

## The Protocols of the Elders of Zion

*Gradually I began to hate them....  
For me this was the time of the greatest spiritual upheaval I have ever gone through.  
I had ceased to be a weak-kneed cosmopolitan and become an anti-Semite.  
Adolf Hitler*

*We have pierced the Jewish abscess.  
The world of the future will be eternally grateful to us.  
Adolf Hitler, 1945*

In the 20th century the plight of the Jews became unprecedented in scope. Forces of evil did their utmost to wipe them off the face of the earth. The genocide of the Jews as practiced by the Nazis was euphemistically called "the final solution." But the Nazis were not the only ones to be blamed for the terrible tragedy that befell the Jews. Western governments knew what was happening and most did little or nothing to stop it. The extermination of the Jews has been meticulously recorded by the Nazis themselves and testified to by survivors and their liberators. Yet the Holocaust, the period of German history that began with Hitler's rise to power and ended with his suicide in his bunker in Berlin (1933-1945), is still being denied by neo-Nazi fanatics. It seems almost incomprehensible that after extermination camps such as Auschwitz, Dachau, and Bergen Belsen, where six million Jews perished, the stench of anti-Semitism can still waft across the world. Yet it is happening.

### Definition of anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism is the hatred and persecution of Jews as a race; not the hatred of persons who happen to be Jews, but rather the hatred of persons **because** they are Jews. It may take the form of inaccurate beliefs about the Jews: it may constitute anger, fear, disdain or any number of negative feelings. And as the history of the Jewish race demonstrates, anti-Semitism can mean brutal physical violence, pogroms and even death camps.

The explanation of anti-Semitism is as varied as the phenomenon. There seems to be a deep-rooted need for societies in a state of acute crisis to look for a scapegoat to excuse the cause of their troubles. One of the most prominent themes in anti-Semitism from medieval times down to the present is its portrayal of the Jew as a miserly and greedy manipulator of money, ready to squeeze the last penny out of people's pockets, forever preoccupied with material goods, and consequently possessing virtually unlimited economic power. Shylock, the grasping money-lender in Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice, is an example of this particular tenet of anti-Semitism.

And the belief that "international banking tends to be dominated by Jews" has played a major role in this century's political anti-Semitism and has been used to evoke images of Jews funding munitions industries and profiting from both friend and foe in wars. Today's anti-Semitism also attributes to the Jews a debased moral character, or a character of innate degeneracy (as in Nazi ideology). It may also equally accuse Jews of cunning, success, power and conspiracy.

## **Adolf Hitler**

One element that lent Nazi anti-Semitism its unprecedented vicious character was the maniacal Jew-hatred of Adolf Hitler. He became convinced that Jews were not human beings. He accused them of a host of wrongdoings. He ranted and raved about Jewish international bankers. He identified all Jews as saboteurs and defeatists who stabbed Germany in the back during World War 1. And the prominence of a few Jews in the extreme left of the political spectrum provided Hitler with an opportunity to constantly rage against the Jewish race as "the revolutionary menace" and the "Jew-Communists." Of the twenty-five points adopted by the Nazi party in its comprehensive political program of February 20, 1925, no less than seven dealt with the Jews. Article Five applied the status of aliens to Jews. Other articles demanded that the German press, Christian doctrine and German culture as a whole be "purified" of the Jewish materialist spirit. But over and above everything else the Nazi propaganda machine demanded that Germany "Aryanize" itself and guard itself from "blood poisoning" by the "Jewish race." For Hitler, the Jew had become the incarnation of evil and of all what he feared. His biographer Alan Bullock wrote:

There can be little doubt that Hitler believed what he said about the Jews; from first to the last his anti-Semitism is one of the most consistent themes in his career, the master idea which embraces the whole span of his thought.

Where did Hitler get his ideas? Hitler's *Mein Kampf* shows the influence of two main anti-Semitic works. The first is no longer of any consequence. The second still wreaks havoc wherever it is read and believed.

## **The Foundation of the Nineteenth Century**

One of most influential racist thinkers of the nineteenth century was the French count Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, who taught the superiority of the white race over all others, and among the whites, of the Aryans, as having reached the heights of civilization. They were even considered responsible for civilization wherever it developed. The Germans were taken to be the purest modern representatives of the Aryans.

Gobineau's most important follower was Houston Steward Chamberlain, son-in-law of Richard Wagner. Chamberlain combined the racist theories of Gobineau, the nihilistic philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, and anti-Semitism in his book *The Foundation of the Nineteenth Century*, published in 1899 in German and in 1911 in English. Chamberlain not only preached the superiority of the German race, he even demanded that for this race a new religion had to be found because the German race was too good and too enormous for inferior Christianity. He regarded the Jews as alien in spirit to the Germanic race, although he admitted the difficulty of distinguishing Jews from Germans on the basis of physical characteristics alone. His work became a source text for the all-Germanic movement in Austria. At the age of 17, Adolf Hitler had already become thoroughly acquainted with this garbled nationalistic diatribe.

## **The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion**

The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion also greatly impacted on the thinking of Hitler. He wrote in *Mein Kampf*

To what extent the whole existence of this people (the Jews) is based on a continuous lie is shown incomparably by the Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion.... (W)ith terrifying certainty they reveal the nature and activity of the Jewish people and expose their inner contexts as well as their final aims.... (O)nce this book becomes the property of a people, the Jewish menace may be considered as broken.

First published in Russia in 1905, the Protocols is supposed to be a verbatim record of twenty-four secret meetings of leaders of a Jewish conspiracy, who announce their determination to overthrow all states and religions, by such tricks as democracy and socialism, and to replace them with a world-wide Jewish empire.

The Jews are described as a group of subversive conspirators who spread diseases, instigate disorder, revolutions, oppose Christianity, and masterminded the French Revolution.

Many believed the Protocols was a genuine document even though in 1921 English journalist Philip Graves of *the London Times* exposed it as a crude forgery, written as far back as 1864. Graves showed that large portions of the Protocols had been plagiarized from Parisian attorney Maurice Joly's book *Dialogues in hell between Machiavelli and Montesquieu, or the politics of Machiavelli in the 19th century*. This book had nothing whatsoever to do with the Jews. It was a satirical description of the reign of the French emperor Napoleon III (1808-1873 ). The anonymous author of this fraud was most probably a Russian anti-Semitic nationalist and a supporter of the Tsar against revolutionary forces. Yet this fantastic and unbelievable anti-Semitic work has inspired every major anti-Semitic movement and bigot in the 20th century and has been used as a warrant for genocide.

Hitler had it published by the Nazi Party and by 1935 the German Minister of Education had prescribed it as a basic textbook for schools.

## **The Arabs and the Protocols**

The belief in a world-wide Jewish or Zionist conspiracy is widespread. Islam politicized its anti-Semitism in order to wage war against the Jews. German Nazi propaganda in the 1930s and 1940s helped to spread anti-Semitism in Arab nations. Many Arabs were Nazi sympathizers. In 1939, Khalid Bey al-Qargani, envoy of King Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia, met Hitler to hear him praise the Arab struggle in Palestine and declare that he would drive every Jew out of Germany. The envoy supported Hitler's actions and replied that this had been the Prophet Muhammad's policy with Jews in Arabia. During the

Second World War many Arabs backed the Germans. In 1942, when the German army was only sixty miles west of Egypt's Alexandria, pro-Nazi slogans were daubed on walls and students in the streets shouted "Forward, Rommel!" There were also frequent contacts between the Nazis and several prominent Arab leaders. The most notorious was the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Hadj Amin Al-Husseini, a collaborator with Hitler and the Nazi leadership. Even after the end of the war, Hitler's extermination of the Jews has often been justified in Arab countries. For some time, German Nazi experts served as advisers to Egyptian and Syrian information departments.

Anti-Semitic Nazi literature continues to be printed and distributed, including the Protocols in Arabic. The latter is a bestseller throughout Islamic capitals in Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Libya and Syria. Extracts and commentaries are frequently printed in official newspapers, incorporated in school textbooks and are even used by the army. In 1961, a headline in a Saudi newspaper read: "Capture of Eichmann, who had the honour of killing five million Jews." This was, in the words of a commentator, "a fairly typical response." King Feisal gave visiting foreign dignitaries a special artistic edition of the Protocols as a memento.

Arab governments spokesmen usually deny that anti-Semitism is found among them as they themselves are Semites. But they are anti-Semite as it means, most specifically, anti-Jewish in feelings, doctrines and practices. Although Arab governments distinguish between "Zionists" and Jews, they did make life miserable for Jews whenever the Arab-Israel conflict erupted in new crises.

After 1948-49, Jews left the Arab countries; many of them went to Europe and the U.S. but most to Israel. The principle motive of the exodus was the deterioration of the economic, social and political security of the Jews, and, in some cases, the oppressive measures taken by Arab governments or actual expulsion. By the 1980s, the Jews had nearly disappeared from the Arab nations. Yet Al-Hajj Muhammad, a Moroccan street-trader, betrays current enmity towards the Jews when he said: "Whenever I work for a Christian or a Jew, I feel dirty and I go to the hamman (public bath)." And he added, "There is nothing worse than the Jews. The Jew is only happy when he has cheated a Muslim."

Some elements in the European Islamic communities show rabid anti-Semitism. Recently excerpts from the Protocols were aired by a London radio station during its Arabic program. Sweden-based Radio Islam and its radical head Ahmed Rami featured a stream of articles on the World Wide Web, promoting Holocaust denials and attacks on the Jewish people. Protests by the international Jewish Wiesenthal Center and others forced Rami's anti-Semitic broadcasts off the air.

This strong Arabic anti-Semitic sentiment demonstrates how difficult it is for Arabs and Jews to come to a peaceful settlement in Israel.

### **Henry Ford (1863-1947) and the Protocols**

The automobile magnate Henry Ford was a capable businessman, but his understanding of the world was limited and bigoted. He became the foremost advocate of anti-Semitism in the United States during the 1920s. Political science professor Michael Barkun notes that Ford produced "the first and widest American popularization of ... the most famous anti-Semitic book of the twentieth century (the Protocols)." It was introduced to him by a czarist émigré. For several years his weekly private newspaper, *The Dearborn Independent*, published a series of articles entitled "The International Jew." They boldly pointed to "the Jewish menace," and accused the Jews of "utilizing communism, banking, labor unions, alcohol, gambling, jazz music, newspapers and the movies to attack and weaken America, its culture and people." These articles were later published in a four-volume book set. The latter received wide publicity and was translated into sixteen foreign languages. In 1921 Ford said in an interview that

The only statement I care to make about the Protocols is that they fit in what is going on. They are sixteen years old and they have fitted the world situation up to this time. They fit it now.

Ford's work was praised by Hitler, who distributed *The International Jew* throughout Germany. Ford even got a favourable mention in *Mein Kampf*. In 1927, a Jewish attorney brought a libel suit against Ford's paper. Ford did repudiate his anti-Semitism, issued a public apology, closed down his newspaper and stopped further publication of *The International Jew*. However, he could not stop the Nazis from using his infamous book. And in 1938, on his seventy-fifth birthday, Ford was even presented with "the highest honour the German government could grant a foreigner: the Grand Cross of the German Eagle." The presentation was accompanied by a personal greeting sent by Hitler himself. And when during the post-war Nuremberg trials, Hitler's youth leader Baldur Von Shirach was asked what had made him an anti-Semite, he replied: "Henry Ford." Ford's anti-Semitism left a horrible legacy. Richard Abanes observed that "Ford had injected anti-Jewish sentiment deep into American hearts."

### **The Protocols and the American extreme right**

During the late 1930s American anti-Semitism was financially supported by Nazi Germany. Anti-Semitic literature was distributed to the American Olympic team before it left for the Berlin Games in 1936. German-born professors frequently served as Nazi propagandists on university campuses. But the appropriation of the anti-Semitic movement by the Nazis ultimately doomed Jew-hatred in the United States. When the public began to hear of Nazi concentration camp atrocities, the tide turned. Most Americans became deeply moved by the courageous struggle of the Jews to win statehood for themselves in Israel. In 1950, the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League was able to report that anti-Semitism in America had fallen to an all-time low. But it was not entirely eliminated. In our troubled times, it has surfaced once again among extremist groups. Louis Farrakhan, leader of The Nation of Islam, has even gone so far as to suggest that Jewish doctors invented the AIDS virus to infect black children.

Among the American extremist movements anti-Semitism is blatant. The Protocols is an important document for them. It has special significance for white supremacists, who harbour a deep hatred of Jews. Christian Identity, which is neither an organized cult nor has a definitive set of beliefs, has many leaders and followers closely related to patriot movement groups and various militia spokesmen. It provides religious support for most of the American white supremacist organizations, including those seeking to overthrow the American government. By calling itself "Christian," Identity seeks to remove the label of racism and bigotry by insisting that hatred of Jews and blacks is mandated by the Bible. Much of Identity's hatred is directed against the federal government in Washington, commonly referred to as ZOG (Zionist Occupation Government), allegedly run by Jews to encourage race mixing, the destruction of the white race, and to facilitate world dominion by Jews. Since the 1920s, according to Christian Identity belief, Satan has again been harassing God's special "white race." His latest plot is an attempt to control the world through the Jews, as evidenced by the Protocols. Pete Peters, influential Christian Identity pastor, has even suggested that the Jews could have been responsible for the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing.

## **Conclusion**

More than ninety years have lapsed since the first publication of the Protocols. And only a few years ago the Western world solemnly commemorated the liberation of Auschwitz, Treblinka, and other Nazi death camps. We grieved over the horrible results of the anti-Semitic propaganda embodied in the Protocols and other hate literature. But the past can reoccur. We must oppose anti-Semitism in any shape or form as it is absolutely irreconcilable with the teachings of the Bible. Anti-Semitism is blasphemous over against our covenant God and humanity. We should never forget that our Lord was born of a Jewish virgin, and also that the Gospel was spread by twelve Jews, the apostles.

Johan D. Tangelder  
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