be found in Albert W. Aikens' 1881 novel, *The Wolves of New York*: "His face was a peculiar one, the skin being as yellow as parchment; the chin was covered with a heavy gray-black beard, which was as kinky as the wool of an African; the hair of his head resembled the beard, both in color and in character; although worn quite long; and from under his bushy eyebrows looked eyes, ferret-like in their sharpness.... His dress suited well his face; a very long coat, half 'ulster' and half body-coat, rather the worse for wear; covered him from, neck to heels. His long, muscular-looking hands were incased in dingy brown gloves which, somehow, gave one an idea of the talons of some fierce and rapacious bird of prey... 'You ish Mister Von Trompp?' the man asked with a strong German-Jew accent. 'Yes, sir; that is my name.' 'And mine is Solomons-- Moses Solomons. I have an office in Wall Street; I am a broker and also do a leetle business in bill discounting; anything, you know, to make de honest penny,' and the old fellow chuckled and rubbed his hands. Von Tramp had never met one of this fraternity before, yet had often heard of them. As the jackals wait upon the lions, the vultures upon the battlefield, the camp-bummers on the march of the victorious army, so upon the outskirts of business a gang of disreputable wretches eager for prey and plunder...."¹³²

Ford's attitude towards Jews may have been common for the era of his youth and early adulthood. However; his decision to transform it into a personal crusade was a quirk unique to Ford alone. It was a distinct trait of his to publicize his beliefs, however bizarre they many be. And Ford had a lot of strange beliefs. He once told reporters that milk was unhealthy after it was touched by air. He had investigators produce a 22-page report to determine whether the Mary of the rhyme "Mary had a Little Lamb" had actually existed.¹³³ He was convinced that oilfield workers possessed uncommonly healthy heads of hair. As a result, he instructed his houseman to soak razor blades in kerosene and water in an effort to create a type of "hair tonic."¹³⁴ When informed by Thomas Edison that a chemical in cigarette paper "rots the nerves," Ford banned all tobacco products from the Ford company and launched an attack on smoking in the press. "Study the history of almost any criminal," he stated in one interview, "and you find an inveterate cigarette smoker."¹³⁵

It is interesting to note that Ford was well ahead of his time in other respects. He supported the women's suffragette movement and campaigned for it in the pages of his newspaper. He also hired more black workers than all of the other car manufacturers combined. In a practice unheard of at the time, Ford often had black foreman placed in charge of white workers in his factories.¹³⁶ Ford had his prejudices, but they appeared to be reserved solely for the Jews.

Ford's authorized biography, *The Amazing Story of Henry Ford* by James Martin Miller; came out the same year as Ford's autobiography. It devoted a full 7 chapters- 94 pages- towards defending Ford's position on the Jews and recycling the allegations of the Independent. Like Ford's autobiography, the book was a bestseller. Its author later wrote, with remorse, to Jewish lawyer Samuel Untermyer:

"I wrote a book about Ford, unfortunately; sent to do it in the heat of the Ford presidential talk. I tell about his anti-Jewish propaganda, quoting him in that book. I was with him a great deal. Ford personally knew all about the attack on the Jews made in *The Dearborn Independent*. I never had a visit with him, at lunch or dinner; when he did not talk about the Jews and his campaign against them."¹³⁷ Miller would disassociate himself from Ford in a much more significant way later on.

One of Miller's defenses of Ford in his book was that he "employs 4,000 Jews, and is doing more to industrialize the Jew and make producers, rather than consumers of them, than any other force in the world."¹³⁸ This statistic was often used by Ford to ward off charges of anti-Semitism, though, as he noted to Judson C. Welliver in *Review of Reviews*, he saw that they were workers and did not get into office jobs.¹³⁹ Even then, Jewish workers were not always in a guaranteed situation. Foreman William Klammer recalled that there was a policy not to have Jewish boys working in the shop: "Of course, it wasn't outspoken, but you knew it when you were told to 'Fire that Jewish fellow over there.'"¹⁴⁰ Ford's paranoia even controlled the materials his workers used. "Don't ever let Mr. Ford see you using brass," new employees would be told. "It's a Jewish metal."¹⁴¹

Ford treasurer Frank Klingensmith was fired after suggesting to Ford that he may need to borrow money from New York bankers during a postwar economic slump at the company. According to Liebold, "Klingensmith used to line up with a lot of Jewish bankers down there and that's what Mr. Ford didn't like. When Klingensmith got to advocating that we ought to borrow money, why, Mr. Ford thought that those fellows put him up to it."¹⁴² Warren C. Anderson, director of European operations, was fired after complaining that Ford's campaign had resulted in a virtual boycott of Ford cars overseas.¹⁴³ Then, there was Ernest Kanzler; the best friend of Edsel Ford and one of Ford's brightest executives. Kanzler was one of the few people to try to persuade Ford to update the Model T., of which the public was rapidly tiring. Ford declared that Kanzler was getting "too big for his britches" and had executive Ray Dahlinger spread the false rumor that Kanzler was Jewish. When word got back to him, Kanzler simply remarked, "A lot of brilliant men are Jews." However; his days were numbered. He was fired when Edsel was sent out of the country on a business venture.¹⁴⁴ Although *The Dearborn Independent* had halted its anti-Semitic articles in January of 1922, it did not cease totally in slandering the Jews. References to them were still occasionally sprinkled among its pages. However; they were less obvious than before. The headlines now read "Einstein Theory Declared a Colossal Humbug" and "A Modern Disraeli" but did not specifically refer to Jews. The *Detroit Jewish Chronicle* made the claim that Ford had merely switched from the "crude" Russian anti-Semitism, "which appealed to the basest passions of drunken peasants," to the more subtle German anti-Semitism, "the intellectual method."¹⁴⁵

More significant and damaging, however; was the publishing of a number of articles from the 1920-1921 campaign in book form. Collectively titled *The International Jew*, the articles were spread over four volumes which averaged 250 pages and which sold for \$0.25 apiece. Volume I was subtitled "The World's Foremost Problem," Volume II: "Jewish Activities in the United States," Volume III: "Jewish Influences in American Life," and Volume IV: "Aspects of Jewish Power in the United States." As stated in the preface to Volume I, the reason for publishing these books was to meet the large number of public requests; "The demand for back copies of the paper was so great that the supply was exhausted early, as was a large edition of a booklet containing the first nine articles of the series."¹⁴⁶ The books would eventually be condensed into a single volume also entitled *The International Jew*. It was through these publications that Ford's message was able to reach an enormously large global audience.

Soon after *The International Jew* was published, a Philadelphia reader wrote to Ford that he would like to see the books translated into German: "It would help the cause very greatly, for the sales in Germany would be enormous! Fully as large as here, if indeed, not much larger than here, because Germans usually lock their stable before the horse is stolen...."¹⁴⁷

Once again, it was Liebold who responded:

"We wish to advise that Volume I of The International Jew has been published in Germany and may be obtained from Hammerverlag (Th. Fritsch) Leipzig. As we have given our entire attention to the problem in the United States, we are not contemplating the publication of this book in foreign languages, preferring to leave this to the people of the respective countries where such would be of benefit to them."¹⁴⁸ Many people took Liebold up on his word, for The International Jew was soon translated into 16 different languages; among others, they included German, Hungarian, Romanian, Serbian, Swedish, Arabic, Polish, and Russian. Between 1920 and 1922 alone, Theodor Fritsch's Leipzig edition, mentioned in Liebold's letter; had gone through six editions.¹⁴⁹

In May of 1924, Herman Bernstein accused Ford of being looked upon as an "anti-Semitic apostle" throughout much of Europe, particularly in Germany, Hungary, and Rumania.¹⁵⁰ Ford was certainly considered a hero to numerous overseas anti-Semitic organizations, including the most notorious one of the century. As early as December 1922, The New York Times carried an article with the headline "Berlin Hears Ford is Backing Hitler." At the time, the Berliner Tragblatt had appealed to the American Ambassador in Berlin to investigate rumors of financial support between Ford and the fledgling Nazi party. A New York Times correspondent investigating the matter found the following at Hitler's Munich headquarters on Cornelius Street: "The wall beside his desk is decorated with a large picture of Henry Ford. In the antechamber; there is a large table covered with books, nearly all of which are a translation of a book written and published by Henry Ford. If you ask one of Hitler's underlings for the reason of Ford's popularity in these circles, he will smile knowingly but say nothing. In nationalist circles in Berlin, too, one often hears Ford's name mentioned by people who would seem the very last in the world with whom an American respecting the Republican Constitution would seek any association..."¹⁵¹

In March of 1923, a reporter from Ford's old nemesis, The Chicago Tribune, interviewed Hitler himself concerning the matter. When the subject came to Ford's possible presidential run, Hitler commented, "I wish I could send some of my shock troops to Chicago and other big American cities to help in the elections. We look on Heinrich Ford as the leader of the growing fascist movement in America. We admire particularly his anti-Jewish policy which is the Bavarian fascist platform. We have just had his anti-Jewish articles translated and published. The book is being circulated to millions throughout Germany."¹⁵² The newsman, upon investigation, found that Ford's books were, indeed, being distributed "by the car loads" and were "displayed in every bookshop in southern Germany."

Hitler denied any financial support on the part of Ford, stating simply, "It is not true that Mr. Ford is backing the fascist movement in Germany financially."¹⁵³ However; an article appearing at the same time in The New York Times reported that a certain Herr Auer; Vice President of the Bavarian Diet, had talked to President Ebert about the spreading accusations of Ford's support for the Nazis. Herr Auer was convinced that Henry Ford's financial as well as moral backing had been given to Bavarian revolution-makers because, according to the article, "part of the program of Herr Hitler; leader of the monarchists, is the extermination of the Jews in Germany."¹⁵⁴ "The Bavarian Diet," stated Herr Auer; "has long had information that the Hitler movement was partly financed by an American anti-Semitic chief, who is Henry Ford. Mr. Ford's interest in the Bavarian anti-Jewish movement began a year ago when one of Mr. Ford's agents seeking to sell Ford tractors came in contact with Dietrich Eichart, the notorious Pan-German. Shortly after Herr Eichart asked Mr. Ford's agent for financial aid, the agent returned to America and immediately Mr. Ford's money began coming to Munich. Herr Hitler openly boasts of Mr. Ford's support and praises Mr. Ford not as a great individualist but as a great anti-Semite."¹⁵⁵

In a lawsuit in June of 1923, Herr Auer testified that "Henry Ford was to have been received like a king if he ever came to Munich" and that credible sources had informed him that "Henry Ford played a big role in the National Socialist party." One of Hitler's principal lieutenants, Christian Weber; confirmed the first part of Auer's statement in his subsequent testimony: "The festival reception for Ford, if he had come to Munich, would have been for Ford the anti-Semite." However; he denied any financial support, declaring that, "The party has not yet received a single penny from Ford..."¹⁵⁶

This did not mean that the idea never entered Hitler's mind. In a 1937 memoir entitled, I Knew Hitler, a former associate of Hitler's named Kurt Ludecke claimed that he had been sent to America in 1924 to raise money for the Nazi party. While in New York, Ludecke met up with Siegfried and Winifred Wagner; son and daughter-in-law of the famous anti-Semitic composer Richard Wagner. The couple was in America to gain new support for Wagner's symphonies after they had been condemned during the anti-German war years. Ludecke and the Wagners traveled to Detroit together to meet with Ford and gain financial assistance for the Nazis, whom, it turned out, Winifred enthusiastically supported. Ludecke was able to obtain a private meeting with Ford through Liebold. As he relayed the struggle of the Nazi party, Ford paid close attention, occasionally interjecting, "I know.... Yes, the Jews, these cunning Jews...." However; according to Ludecke, his final response was less than enthusiastic. "If I had been trying to sell Mr. Ford a wooden nutmeg," Ludecke wrote, "he couldn't have shown less interest in the proposition.... Ford was deeply interested in what I had to tell, but he was not at all

interested in what I had to ask.... He became immediately very wary when I pressed towards my goal with frank requests for money. The more I mentioned the word, the more Henry Ford cooled down from idealist to businessman...."¹⁵⁷ Ludecke later received a telegram from Cameron with Ford's final decision: "The proposal will probably not be entertained." Ludecke dutifully reported back to Germany and an "irritated and nervous Hitler to inform him of the mission's failure."¹⁵⁸

A different account of the Detroit venture, however; was revealed in an interview with an elderly Winifred Wagner in the 1970's. According to Frau Wagner; she had met with a very enthusiastic Ford a few days before his meeting with Ludecke. "The philosophies of Ford and Hitler were very similar;" she recalled. "Ford was very well informed about everything going on in Germany.... He knew all about the National Socialist movement.... Ford told me that he helped to finance Hitler with money from the sales of automobiles and trucks that he had sent to Germany." Frau Wagner claimed that, when she informed Ford that Hitler was still in need of money, he made a remark about being willing to support a man like Hitler who was working to free Germany from the Jews.¹⁵⁹

Upton Sinclair accused Ford of using Prince Louis Ferdinand, a grandson of Kaiser Wilhelm II, as an agent to transfer funds to Germany. Ferdinand was employed by Ford for two and a half years during the 1920's. Through him, three hundred thousand dollars had supposedly been forwarded to the Nazi treasury.¹⁶⁰ Sinclair; however; offered no sources or evidence for these claims. In 1933, a Congressional Committee investigated allegations that Ford had financed the Nazi Party, but was unable to prove anything conclusively.

While the question of Ford's possible financial assistance to the Nazis remains a mystery, his aid to them through influence remains indisputable. When news of Jewish boycotts reached Hitler; he declared, "The struggle of international Jewish finance against Ford has only strengthened the sympathies of the National Socialist party for Ford and has given the broadest circulation of his book, *The International Jew*."¹⁶¹ According to Nazi aide, Felix Kersten, Heinrich Himmler claimed that Ford's book had opened his eyes to the Jewish danger.¹⁶² Significantly, Ford was also the only American to be mentioned in Hitler's political testament, *Mein Kampf*-- a book that owed much of its philosophy to *The International Jew*. "It is the Jews who govern the stock exchange forces of the American Union," Hitler stated in its pages. "Every year makes them more and more the controlling masters of the producers in a nation of one hundred and twenty millions; only a single great man, Ford, to their fury still maintains full independence."¹⁶³

However; even Ford could not always match the rabid fanaticism of the National Socialists. When it was revealed that Ford planned to give \$7 million in war profits back to the government, the Nazis complained that he should have used the money "to fight the Hebrew boarders of Wall Street, who are more responsible than anyone else for Germany's economic misery."¹⁶⁴

It is interesting to note that it was not just the Nazis that Ford was accused of financing. In 1927, it was reported that Ford had loaned \$3,000 to a Hungarian anti-Semite named Laszlo Vannay. According to *The New York Times*, Vannay was "one of the most fanatical leaders against the Jews during the white terror in 1921."¹⁶⁵ In an interview in the *Magyarsag*, Vannay claimed to have received the loan after complying with a request that he send proof of his anti-Semitic activities. He had sent Ford various newspaper articles and a copy of charges made against him by the Hungarian Attorney General for his anti--Semitic activities.¹⁶⁶ He also claimed that Ford had promised further support. In the weeks after Vannay made these claims, the Ford office received hundreds of similar requests for backing from other Hungarian anti-Semitic groups.

At the same time Ford was being lauded as an anti-Semite hero in Europe, he was confronted with another lawsuit in America. This one came from Herman Bernstein, the same man who had helped to expose *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* as a forgery. In the August 20, 1921 issue of the *Independent*, Bernstein had been identified as the source on the Peace Ship who revealed to Ford the supposed worldwide Jewish conspiracy. "He told me most of the things that I have printed," Ford claimed in the article, which labeled Bernstein "the messenger boy of international Jewry."¹⁶⁷ An outraged Bernstein denied the allegations and, in 1923, sued Ford for \$200,000. He told the press that he was doing a public service by allowing the American people to get a "true picture" of Ford's "diseased imagination."¹⁶⁸

Ford, however; was too preoccupied with other matters to pay much attention to the lawsuit. Instead, he was focusing all of his efforts towards acquiring Muscle Shoals. Muscle Shoals was the series of dams and power plants that would later be known as the Tennessee Valley Authority. After World War I, it was decided by the government to open the newly created area to private development. Ford saw it as a chance to create an ordered society away from the big cities, which he despised. As with all his schemes, Ford took this one to the press, declaring at one point that his plans for the property would "benefit

the whole world" and would even "eliminate war..."¹⁶⁹ However; he was only offering \$5 million for a project that had cost the government \$85 million and that was worth \$8 million in scrap alone.¹⁷⁰ His offer was met with open resistance in the Senate, and his bid for the property was in danger of never gaining government approval. In an effort to win public support, Ford visited farmers living in the Muscle Shoals valley and had the Independent publish articles that championed the "American farmer." However; in order to supply a steady stream of articles and to give Ford a "crusade" for the farmers, a more focused campaign was needed.

On April 23, 1924, the Jewish articles resurfaced on the pages of Ford's paper. "Jewish Exploitation of the American Farmer's Organizations: Monopoly Traps Operate Under the Guise of Marketing Associations," ran the headline. The opening line supplied the tone for the series that was to follow: "A band of Jews-bankers, lawyers, moneylenders, advertising agencies, fruit packers, produce buyers, professional office managers, and bookkeeping experts- is on the back of the American farmer."¹⁷¹ A typical article would show a picture of a celery field, with the accompanying caption reading: "Every stalk of celery.. .pays direct tribute to Jewish domination of the cooperative marketing system in this section of the United States."¹⁷² As with the previous series, these articles used a number of prominent Jews as scapegoats for the accusations, including Bernard Baruch, Albert Lasker; Otto Kahn, Eugene Meyer; and Julius Rosenwald. However; the main thrust of the campaign was directed at Chicago lawyer Aaron Sapiro.

Aaron Sapiro was a proud, controversial figure notorious for his short temper. Born in poverty and raised in an orphanage, he had originally studied to become a rabbi. He later switched over to law and eventually worked as a cooperative organizer for fruit growers in California. Most of the Independent's attacks centered on his "Sapiro Plan." This plan involved organizing farmers under cooperatives in an effort to eliminate middlemen and wholesalers and, in the process, increase farm profits. By 1925, the Sapiro Plan possessed a membership of 890,000 farmers nationwide and had the endorsement of the National Council of Farmer's Cooperative Marketing Association. According to The New York Times, Sapiro was the leader "of one of the greatest agricultural movements of modern times. c173 He often stated that money meant nothing to him when he was dealing with the farmers. Nonetheless, Sapiro was as famous for his high fees as he was for their productive results.

William J. Cameron, once again, supervised the articles in the campaign. This time, however; they were actually written by a former newspaperman, Henry H. Dunn, under the pen name of Robert Morgan. In his correspondence with the Independent, Dunn said that proving the conspiracy was the hardest story that he had ever handled. Among the obstacles that he encountered was the fact that Jews and Gentiles were both equally active in the cooperatives. Another problem was that, although Dunn was convinced that Sapiro had "skinned the farmers out of thousands," the farmers were actually making more money than ever. Not surprisingly, it was hard to find ones who were willing to condemn Sapiro in print.¹⁷⁴

The attacks made on Sapiro were incredible, even by the Independent's standards. Sapiro was charged with leading "a conspiracy of Jewish bankers" who were forcing farmers into the cooperatives. His Sapiro Plan had "turned millions away from the pockets of the men who till the soil and into the hands of the Jews and their followers."¹⁷⁵ He was accused of using "strong arm" tactics and squads of Bolsheviks in order to inject farm children with the germs of communism, so they would be "modeler's clay" in his hands.¹⁷⁶ His non-Jewish associates were nothing more than "Gentile false fronts.., human camouflage of the international ring of professional aliens."¹⁷⁷ Even Liebold commented to Ford, "You know, Cameron is going a little bit wild with this fellow, Sapiro." "That's just what I want," Ford responded. "Don't you interfere with Cameron. If he can get me into a lawsuit with Sapiro, that's just what I want. I'd like to see that fellow start a suit against me."¹⁷⁸

Ford no doubt recalled his own libel suit and the trouble and ridicule it had brought him. He may have had a case, but it was The Chicago Tribune that had the influence. Now, Ford had influence of his own with The Dearborn Independent. With his newspaper; he seemingly had more than enough money and influence to win a case brought against him. He thought little of the Bernstein libel suit and now welcomed one from Sapiro.

It came on April 23, 1925, when Sapiro sued Ford for \$1 million. The case did not actually reach court until almost two years after it was filed. In the meantime, Ford had lost his final bid for the Muscle Shoals. With two lawsuits against him, however; he had more than enough to deal with. Ford's private detectives were soon scrambling across the country in an effort to dig up as much as they could on Sapiro. This time, they would have to produce evidence that would hold up in a court of law and not the type of sensationalism that was published in Ford's newspaper. They went to California, Oregon, North and South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Washington, Minnesota, Idaho, and Maine, eventually compiling 40,000 pages of depositions.¹⁷⁹ Back in Dearborn, Ford's office was receiving chilling letters of support: "Sapiro is a shrewd little

Jew.... The Bible says Jews will return to Palestine, but they want to get all the money out of America first.... Sapiro should be kicked out because he is trash.... The sooner the leeches are given a dose of 'Go quick' the better."¹⁸⁰

In August of 1926, something happened in the case which Ford had not anticipated. During a celebration for him at the Ford Airport, a man posing as a reporter dropped a document in Ford's lap and calmly announced, "I am serving a subpoena for the United States Circuit Court in the case of Sapiro versus Ford." Ford was mortified, crying, "No, no, no! Take it away!" Ford's bodyguards then chased down and accosted the process server. "You think you're pretty smart, don't you?" smirked one of the guards. "Well, you didn't serve a subpoena on Mr. Ford at all. You served it on Mr. Ford's brother; John Ford." "Then what's all the fuss about," the server innocently replied."¹⁸¹

By March 1927, the Sapiro case was finally ready to be heard in court. However; Ford and his six expensive attorneys were still contesting the subpoena. The Sapiro counsel grew increasingly irritated, especially when it was revealed that Ford had recently denied in print having ever been served. Finally, Sapiro's attorney threatened to file contempt papers. By this time, Ford had run out of options and reluctantly sent word the following day that he would testify.

The case was to be tried before Judge Fred M. Raymond in Detroit, because Sapiro wanted it in Ford's "own back yard." Ford had originally planned on being represented by attorney Delancey Nicoll. Nicoll was fired, however; after Ford discovered that he was a smoker.¹⁸² Senator James A. Reed of Missouri was then chosen to act as chief of Ford's legal staff. "We have often heard that Henry Ford was just lucky," quipped Will Rogers, "...But when a man goes out and hires Jim Reed for his lawyer- that's inspired genius. The other side needs Moses to compete with him."¹⁸³ Ford had expected Sapiro to be represented by a "Jew lawyer" from New York. However; much to Ford's chagrin, Sapiro's attorney was revealed to be William Henry Gallagher; who was Detroit based and an Irish Catholic. According to an associate, Ford privately referred to Gallagher as a "Christian front" and was to refer constantly to Catholics in general as "tools of the Jews" after the trial.¹⁸⁴

Early in the trial, the Sapiro counsel was dealt a stunning blow. Senator Reed was somehow able to convince the judge that race was not an issue in the case. "Mr. Ford's ideas of the Jews as a whole and his attitude towards them as a people will be barred," came the ruling from Judge Raymond.¹⁸⁵ His reasoning was that Ford was being tried for libeling Sapiro the individual and not the Jewish race as a whole. It was, apparently, irrelevant that the two had often been interchangeable in the pages of the Independent. Now, the defense merely had to prove that Ford had been completely ignorant of the attacks carried out in his paper. They needed a patsy and they found one with William J. Cameron.

At the beginning of the trial, Ford's attorneys had asserted that Ford had never read the Sapiro articles in The Dearborn Independent, had never spoken of Sapiro, and had never even heard of Sapiro before the suit was launched. Cameron, during a testimony that lasted for over six days, accepted full responsibility for the contents of the paper. "I had no conversation with Mr. Ford on any article on any Jew," he claimed from the witness stand.¹⁸⁶

As Cameron gave his testimony, Sapiro found himself the target of much ridicule and praise in the public spectrum. He received numerous threatening letters, 90% of which were unsigned. Senator Reed also received letters condemning Sapiro. One proclaimed that "every Jew is sworn to knock out three teeth of a Christian when kissing him" while another "blood-curdling" note was anonymously signed by "An American of the Sixteenth Century Blood."¹⁸⁷ Some Jews, such as prominent New York attorney Louis Marshall, felt that Sapiro's lawsuit gave the Independent unnecessary publicity. Others, however; shared the view of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, who praised Sapiro as "a man ready to face the richest and, in some senses, the most powerful man on earth, and say, 'You may libel me, but you shall not lie about my people.'" ¹⁸⁸

In the midst of Cameron's testimony, the Sapiro team called a key witness on their own to the stand. Surprisingly, it was James Martin Miller-- author of the earlier pro-Ford biography, The Amazing Story of Henry Ford. When asked if Ford had ever mentioned Sapiro, Miller answered in the affirmative: "Mr. Ford asked me why I didn't write about the Jews in the reserve bank down there and he asked me if I knew Aaron Sapiro... He said that he was organizing the farmers for that bunch of Jews down there. [Ford] said that he was going to expose them...."¹⁸⁹

The evening before he was scheduled to testify, Ford stumbled through the gates of his home bearing a number of cuts and bruises. He told his shocked wife that he had just been involved in an automobile accident, and was quickly rushed to the nearby Henry Ford Hospital. Constant news bulletins updated the nation on his condition, which ranged from being on the brink of death to rapidly recovering. It was eventually revealed that Ford had suffered no broken bones or internal injury. Although he had a cut on his forehead and bruises on his chest, the attending doctor reported that "the shock of the mishap was the chief thing the matter with Mr. Ford."¹⁹⁰

Ford's account of the accident held that a mysterious Studebaker had forced him off the side of the road. He was then plunged down a fifteen-foot embankment and into a tree, barely avoiding a fall into a nearby river. He would be in no condition to testify for quite some time. Meanwhile, in the words of his doctor; all he could do was wait "for nature to heal him."¹⁹¹ While speculation abounded that Ford had been the victim of a murder plot, Ford himself insisted that the mishap was unintentional and strongly urged that the matter be dropped.

As sympathizers sent letters of encouragement to Ford and wished him a fast recovery, it was obvious to some that the whole episode was ridiculously suspicious. The only witnesses to the incident were two boys. One had not really seen anything while the other; Carl Makivitz, claimed to have seen the Ford coupe in a ditch, with one man pushing it while another sat in the driver's seat. The account was dismissed by a Ford investigator; who stated, "Malkovitz, a talkative boy, told several stories in his excitement."¹⁹² Sapiro, however; publicly stated his belief that the accident was "completely manufactured" as an excuse to keep Ford off the stand.¹⁹³

This seemingly obvious conclusion was expanded on years later by Ford's chief investigator of the period, Harry Bennett. "I'm going to find out who knocked you into the river if it takes the rest of my life," Bennett claimed to have told Ford soon after the accident. "Now you just drop this," Ford calmly replied. "Probably it was just a bunch of kids." However; Bennett kept persisting, until Ford cryptically blurted out, "Well, Harry, I wasn't in that car when it went down into the river. I don't know how it got down there. But now we've got a good chance to settle this thing. We can say we want to settle it because my life is in danger."¹⁹⁴

While Ford was at home "recovering," Sapiro had taken the witness stand in the ongoing case. As Ford's lawyers grilled him over his business practices, however; Ford's detectives were making examinations of their own. Some fifty investigators had been put to work tapping phones, wiring rooms, and harassing various witnesses.¹⁹⁵ Amazingly, on April 22, Ford's legal team accused the Sapiro counsel of jury tampering. According to the investigators, juror Cora Hoffman had told witnesses before the trial that having her on the case would be unhealthy for "old Mr. Ford." They further alleged that the Sapiro counsel had attempted to bribe her "with thousands" through a man with a "Jewish cast of countenance." An outraged Mrs. Hoffman denied the allegations in The Detroit Times, adding, "It seems to me that someone is trying to keep this case away from the jury."¹⁹⁶

As a result of Mrs. Hoffman's comment to the press, Judge Raymond declared a mistrial, adding that justice had been "crucified upon the cross of unethical and depraved journalism."¹⁹⁷ It appeared to many that justice had, indeed, been crucified-- but not because of the press. Sapiro and his attorneys, for one, were convinced that they had been on the road to a winning case. They felt that Ford and his attorneys also realized this, and had sabotaged the trial before such a verdict could be declared. Sapiro had been on his way to victory according to one juror; who declared, "The jury almost unanimously believed that the defense had collapsed and that the plaintiff was justified in bringing the suit. He was in a fair way to get a verdict."¹⁹⁸

On July 1, it was ruled that the retrial for the case of Sapiro vs. Ford would be held in September. However; exactly one week after this announcement, Ford made a public declaration of his own that surprised everyone. Desiring an immediate end to the ongoing case, Ford had Joseph Palma, a New York government agent, contact Louis Marshall and ask for his assistance in making amends. "I wish this wrong could be righted," he was quoted as saying.¹⁹⁹ Ford was informed that he must make a formal apology and retract his anti-Semitic accusations. Marshall, along with Arthur Brisbane and a few other members of the American Jewish Committee, drew up the apology for Ford to give to the press. Ford investigator Harry Bennett received the apology and called up his boss. "It's pretty bad, Mr. Ford," Bennett informed him. "I don't care how bad it is," Ford replied, "you sign it and settle the thing up." Bennett tried to read the contents to Ford over the phone, but Ford cut him off, reiterating, "I don't care how bad it is, you just settle it up. The worse they make it, the better."²⁰⁰ Bennett then forged Ford's signature to the document and sent it back to Marshall.

Although it was Marshall's goal to humble Ford somewhat with the apology, it actually was not as bad as it could have been. The apology went along with what Ford's attorneys had argued during the trial in that he had been totally ignorant of what his newspaper had been printing. The apology acknowledged that Ford was the publisher of The Dearborn Independent and The International Jew. However; in his "multitude of activities," he had been unable to pay attention to what made up their contents. "To my great regret," read the apology, "I have learned that Jews generally, and particularly those of the country, not only resent these publications as promoting anti-Semitism, but regard me as their enemy." The document went on to defend such an assessment, in light of the "mental anguish" the articles had caused. This led Ford to direct his "personal attention" to the subject and claimed to be "deeply mortified" by what he had found. "Had I appreciated even the

general nature, to say nothing of the details of those utterances, I would have forbidden their circulation without a moment's hesitation." The document praised the Jewish culture for its vast contributions to civilization, and for its sobriety, diligence, benevolence, and "unselfish interest in public welfare." "Those who know me," the document asserted, "can bear witness that it is not in my nature to inflict injury upon and occasion pain to anybody, and that it has been my effort to free myself from prejudice." Therefore, he was "greatly shocked" by the publications done in his name. He saw it as his duty as an "honorable man" to make amends to his Jewish brothers by "asking their forgiveness for the harm I have unintentionally committed." The statement then presented a retraction of Ford's charges against the Jews and a promise that, henceforth, they may look to him for friendship and goodwill.²⁰¹

This statement was a remarkable attempt at public image revisionism. In order for the public to accept it, they would conveniently have to forget all of the press interviews in which Ford had condemned the Jews. They would have to forget the anti-Semitic statements found in his own autobiography. They would have to forget his proclamation in 1921 that he had a "five years' course in sight" of anti-Jewish articles.²⁰² They would have to forget the press releases that announced: "The Dearborn Independent is Henry Ford's own paper and he authorizes every statement incurred therein."²⁰³ They would have to forget Cameron's boast at a 1924 Ford branch manager's convention that "We never step out on any unusual program without first getting his guidance."²⁰⁴ Ford was trying to get away with an obvious fabrication of the truth. Liebold himself would later state, "Mr. Ford knew everything that was going on.... There was no one who could get by with putting anything over on Mr. Ford such as conducting a campaign against the Jews. As long as Mr. Ford wanted it done, it was done." ²⁰⁵

Remarkably, however; the statement was largely embraced by the press. The New York Herald Tribune praised Ford for conducting himself "in a manner which handsomely emphasizes his regret" and his intent to end his anti-Semitic publications.²⁰⁶ The Des Moines Register proclaimed that "It takes size to do a grand thing in a grand way."²⁰⁷

Ford received the most praise, however; from Jewish publications. The Jewish New York Tribune expressed "profound satisfaction," while The American Hebrew declared that the statement "breathes honesty and sincerity." The Jewish Daily proclaimed its belief that Ford acted out of sincere regret, rather than for any business or political motives.

Even the music industry cashed in on Ford's apology. Future theatrical producer; Billy Rose, published a ditty entitled "Since Henry Ford Apologized to Me":

"I was sad and I was blue
But now I'm just as good as you
Since Hen-ry Ford a-pol-ogized to me
I've thrown a-way my lit-tie Che-vro-let
And bought my-self a Ford Cou-pe
I told the Sup-'rin-tendent that
The Dearborn In-de-pen-dent
Does-n't have to hang up where it used to be
I'm glad he changed his point of view
And I even like Edsel too,
Since Hen-ry Ford a-pol-o-gized to me
My mother says she'll feed him if he calls
'Ge-fil-re-fish' and Mat-zah balls
And if he runs for President
I would-n't charge a sin-gle cent
I'll cast my hal-lot ab-so-lute-ly free
Since Hen-ry Ford a-pol-o-gized to me."²⁰⁸

The outpouring of Jewish praise was so great that Louis Marshall publicly warned against exaggerated expressions of felicity. Marshall was amazed by how the Jewish community could go from one extreme to the other; "Only last week Henry Ford was regarded as a Hamen and they are almost willing now to declare him a Mordecai."²⁰⁹ The Jewish Telegraphic Agency agreed, stating that there was a limit to every manifestation of joy. Ford's apology, therefore, did not need to be greeted with such an "hysteric outburst."

Ford's statement did have its critics. The Chicago Tribune, not surprisingly, pointed out that there were few things as remorseless as a rich man trying to duck the future consequences of his actions. "Mr. Ford," The Tribune stated, "advances an empty head to explain his cold feet."²¹⁰ The World expressed its support of Ford's apology. However; it noted that his

"amazing unfamiliarity" with the actions of his paper and his willingness to "avoid responsibility at the expense of his subordinates are anything but impressive."²¹¹ In *The American Hebrew*, E.G. Pipp expressed his belief that Ford had stopped the articles when they began to threaten his power; money, and leadership. Ford then falsely shifted the blame for their contents onto Cameron. "The campaign," Pipp emphasized, "was carried on not only with Mr. Ford's approval but on his orders."²¹²

The world press has some reservations of its own regarding Ford's apology. The German paper; *Vossische Zeitung*, cynically stated that "The auto king was compelled to abandon his cheap product and is now getting rid of his borrowed views."²¹³ Other European publications argued that the retraction had come too late to stop the widespread influence of *The International Jew*. Still others questioned the sincerity of Ford's apology. *The Berliner Tageblatt* pointed out that, only a short time before, Ford had urged in its pages for the German nation to "free itself from the slavery of Jewish capital and of the Jewish League of Nations."²¹⁴

Ford's apology had taken many of his associates by surprise. He had certainly acted on his own initiative. Ford did not notify his son, Edsel, or his lawyer, Senator Reed, of his intentions. When Cameron was asked about it by the press, he announced, "It is all news to me and I cannot believe it is true."²¹⁵ There were a number of possible reasons as to why Ford acted so quickly to end the matter. He had finally given in to arguments that it was time to replace the Model T. The new Model A was making its debut in 1927, and it is doubtful that Ford relished the thought of a lawsuit coinciding with its release. The Jewish Press pointed to the possible influence of Edsel Ford. Edsel had apparently tried to invest \$1,000,000 in Palestine mortgage securities the year before. He had been denied by Zionists, however, in protest of his Ford connection.²¹⁶ The New York Astrologers Guild maintained that Ford had been influenced by the alignment of the planets. Will Rogers even had an explanation of his own: "Ford used to have it in for the Jewish people until he saw them in Chevrolets, and then he said, 'Boys, I am all wrong.'²¹⁷

It is probable that Ford was attempting to avoid a trip to the witness stand through his apology. He had managed to get out of such an ordeal the last time through his car wreck. However; it was unlikely that he would have such an excuse during the retrial. Sapiro had been telling audiences that he would dedicate his life to getting Ford on the witness stand. At a speech in Carnegie Hall, he stated that, "I want to get Henry Ford on the stand and tear away the veil of secrecy. I want to show the world that he may be a genius at mass production, but he has disorganized their minds and souls when it comes to giving them freedom in religion."²¹⁸ Ford no doubt realized that he had a losing case and he certainly did not want a repeat of his 1919 court appearance. In issuing the apology, Ford wanted to end the matter once and for all.

Everything worked out exactly as Ford hoped it would. He not only regained footing within the Jewish Community but also brought an end to the Sapiro suit. Sapiro publicly praised Ford, stating that he had done the "square and manly" thing by apologizing. Sapiro agreed to end the lawsuit in exchange for a statement from Ford clearing his name and for monetary compensation for his legal fees. The subsequent statement again denied that Ford had any knowledge of the articles. It also stated that, as a result of "inaccuracies of fact," found in the articles, "Mr. Sapiro may have been injured and reflections cast upon him unjustly."²¹⁹ Ford soon issued another apology to bring an end to the long standing Bernstein lawsuit. As with Sapiro, Ford was asked to make monetary reparations for the court costs. Ford also swore to counteract the effects of his accusations throughout the world--namely, by stopping overseas distribution of *The International Jew*.

Not everyone was pleased, however, in the aftermath of Ford's apology. For years, rumors had been circulating that Rosika Schwimmer was the actual source of Ford's bitterness against Jews. Many of these rumors seemed to have circulated from within The Ford Company itself. Henrik Willem Van Loon had even published an article in *The Jewish Tribune* that blamed Schwimmer and her ill-conceived Peace Ship idea for the articles. Van Loon argued that the humiliation resulting from the expedition had caused Ford to hate the entire race to which Mine. Schwimmer belonged. For more than a decade, Mine. Schwimmer had tried in vain to contact Ford in an effort to gain vindication. She finally received a reply in September of 1927. It ended up being another of Liebold's notorious memos. While Liebold acknowledged Mine. Schwimmer's laudable aims on the Peace Ship expedition, he questioned her accusations and requested concrete proof. Mine. Schwimmer had no choice but to content herself with this partial vindication.

In the aftermath of Ford's retraction, a friend recalled asking him over a game of golf why he had started his anti-Jewish campaign in the first place. "I don't hate the Jews," Ford replied, defensively. "I want to be their friends." When the friend inquired further, Ford elaborated: "The Jews have gone along during the ages making themselves disliked, right? They ignored their own splendid teachers and statesmen. Even they could not get their people to mend their obnoxious habits. I thought by taking a club to them I might be able to do it."²²⁰

It is interesting to note that Ford appeared to blame Jews for the rapid changes taking place in America. Old time values seemed to be eroding as people became more "urbanized." In an attempt to turn back the clock, Ford built a museum and a village in Dearborn that celebrated the simple virtues of his youth. He reissued McGuffey's Readers and gathered a massive collection of nostalgic antiques-- ironically, with the aid of a Jewish dealer.

What Ford did not seem to realize, however, was that he was as responsible as anyone for the changes that were taking place in society. His Model T had done much to urbanize America by allowing people to travel farther, faster, and cheaper. The assembly line production that he advocated had undermined the craftsmanship that he now championed. He blamed "monied Jews" as a scapegoat while he was one of the richest and most influential men in America.

For a while after the apology, however, Ford publicly attempted to heal the wounds that existed between himself and the Jewish community. He utilized approximately 12% of his total advertising expenditures for the Model A on ads in Jewish publications.²²¹ He attended, and was warmly received, at a number of Jewish banquets and receptions. He rekindled his old friendship with Rabbi Leo Franklin and had meetings with Louis Marshall. He snubbed the Nazis during a 1930 visit to Munich. He further refused to see their "shabbily dressed" representative who knocked on his hotel door and ignored their request for a 20,000,000 mark donation,²²² he even stated that he would fire William J. Cameron and donate his anti-Semitic collection of books, magazines, and clippings to Cincinnati's Hebrew Union College. Both of these two promises, however, went unfulfilled.

Ford had also publicly vowed to halt all printings of The International Jew across the globe. However, this would be no simple matter. Samuel Untermyer, who had acted as Bernstein's lawyer, underscored their widespread influence soon after the end of the Bernstein suit: "Wherever I went on my recent world tour, even into the most remote corners of the earth, in every county, city, and hamlet, the Ford cars were to be found. Wherever there was a Ford car there was a Ford agency not far away, and wherever there was a Ford agency these vile, libelous books in the language of that country were to be found.... These articles are so fantastic and so naive in their incredible fantasy, they read like the work of a lunatic and but for the authority of the Ford name, they would have never seen the light of day and would have been quite harmless if they had. With that name, they spread like wildfire and became the bible of every anti-Semite...." ²²³

Several publishers, including Theodor Fritsch of Leipzig, Andre E deRunge of Sao Paulo, and V.A. Kessler of Berlin, refused to cease publishing unless they were given monetary compensation for losses. By 1933, Fritsch had published 29 editions of the book, and demanded 40,000 marks to stop his enterprise. In reply to the Ford request, Fritsch sent a letter which expressed puzzlement over why Ford would want to destroy such "inestimable mental goods," the publication of which had "remained the most important action" of Ford's life.²²⁴ Louis Marshall himself advised Ford not to pay Fritsch off, stating that it would be like "coming into contact with a lion who has tasted blood-- he can never be satisfied."²²⁵ Instead, Liebold wrote to Edmund C. Heine, the American manager of the Ford Motor Company in Germany, concerning the matter. Heine responded that The International Jew "had strong government backing" and was an important educational tool for the people of Germany "to understand the Jewish problem as it should be understood."²²⁶ Therefore, Fritsch refused to stop his publishing venture. This, apparently, was good enough for Liebold, who wrote back, "We understand the matter perfectly and this thoroughly answers our recent inquiry." ²²⁷

In 1932, a Brazilian book company wrote to Ford and requested the publishing rights to The International Jew. Liebold wrote back that such permission was not necessary "since the book has not been copyrighted in this country."²²⁸ Liebold conveniently failed to mention that the book was no longer supposed to be circulating. Because of this, the Brazilians published an edition of 5,000 copies of the book before being again notified and asked to cease publication. By this point, a large number of copies had already been sold.

Rabbi Leo Franklin played a major role in whatever meager attempts Liebold made in halting circulation of The International Jew. Whenever a new edition of the work appeared, Franklin was quick to notify the Ford Company and diligently request that action be taken. However, Liebold acted very slowly, if at all, in complying with the rabbi's requests. In 1933, Franklin was able to convince Ford that an official statement reiterating his 1927 disassociation from The International Jew was necessary to combat its distribution. After agreeing to this, however, Ford promptly changed his mind. He had Liebold write back to Franklin and explain that, while sympathetic, he did not care to sign the prepared statement that Franklin had sent to his office.²²⁹ Ford did not formally issue a statement concerning the matter until four years later, when Liebold sent a prepared notice to Untermyer then president of The Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League. In the statement, Liebold wrote that a German edition of The International Jew "erroneously refers to Mr. Ford as its author" and that steps

would be taken to prevent further misuse of his name.²³⁰ The statement, however, received little attention and, in any event, could not curb the damage that had been already been done.

It was not just overseas that *The International Jew* was being distributed. It was widely available in the United States from such fascist organizations as The German-American Bund, The Defenders of Faith, The National Workers League, and The Silver Shirts of America. In 1938, investigator John Roy Carison found copies of the book sold at Conrad K. Grieb's American Review Bookstore in New York. "Six dollars for the set is a very good buy," boasted the salesman, who sold the book alongside fascist publications from Germany, France, and England.²³¹ World Service, the Nazi bulletin published in Erfurt, Germany, offered German imports and referred to the British Imperial Fascist League for English translations. Passages from *The International Jew* were even quoted by Pennsylvania Congressman, and Silver Shirt sympathizer, Louis T. McFadden on the floor of the House.²³²

Also making the rounds during this period were The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion. Detroit's famous anti-Semitic priest, Charles Coughlin, said of them, "Yes, the Jews have always claimed that The Protocols were forgeries, but I prefer the words of Henry Ford, who said, 'The best truth of The Protocols is the fact that up to the present minute they have been carried out.' Mr. Ford did retract his accusations against the Jews. But neither Mr. Ford nor I will retract the statement that many of the events predicted in The Protocols have come to pass."²³³ The Protocols also received wide distribution through the efforts of The Dearborn Independent's former editor, William J. Cameron.

Cameron had changed quite a bit since beginning his tenure at Ford. The former minister now firmly believed the accusations that he had written about the Jews throughout the 1920's. When Ford made his 1927 apology, Cameron told an acquaintance, "I don't know yet what I am going to do, but it is certain that I for my part will never make any retraction. What I have written will stand. Not one thing will I take back. You can be sure of that."²³⁴ Cameron became the first president of the Anglo-Saxon Federation of America and published the anti-Semitic *Destiny* magazine, which recycled many of the accusations of The Dearborn Independent. The Anglo-Saxons believed that they were the "true" sons of Israel. Hieroglyphics on the Great Pyramid in Egypt supposedly proclaimed that the lost 10 tribes of Israel had wandered all over Europe and eventually settled in what became the Anglo-Saxon countries-- namely The British Isles. It was their belief that Jesus was not a Jew, but an Anglo-Saxon-Celtic-Israeli.²³⁵ In addition to *Destiny* and The Protocols, the Anglo-Saxons published pamphlets addressing "The Jewish Question." In the meantime, Cameron still maintained full employment at the Ford Company as its chief spokesman and commentator for the Ford Sunday Evening Hour radio show.

Throughout the 1930's, The Ford Motor Company was notorious for its ruthless practices. Ford's chief investigator, Harry Bennett, had emerged as a major influence on company policy. Bennett created a Gestapo-like agency of thugs and spies to crack down on potential threats to Ford, such as union men. "To those who have never lived under a dictatorship," reflected one employee, "it is difficult to convey the sense of fear which is part of the Ford system."²³⁶ In 1937, Upton Sinclair presented a sinister depiction of the company in a book entitled *Flivver King: A Story of Ford-America*. The book, a combination of fact and fiction, told of a naive Ford easily influenced by such extremist groups as The Ku Klux Klan, The Black Legion, The Silver Shirts, The Crusader Whiteshirts, The American Liberty League, and The Anglo-Saxon Federation. His Dearborn Independent influences the main character Abner Shutt, to join The Klan and to teach his children to have nothing to do with "this evil race" known as Jews. Later, Nazis swarm at Ford and start a new anti-Semitic campaign. Ford finds all of this good, for he remains what he had been born, "a super-mechanic with the mind of a stubborn peasant."²³⁷

It is true that the Ford Motor Company was a haven for Nazi sympathizers. Detective Casmir Paler wrote to Professor Nathan Isaacs in 1937 that "Henry Ford and his subordinates Ernest G. Liebold, WJ. Cameron, and others have turned the Ford Motor Company Chemical Department into the headquarters of the Nazis here."²³⁸ Ford tool and die maker; John T. Wiandt, distributed literature of the pro-Nazi National Worker's League to his fellow Ford workers. "I have an audience every lunch hour," he proudly told an interviewer.²³⁹ Signs were left in various employee areas which proclaimed that "Jews are traitors to America and should not be trusted-- Buy Gentile," "Jews destroy Christianity," and "Jews Control The Press."²⁴⁰ The American Nazi Party's first president, Heinz Spanknoebel, had been an employee at the Ford Motor Company. Fritz Kuhn, leader of the pro-Nazi German-American Bund, worked at Ford off and on from 1928 until 1936. Harry Bennett once confessed to the FBI that Kuhn had been caught during work hours "practicing speeches in a dark room."²⁴¹

To combat growing public criticism, The Ford Company issued a statement in 1937 which declared "that inasmuch as Mr. Ford has always extended to Ford employees the fullest freedom from any coercion with respect to their views on

political, religious, or social activities, they cannot be reproved by us for exercising such liberties."²⁴² Ford's active anti-Semitism had been quite disturbing throughout the 1920's. However; he was equally unsettling in the 1930's due to his passive behavior towards its consequences.

Ford courted further controversy through his business ventures in Germany. In 1938, The German Ford Motor Company opened a plant in Berlin whose "real purpose," according to U.S. Army Intelligence, was producing "troop transport-type" vehicles for the German Army. Ford, however; refused an offer to build aircraft engines in England.²⁴⁵ According to Harry Bennett, Ford became anti-British after he overheard Winston Churchill ridicule farming. However; he considered the German people to be "clean, thrifty, hard-working, and technologically advanced and he admired them for that."²⁴⁴ The German Ford worker's employee publication contained such propaganda as: "At the beginning of this year we vowed to give our best and utmost for final victory, in unshakable faithfulness to our Fuhrer. Today we say with pride that we succeeded."²⁴⁵ On Hitler's birthday in 1939, the German Ford Company sent him a gift of 50,000 marks as a token of its loyalty.²⁴⁶

Ford, however; received the loudest criticism for becoming the first, and only, American to be awarded the German Eagle Order. Hitler had created the award himself as the highest honor a foreigner could receive from the Nazi government. Ford shared his award with only four other men, including Mussolini. The award consisted of a Maltese cross studded with four eagles and four swastikas, and came with Hitler's personal congratulations. It was presented to Ford, in honor of his seventy fifth birthday, in July of 1938 by German consuls Fritz Heiler and Karl Kapp. Newspaper pictures of the event showed a smiling Ford shaking the Heiler's hand as Kapp pinned the award onto Ford's jacket.

Jewish groups were horrified, and promptly called upon Ford "in the name of humanity and Americanism" to "repudiate" the Nazi medal.²⁴⁷ An offer by the Ford Motor Company to donate 71 Ford automobiles to the Jewish War Veterans of the United States was rejected. It came with a letter from the organization's president, Samuel J. Leve, condemning Ford's "endorsement of the cruel, barbarous, inhuman actions and policies of the Nazi regime." Comedian Eddie Cantor publicly lambasted Ford, stating, "Mr. Ford, in my opinion, is a damned fool for permitting the world's greatest gangster to give him a citation. Doesn't he realize that the German papers, when reporting the citation, said all Americans were behind Nazism?...The more men like Ford we have the more we must organize and fight."²⁴⁸

Ernest Liebold did not help matters with his response to the criticism. He looked at it from a purely business standpoint, arguing that Ford employed 3,500 Germans and produced 15,000 cars each year in their overseas agency. "For a nation," Liebold stated, "of 70,000,000 to recognize the achievements of a man in another land seems to be an honor which cannot be disregarded or ignored. We have interests, physical, financial, and moral, which have taken many years to establish, and consequently such foundations cannot be uprooted overnight to comply with propaganda intended to arouse American sympathy."²⁴⁹

Ford, himself, did not publicly respond to the charges until four months later; in December of 1938. Ford met with Rabbi Leo Franklin and, following their conversation, had an authorized statement issued to the press. In the statement, Ford advocated U.S. acceptance for the growing tide of Jewish refugees from Europe and pledged his support for such an effort. He also defended his acceptance of Hitler's medal, stating that it was his opinion that the German people as a whole "are not in sympathy with their rulers in their anti-Jewish policies," which, Ford explained, was the work of "a few war-makers at the top." "My acceptance of a medal from the German people," Ford continued, "does not, as some people seem to think, involve any sympathy on my part with Nazism. Those who have known me for years realize that anything that breeds hate repulses me."²⁵⁰ Ford's statement was applauded by Jewish leaders across the country. Rabbi Abraham L. Feinberg brought up another noteworthy American in his praise for Ford, commenting, "Perhaps Colonel Lindbergh will now follow his good example and make a similar public disapproval [of Nazi policies]."²⁵¹ Charles Lindbergh, like Ford, had recently received a medal from the Nazi Government. However; the sincerity of Ford's statement was soon to be called into question. One evening, not long after Ford's statement was issued, Rabbi Franklin received an anonymous telephone call from someone who would only identify himself as "former Ford serviceman." Franklin was told that he had been duped by Ford and would soon be double-crossed by Ford, Father Coughlin, and Ford investigator Harry Bennett.²⁵²

The next Sunday, Father Coughlin announced in his weekly radio address that Rabbi Franklin had actually ghostwritten Ford's statement following their meeting. Coughlin alleged that the phony direct quotations were "totally inaccurate" to Ford's true feelings, that Ford actually believed that there was little or no persecution of Jews in Germany, and that Ford believed that the war mongering parties in Europe were the "international bankers" and not the German government. "Moreover;" Coughlin added, "while Mr. Ford expressed his humanitarianism for all people, yet he believed that Jews wouldn't be content to work in

factories."²⁵³ Father Coughlin went on to state that this information had been obtained from Harry Bennett while in the presence of Henry Ford, and had been authorized in a signed statement.

Bennett himself issued a statement the next day. In it, he presented a compromise between the earlier press release and Father Coughlin's accusations. Bennett claimed that Father Coughlin's version was essentially correct, except that he had not used the phrase "totally inaccurate" and that Ford did not state the belief that "there was little or no prosecution in Germany." However; Bennett further stated that "Mr. Ford did not attack the German Government, and did not mention Nazism. He did say that he did not know whether there was any persecution, but that if there was any he didn't believe that the German people or the German Government were responsible, but an organized few, the warmakers and international bankers."²⁵⁴ The statement was then written by Dr. Franklin, changed to the first person, authorized by Ford, and issued to the press. When Father Coughlin's Social Justice magazine called and asked if the press release was accurate, Bennett had explained that it was "not totally accurate" and signed a statement declaring it as such.²⁵⁵

In the aftermath of this statement, an understandably confused Rabbi Franklin refused to make an official comment. The Detroit Free Press, however; made it clear where it stood. It praised Rabbi Franklin as "One of the great spiritual leaders of Detroit," while it condemned Coughlin as a man "well known for his congenital inability to tell the truth."²⁵⁶ An outraged Father Coughlin sued the newspaper for \$4,000,000, but later retracted when he saw the evidence the paper had against him. In the meantime, Bennett issued another statement in which he stated that "Father Coughlin crossed me up. I am going to get in touch with him and tell him so. The statement as published was accurate and expresses Mr. Ford's sentiments."²⁵⁷

Throughout the whole episode, Ford remained silent. He refused to comment on either Bennett or Father Coughlin's statements and, more importantly, refused to defend his old friend, Rabbi Franklin. It appeared that Ford was trying to project a double image with the conflicting statements. To Jewish groups, he would appear to be a pawn for the notoriously anti-Semitic Father Coughlin. At the same time, to Nazi-sympathizers, it would appear that Ford had been taken advantage of by Rabbi Franklin. In the end, the whole matter was never truly resolved. The Anti-Nazi Bulletin complained that, "in handling the situation in this way Ford has settled nothing. He is completely naive, or utterly contemptuous of public opinion if he supposes that this torturous way of dealing with the gravest problem confronting Democracy will leave him unscathed."²⁵⁸ Secretary of the Interior; Harold L. Ickes, ignored all of the public excuses, and proclaimed that anyone who accepted a decoration from a dictator automatically foreswore his American birthright. "How can any American," Ickes demanded, "accept a decoration from the hand of a brutal dictator who, with that same hand, is robbing and torturing thousands of fellow human beings?"²⁵⁹

Privately, Ford stated that, "They [the Germans] sent me this ribbon band. They [the critics] told me to return it or else I'm not an American. I'm going to keep it!"²⁶⁰ Editor Oswald Garrison Villard noted that he did not think that Ford had the mentality to understand the significance of his actions, that "a boy of 12 would do better." Villard pointed out that Ford had many German workers employed overseas, so it seemed to Ford "just a pleasant gesture, quite harmless."²⁶¹ Harry Bennett, himself, later expressed a similar opinion, believing that Ford did it out of mulishness, ignorance, and a failure to understand the consequences of his actions.²⁶²

Bennett also felt that Ford may have accepted the medal to spite President Franklin D. Roosevelt, whom he hated. This feeling had been longstanding; Roosevelt had criticized Ford's Peace Ship mission in 1915 when he was the Assistant Secretary of the Navy. When going through a list of things Ford despised, an acquaintance would later say, "FDR was first on the list, and after that was what he called "monied" Jews, and all those whom he even suspected of admiring the monied Jews."²⁶³ Roosevelt had once actually set up a meeting between himself and Ford at the White House. Ford, however; remained unimpressed. When a friend asked Ford what the two of them had talked about, Ford snapped, "Well, he took up the first five minutes telling me about his ancestors. I don't know why, unless he wanted to prove he had no Jewish blood."²⁶⁴ It is interesting to note that union men, in 1936, accused foremen at Ford of distributing anti-Semitic literature that referred to Roosevelt as "Roosenfelt."²⁶⁵ About the only good thing Ford had to say about Roosevelt's New Deal concerned the appointment of Henry Morgenthau Jr. as Secretary of the Treasury. It made sense, Ford would say, to have the nation's money under the control of a Jew.²⁶⁶

At this time, Ford was convinced that reports of impending war in Europe were nothing more than false rumors. To close acquaintances, Ford put down reports of German aggression and persecution as being propaganda. Three days before the invasion of Poland, Ford praised Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain for his policy of appeasement, calling him "one of the greatest men who ever lived."²⁶⁷ That same day, when reporters asked Ford for his opinion of Hitler; Ford responded, "I don't know Hitler personally, but at least Germany keeps its people at work. Apparently England's reason for going to war is

that she doesn't make enough use of her land."²⁶⁸ When asked about the possibilities of a war in Europe, Ford claimed that it was all a bluff; "They don't dare have a war and they know it."²⁶⁹

When war was declared, Ford was unsympathetic to the cause of the Allies. An Englishman once came to Ford and asked for help in bringing English children over to America for safety from The Blitz. Ford refused the request and mockingly voiced his new opinion of Chamberlain. "Why did you send that fool with the umbrella to talk to Hitler?" Ford asked. "Why didn't you send a man?"²⁷⁰ Privately, Ford had no doubt as to who had started the war. He talked to John Dykema, his friend from the Huron Mountain Club, about the matter soon after the war had been declared. "You know, John," Ford stated, "there hasn't been a shot fired. The whole thing has just been made up by Jewish bankers."²⁷¹

Ford developed strong ties with fellow isolationist, Charles Lindbergh, at this time. Both publicly declared their belief that the United States should stay out of the conflict. Pulitzer Prize winning playwright, Robert Sherwood, accused Ford and Lindbergh as being exponents of "a traitorous point of view" and of being "bootlickers of Hitler."²⁷² However; Ford was also viewed with suspicion within the isolationist America First organization. Ford became a member of the America First National Committee in 1940 at the same time as businessman Lessing J. Rosenwald. When the Jewish Rosenwald found out about Ford's membership, he promptly resigned from his post in protest. At this stage, the America First Committee did not want to be labeled as being anti-Semitic and voted to drop Ford as a member. The America First leadership justified this by explaining that Ford was not able to commit much time or energy to the movement and "because the committee could not be sure that from time to time Mr. Ford's views were consistent with the official views of the committee."²⁷³

However; Ford continued his good friendship with the prominent America First member Lindbergh. The FBI believed that someone had been leaking classified information to Lindbergh from the War Department, and had Detroit agent John S. Bugas question Ford over the matter. "When Charles comes out here," Ford told Bugas in July 1940, "we only talk about the Jews."²⁷⁴ Lindbergh visited Ford for two weeks in the summer of 1941. One month later; Lindbergh gave a speech in Des Moines, Iowa in which he expressed the decidedly Ford-like view that "The three most important groups which have been pressing this country towards war are the British, the Jews, and the Roosevelt Administration."²⁷⁵ Shortly after America declared war on the Axis Powers, Ford offered the then-unpopular Lindbergh a job in Detroit. Lindbergh immediately accepted the offer.

It was obvious in Ford's private circles that his anti-Semitism, though less publicly proclaimed, was as strong as ever. In the late 1930's, Ford befriended the notorious anti-Semite, Gerald L.K. Smith. Like Ford, Smith hated the New Deal, referring to it contemptuously as the "Jew Deal." Similar to Cameron, Smith believed that Jews had not descended from the Israelites of the Bible, but "sprang from a tribe of roving bandits."²⁷⁶ The Ford Company provided bodyguards for Smith at an anti-Communist rally and used him as a principal speaker at an Election Day gathering. Ford was even once quoted as saying, "I wish Gerald L.K. Smith could be president of the United States."²⁷⁷ According to Smith, Ford informed him during an interview in 1940 that he had never signed the 1927 apology for The International Jew. Bennett had signed it and Ford did not show signs of regret for having published it in the first place. "Mr. Smith," Ford allegedly stated, "I hope to republish The International Jew again some time."²⁷⁸ Eventually, Ford was to sever his relationship with Smith. However; that did not stop Smith from republishing a copy of The International Jew in 1964 through his Christian Nationalist Crusade and serializing it in his publications.

In early 1940, Walt Disney was thinking of taking his studio public and asked Ford for his advice on the enterprise. Ford expressed his admiration for Disney because he was a successful Protestant in the film business-- a field dominated by Jews. However; Ford warned, Jews also controlled the stock market, and Disney would be wise to sell his company outright rather than lose it to "them" one piece at a time. Disney, who may have had anti-Semitic leanings of his own, thanked Ford for his advice.²⁷⁹

It was not always in just his private circles that Ford would reveal such views. After interviewing Ford in 1941, a reporter for the Manchester Guardian later said, "The best thing he would say about the Jews was that you couldn't do without them. The Gentiles wouldn't work if the Jews weren't here."²⁸⁰ Public opinion polls also showed that the majority of Americans, as high as 80%, still connected Henry Ford with anti-Semitism.

With the American declaration of war in December of 1941, it was decided to present a new image of Ford to the American public. This was largely due to the efforts of Edsel Ford. Edsel was instrumental in converting the Ford Motor Company into a major arms producer for the allies, and had made efforts to court the Jewish community for years. He and his son, Henry Ford II, now took upon themselves the campaign against unauthorized distribution of The International Jew.

By this time, Ernest Liebold had been removed from responding to Ford's letters. This was largely due to the efforts of his rival, Harry Bennett. Liebold had told Gerald L.K. Smith that the employment of Bennett had been the worst thing to happen to the company. Bennett, for his part, made endless efforts to get Liebold fired. According to Bennett, he was the one who brought Liebold's "highly inappropriate" letter responses to Ford's attention. "Mr. Ford was furious to see what kind of stuff Liebold had been sending out," Bennett reported. "He instructed me to see to it that Liebold wrote no more letters."²⁸¹ Ford told Bennett that he would not fire Liebold because that would please too many people he did not like. Bennett, however; thought the truth was that Ford was afraid of Liebold.

It was not just Liebold about whom Ford was growing suspicious. When reflecting on Bennett himself, Ford was heard to lament, "The Jews and Communists have been working poor Harry until he's almost out of his mind."²⁸² He was even heard to remark of Hitler; "Well, by God, we're through with him. He's just power-drunk, like the rest of them."²⁸³ Liebold was eventually fired early in 1944, victim of one the periodic purges of the Ford Company. Bennett would not have much longer before his time also came. His removal was one of the first acts commissioned by Henry Ford II when he gained control of the company in 1945.

As part of the effort to clean up the Ford image after Pearl Harbor; Edsel and, suprisingly, Bennett, set up a meeting between the elder Ford and Richard E. Gunsadt, National Director of the Anti-Defamation League. Gunsadt wrote a letter for Ford that was then sent to Sigmund Livingston, the League's founding member. The letter; dated January 7, 1942, was later published in newspapers across the country. It was meant as a public repudiation of anti-Semitism on behalf of Ford. This time, it was, presumably, sent with Ford's actual signature. The letter stated, in part, that "In our present national and international emergency, I consider it of importance that I clarify some general misconceptions concerning my attitude towards my fellow citizens of Jewish faith. I do not subscribe or support, directly or indirectly, any agitation which would promote antagonism against my Jewish fellow-citizens. I consider that the hate-mongering prevalent for some time in this country against the Jew is of a distinct disservice to our country, and to the peace and welfare of humanity." The statement went on to reiterate Ford's disassociation from the articles of The Dearborn Independent, decried racial hatred as an effort "to weaken our national unity," and urged citizens not to give aid to hate groups. The letter ended on an ironic note, for one signed by Henry Ford: "It is my sincere hope that now in this country and throughout the world, when this war is finished and peace once again established, hatred of the Jew, commonly known as anti-Semitism.. will cease for all time."²⁸⁴

The following month, Ford attorney, I.A. Capizzi, threatened the Ku Klux Klan with legal action if it did not desist from further publication and distribution of The International Jew. The Klan replied that it already had halted the effort; it did not wish to issue "controversial articles" during wartime. Capizzi also wrote Mexican Government official Miguel Aleman. In his letter; Capizzi informed Mr. Aleman that Spanish translations in Mexico City and Pueblo were works of the "German propaganda department," that any intimation of Ford being the author was a "gross misrepresentation," and that assistance in halting distribution of "this harmful exhibition of deceit" would be greatly appreciated.²⁸⁵ That same month, William J. Cameron, of all people, condemned anti-Semitism as "scurrilous stuff, a vestige of tribal barbarism, the negation of humanity, intelligence, and Christianity" on the Ford Sunday Evening Hour.²⁸⁶ This was quite a change in tune, coming from the man who had accused the Jews themselves of such things for years. The absence of Ernest Liebold as Ford's secretary and the weakening health of the nearly eighty year old Ford were beginning to be reflected in company policy. The Ford Motor Company was now actively pursuing an end to The International Jew as it never had before.

By the mid 1940's, Ford had suffered two strokes. He was to have his third, and most severe, attack in May of 1945. According to witness Josephine Gomon, it happened as Ford watched uncut footage of the Majdanek Concentration Camp in the Ford Auditorium. "He never recovered his mind or physical strength," Gomon later reported.²⁸⁷ After this, Ford claimed that government agents were after him and made sure that his chauffeur was armed.

If Ford made any connection between the grisly concentration camp footage and his own actions, it was only re-enforced during the Nuremberg Trials. The leader of Hitler's Labor Front, Robert Ley, wrote a letter to Ford from his cell as he awaited trial. In view of their mutual interests, Ley wrote, he would like to work for Ford after he was released. After all, he added, he had done nothing more in the past few years than engage in anti-Semitic activities.²⁸⁸ Ley was later to hang himself.

The testimony given by Baldus von Schirach, former leader of the Hitler Youth, was no less condemning. Von Schirach testified that he had first become an anti-Semite after reading a German edition of The International Jew translated as The Eternal Jew. "You have no idea what a great influence this book had on the thinking of German youth," von Schirach stated. "The younger generation looked with envy to the symbols of success and prosperity like Henry Ford, and if he said the Jews were to blame, we naturally believed him."²⁸⁹

It is interesting to note that the German Ford plants in Cologne and Berlin had both utilized slave labor during the war. "The conditions were terrible," remembered Cologne worker Elsa Iwanowa, who was taken from Russia by German troops at the age of 16. "They put us in barracks, on three tier bunks. It was very cold; they did not pay us at all and scarcely fed us. The only reason that we survived was that we were young and fit."²⁹⁰

It is unclear how much contact the home office in Dearborn had with its German enterprise after December of 1941. The company later claimed that connections had been completely severed during the war years. This excuse has been disputed, with some arguing that American Ford received dividends from its German plants worth approximately \$60,000 from 1940-1943.²⁹¹ Nothing has been conclusively proven to date. However; according to American Intelligence reports, vehicles manufactured at German Ford and G.M. plants made up "the backbone of the German transportation system." After the war; Ford demanded reparations from the U.S. Government for wartime damages resulting from allied bombings on its German plants. It was awarded almost \$1 million, mainly due to damage inflicted on the military truck complex in Cologne.²⁹²

Shortly before his death, Henry Ford was confined to his bed in a state of depression. His physician arranged for a reporter to visit, in an effort to arouse Ford from his gloomy state. The newsman innocently asked Ford what the chances were of his company going public. This was all it took, according to witness Jack Davis, to energize the old man. "I'll take my factory down brick by brick," Ford announced, "before I'll let any of the Jew speculators get stock in the company." The shocked physician quickly removed the newsman and announced that that was enough questions for the day.²⁹³

Henry Ford died on April 7, 1947. Edsel had died three years earlier of stomach cancer. The company now passed firmly into the hands of Edsel's equally compassionate son, Henry Ford II. The younger Ford spent the rest of his life attempting to atone for the sins of his grandfather. In 1951, Ford II received the annual Medallion of the Anti Defamation League for his work in advancing human rights. He set up company branches in Israel and made numerous contributions to Yeshiva University and various Jewish organizations. The younger Ford had a number of Jewish acquaintances and was well liked in the Jewish community. This commitment still continues at Ford. In 1997, the company sponsored the network premier of "Schindler's List." In order to air the program commercial free and uncensored, Ford underwrote the entire cost. A Jewish man said it best in 1967 when he compared the new generation to the elder Ford: "Certainly the grandsons have given every indication of being enlightened, of making every effort to atone for the sins of that contemptible old bastard ignoramus."²⁹⁴

However; Ford II's warm friend in the Jewish Community, Max Fisher; commented around the same time that the past was still quite vivid: "You have no idea how this seeps through the Jewish community, even through the generations.

Today, here in Detroit, people still feel it. "²⁹⁵

The International Jew has remained in print in various languages ever since it first emerged in the 1920's. In the 1950's, President Juan Peron defended its sale in Argentina as being a representation of the freedom of the press. In 1964, articles from it were serialized in Thunderbolt, the official magazine of The National States Rights Party. In 1972, The John Birch Society republished Dearborn Independent articles in a book entitled None Dare call it Conspiracy.²⁹⁶

Currently, The International Jew is being circulated in Egypt and Russia and can be seen displayed in the windows of British Muslim bookstores, according to the 1997 Anti-Semitism World Report. In Germany, it is distributed by the growing Neo-Nazi movement. It is published in Brazil by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research. In The United States, it can be obtained from the California based Noontide Press. It is promoted by America's Promise Ministries church and has been available at the rallies of Louis Farrakhan.²⁹⁷

The International Jew is more readily available, however; on the Internet. A site called "Jew Watch" offers the book's complete text along with a "special" introduction by Gerald L.K. Smith. The site also includes an essay entitled "The Wisdom of Henry Ford," which characterizes The International Jew as being "a book for all Americans.... It is scrupulously fair; even handed, and factual." Transcripts of the book, always attributed to Ford, can also be found at such Internet sites as "This Time The World: The National Socialist Archive," "G.O.A.L.: God's Order Affirmed in Love," "Reconstructing a National Identity For Christian Whites," "Bible Believers," "Aryan Nations," "Alpha: Pro- Aryan," and various Islamic homepages.

For much of this century, Henry Ford was among the most influential men in the world. He was the very embodiment of success and prosperity to countless millions. However; he left an ugly legacy of hatred and bigotry that is still felt today. Henry Ford, more than anyone, is responsible for the widespread influence of anti-Semitism in the United States. Not once

did he issue a genuine retraction for his Jewish attacks. All of his excuses and disclaimers were self serving and were never actually written by him. He surrounded himself with sordid characters and ignored the pleadings of reason. He was a prime influence on the Nazis-- the most notorious group of mass murderers in the history of mankind. Much of America still regards Henry Ford as a hero. However; it is doubtful that the Jewish Community will ever forgive him for the horrible wrongs that he inflicted on both the Jewish people and the truth.

Because it is among the oldest colleges in Indiana and because of its proximity to the South, Hanover College possesses a unique relationship to the Civil War. In the following selections, the editors of The Hanover Historical Review hope that we offer our readers a glimpse into the intriguing activities and significant sacrifices experienced by Hanover's students and faculty during one of the darkest periods in American History.

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