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### THE VICIOUS ROLE OF ANTI-SEMITISM

PRECISELY such propaganda as that which the *Dearborn Independent* has been carrying on is responsible for many of the blackest and most shameful pages in history. Wherever and whenever there has been an organized propaganda of anti-Semitism it has invariably been closely intertwined with every other contemporary reactionary oppressive and contemptible force. To those who know the history of anti-Semitism in Russia, in Poland, and in Rumania, even in quite recent years, this statement will seem so trite as not to require any demonstration. This close association with other forms of reaction and brutal oppression is not peculiar to anti-Semitism, but is a common characteristic of every form of race prejudice and hatred. Among the

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Turks organized prejudice and hatred of Armenians has invariably been found to be closely associated with all the other evil forces in the Turkish Empire. In our own country, discrimination against and injustice to the negro goes hand in hand with almost every other form of reaction and oppression.

It is quite useless to pretend that such articles as those published in the *Dearborn Independent* and the *London Morning Post* are not really anti-Semitic propaganda, but merely a legitimate discussion of a great and serious problem. Such specious pleading will not deceive any intelligent, honest person. The only possible object of the articles is to convince the people who read them that civilized society is threatened by a great world-wide secret conspiracy of the Jews; that this virile and highly intelligent people, scattered throughout the civilized world, and numbering, it is estimated, about sixteen millions, is secretly organized and led by an "invisible government" composed of some of the ablest and keenest minds in the

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world, to the end of bringing all the governments of the earth, together with all industry and commerce, under the absolute rule and dominion of a dynasty to be set up by an aristocratic Jewish Sanhedrin.

Even if we ignore, for the purpose of this discussion, the fact that to sustain this charge a structure of cruel falsehood has been erected with great cunning, it is surely plain enough that the effect of such a charge upon the minds of such non-Jews as believe it can only be the development of a spirit of antagonism toward Jews, as Jews. In so far as the *Dearborn Independent* succeeds in its efforts, it must inevitably make our Gentile population regard their Jewish neighbors with fear and suspicion. And from such fear and suspicion emanate intolerance and hatred and their brutal progeny. There is no essential difference between the articles which have been appearing in Mr. Ford's paper, either in spirit or in text, and those which, in a past so recent that its horror haunts the memory of

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men and women of our generation, let loose upon tens of thousands of helpless and inoffensive people the most bestial and fiendish cruelty and hatred ever attained by beings called human.

I can quite well remember the intense horror with which the Christian world read of the wave of pogroms against the Jews which swept over Russia in 1891, following the inhuman enforcement of the "May Laws." Jewish women in travail, forced to flee for their lives, hid in cemeteries, and in those "cities of the dead" brought forth their babes. Jewish fathers took their daughters to brothels for safe hiding. Jewish women and girls were raped. Jewish homes were looted, and whole villages inhabited by Jews were burned down. Even women and children were brutally murdered, simply because they were Jews and because a newspaper propaganda in all respects like that now being carried on in this country and in England had made the Jewish people the object of suspicion and

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fear and, therefore, of hatred. It was then that a Russian statesman declared that the "Jewish question" would be solved only when one third of the Jews had perished, another third emigrated, and the remaining third been converted to the orthodox Church!

The frightful massacre of Jews at Kishinev in 1903 likewise resulted from a newspaper propaganda very similar to that which is now being carried on by the *Dearborn Independent* and the *London Morning Post*. On that occasion an unexampled and unprecedented outburst of horror thrilled the whole civilized world. John Hay, our then Secretary of State, said: "No person of ordinary humanity can have heard without deep emotion the story of the cruel outrages inflicted upon the Jews of Kishinev. These lamentable events have caused the profoundest impression throughout the world." President Roosevelt said, "I have never in my experience in this country known of a more immediate or a deeper

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expression of the sympathy for the victims and of horror over the appalling calamity that has occurred."

The Kishinev outrages were the direct and logical outcome of the campaign of calumny and hatred against the Jews waged by the local newspaper, the *Bessarabetz*, owned and edited by a Moldavian named Kroushevan. Except for the specific charge of "ritual murder," with which I shall presently deal, the campaign of Jew-baiting pursued by this journal, which produced such disastrous and monstrous results, was the counterpart of that now being carried on by the *Dearborn Independent*. Kroushevan charged that the Jews were conspiring to secure world dominion; he charged that the economic power of the Jewish race in Russia was a peril to the nation; he charged that Jews were responsible for Socialism and social unrest. The anti-Semitic articles appearing in this country and in England during the past few weeks are quite like those which used to appear in the *Bessarabetz*.

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Of course, the crowning infamy of the campaign of hate waged by the Kishinev paper was the charge of "ritual murder." A Christian boy, named Ribalenko, belonging to the village of Doubossar, midway between Kishinev and Odessa, was murdered, his body being found in an orchard. The *Bessarabetz* at once declared that the boy had been killed by the Jews for sacrificial purposes, thus reviving one of the most terrible and most infamous libels ever directed against any race or sect—a calumny that has been exposed and refuted again and again. Subsequently, after the mischief had been done, *it was proved that the boy was murdered by his uncle and the caretaker of the orchard in which the body was found—both of them Russians and Gentiles.* The murderers confessed their guilt, the motive for the crime being gain.

The horrors of 1891 were repeated and even excelled at Kishinev in 1903 as a result of this propaganda. It is not necessary to go into the gruesome details of the numerous

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nameless sex mutilations, the awful outrages committed upon young girls and their gray-haired grandmothers, the shockingly brutal and bestial murders, the well-authenticated cases of nails driven through the eyes of a woman and the cutting out of the tongue of a two-year-old child; let these brief references suffice. It is all too evident from the most reliable accounts of the massacre that hatred born of resentment and fear had made the Gentile mobs as savage as wild beasts. They were no longer human.

Thus far neither the *Dearborn Independent* nor the *London Morning Post* has reproduced the "ritual murder" lie. Perhaps neither will do it. Probably not. At the same time, *both papers have done their utmost to create in the minds of their readers a readiness to believe that or any other infamy when attributed to the Jews.* There is not, and there cannot be, any assurance that in the soil thus prepared by these papers, others more ignorant or less scrupulous will not successfully plant belief in the ancient legend of

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sacrificial murders committed by Jews. And even if this never happens at all, the fact remains that in charging that the horrors of Bolshevism were deliberately instigated by Jews, British and American anti-Semites have appealed to the same unreasoning, instinctive, primal passion. For Bolshevism, primarily a political and economic program though it be, impinges upon religious faith and religious authority. Thus do the anti-Semites play with fire in close proximity to the high explosives of human nature.

It was not the ancient, insensate hatred inspired by belief that the Jews kill Christian children in their Paschal rites which made the Kishinev pogrom possible. That added the element of savage fanaticism to the antagonism and resentment already developed by the economic position of the Jews. The extortions practiced by Jewish money-lenders; the superior business capacity, perseverance, and resourcefulness of the Jewish traders and shopkeepers as compared with their Gentile rivals; the intense competition

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of Jewish artisans, superior to the average Russian workman in intelligence, industry, thrift, sobriety, and ambition—all these things resulted in bitter antagonism. Upon that economic fear and resentment religious fanaticism fastened and flourished.

Herein lies the danger of the anti-Semitic propaganda in this country and in England. It is invoking economic fear and resentment. The non-Jew is adjured to contemplate the spectacle of the Jews ousting the Gentiles from one industry after another, gradually assuming leadership and control of our industry and commerce, thanks in part to superior intelligence, skill, and diligence, but in part also to a lack of moral scrupulousness. So the Jew is presented as a dangerous economic rival to be feared and guarded against. The Gentile is thus taught to look upon Jewish prosperity as a sort of parasitism, and as a menace to the well-being of all non-Jews, even where the withdrawal of Jewish enterprise and activity would mean ruin for Jew and Gentile alike—

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a condition long recognized in the principal Russian cities. Now, I do not deny that some of the worst aspects of capitalism have been developed to a special and notable extent by some Jews. Neither do I forget that others have developed the very noblest social idealism. The point I am now making is that hatred of the Jew, even when it is motivated by economic fear and resentment, will inevitably nurture every other form of anti-Jewish prejudice. If the campaign of the anti-Semites succeeds in cultivating that fear and hatred in the minds and hearts of our people, there can be no assurance against the occurrence of pogroms here.