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IS SOCIALISM A JEWISH CONSPIRACY?

UPON the strength of statements made in this collection of documents of mysterious and suspicious origin, a number of papers, including the *Dearborn Independent* and the *London Morning Post*, have attempted to account for and explain the international Socialist movement as part of this Jewish imperialistic conspiracy. Neither in the protocols themselves nor in the newspapers making this particular charge has any shred of authentic evidence been adduced in its support. True, a great deal has been made of the undeniable fact that Karl Marx, Ferdinand Lassalle, Wilhelm Liebnicht, and other noted Socialists belonged to the Jewish race. Against this fact might very well be set the equally undeniable fact

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that the foremost opponents of these men, and of Socialism, were also of the Jewish race. Apparently, therefore, we are to believe that the leaders of this Jewish conspiracy set up the Socialist movement and fostered it, while at the same time they enlisted their ablest minds to defeat it. Surely for the normal mind that is not obsessed this is a theory too absurd for belief.

Only those who are entirely ignorant of the history of Socialism and Socialist theories can possibly hold this view of its Jewish origin. Long before Karl Marx appeared upon the scene of action Socialism had already made an impress upon European thought. Marx was a boy of fifteen when the word Socialism first appeared in print as designating the doctrines preached by Robert Owen, the Welshman, for almost twenty years before that time. Was Owen the tool of Jewish conspirators? I have read most of the literature relating to Owen's life and teaching, including his own voluminous

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writings, and the innumerable controversies in which he was engaged throughout his life. I have not discovered in all this mass of material a single trace of Jewish influence. He had no Jewish friends or associates during the formative years, the period in which the Socialist ideas and ideals shaped themselves. His Socialism was the direct outcome of his experience as a successful manufacturer. He was not in any sense a man of books. From time to time he required large sums of money for his enterprises. Surely, if those enterprises, and his life's work as a whole, formed part of a great Jewish conspiracy which had behind it the vast financial resources of Jewry, it would not have been difficult for him to secure the financial support he needed. It is a fact of cardinal importance, therefore, that Owen never did receive Jewish financial support. Those who would have us believe that Socialism originated as a part of the great world-wide conspiracy of Jewish imperialism must first of all explain Robert Owen.

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Nor does Owen stand alone in the history of Socialism among the Anglo-Saxon peoples. It is a well-known fact, one to which he himself has called attention, that the most important of the economic and sociological theories of Marx were held and promulgated before his time by a number of British writers. As Professor Foxwell and others have shown, the roots of what is called Marxian Socialist theory lie deep in the soil of British political economy. Karl Marx devoted his typically Jewish genius to the exposition of Socialist theories, but the theories themselves were not of Hebraic origin. William Godwin, Charles Hall, William Thompson, John Gray, and John Francis Bray all preceded Marx, and not one of them was a Jew, nor can we find in their writings any trace of Jewish influence. It is the same with Bronterre O'Brien, the first to call himself a Social Democrat. If any or all of these men were the agents of such a conspiracy, it is remarkable that there should be an entire absence of evidence of that fact.

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It is quite unbelievable that there was any sort of conspiracy which affected them. For the most part they were poor and their books were published in pitifully small editions at great sacrifice to themselves. Incidentally, it is worthy of note, Karl Marx, the Jew, suffered terrible poverty. Certainly, all this does not suggest an international conspiracy backed by the Jewish leaders of the financial world.

Because of the prominence of a few individual Jews in the American Socialist movement in recent years, the writer of the anti-Semitic articles in the *Dearborn Independent* regards as proven the theory that American Socialism originated in Jewish conspiracy. It is another evidence of his entire ignorance of the subject concerning which he writes. If there is anything which can be said about Socialism with certainty, it is that its fundamental theories are mainly of Anglo-Saxon origin. Karl Marx was a boy of nine years when Robert Owen reprinted in England an American Socialist pamphlet.

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written by an American workingman and published in America a year or two earlier. At about the same time Thomas Cooper, of Columbia, South Carolina, published his book in which the fundamental economic theories of modern Socialism were clearly expounded. When Marx was no more than ten years old we find O. A. Brownson, editor of the Boston *Quarterly Review*, vigorously preaching here in America the theory of the class war, the abolition of the wage system, and the necessity for a triumph of the proletariat. We find such men as Thomas Skidmore, R. L. Jennings, and L. Byllesby preaching thoroughgoing Socialism. In 1829 these men and others were exercising a notable and considerable influence upon American thought. In vain shall we search their writings and the meager accounts of their lives for any trace or suggestion of Jewish influence or control.

I skip a decade and turn to the Fourierist period of American Socialism. The profound influence of Charles Fourier upon Karl

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Marx is well known and has been the subject of much learned writing. But if the Frenchman inspired the German Jew, so likewise did he inspire many American non-Jews, the very flower of our race. It was Albert Brisbane who began the Fourierist agitation here, and soon he had associated with him Horace Greeley, Parke Godwin, George Ripley, Charles A. Dana, John S. Dwight, William Henry Channing, Margaret Fuller, John Orvis, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Edmund Clarence Stedman, and many others. Other distinguished Americans who were brought into more or less sympathetic association with the movement included Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, James Russell Lowell, and Theodore Parker, among others. Certainly it would be difficult to name a body of men and women more truly representative of the highest and best of American life and genius. To suggest that these were all the agents of a Jewish conspiracy, either consciously or unconsciously, is to invite and deserve ridi-

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cule. In truth, Socialism is as Anglo-Saxon as Magna Charta and as American as the Declaration of Independence, and we might as well attribute either or both of these to Jewish intrigue as Socialism. It is true that the organized Socialist movement in America has long spoken with a foreign accent and borne the imprint of an alien psychology, but that psychology, as I have elsewhere pointed out, is German and not Hebraic.

It would take us too far afield to discuss the origin of French Socialism, even in this sketchy fashion, but I can state with the assurance that is born of intimate knowledge that French Socialism shows as little sign of having been inspired by alien influences, Jewish or other, as British and American Socialism. I stress this point not because I would defend the Jews against the charge that they have manifested unusual sympathy for Socialism (which, indeed, if true, I should hold to be a virtuous distinction), nor to apologize for or to deny the splendid

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contributions of individual Jews to the Socialist movement. My concern is to enter protest against the charge that the Socialist movement of the world originated in the ambitions of Jewish imperialists and is neither more nor less than part and parcel of a great international Jewish conspiracy. That is a stupid travesty of history, and a dangerous one.

I have spent the greater part of my life in the Socialist movement, in close and intimate comradeship with both Jews and Gentiles belonging to nearly every civilized nation. I am as proud of the comradeship of my Jewish comrades as I am of that of any others. My readers will perhaps understand that I deeply resent the implication that through all the years of struggle and sacrifice I have been either the unconscious dupe or the willing agent of any kind of selfish conspiracy, Jewish or other. It is, of course, difficult to disprove such an accusation brought against a great movement, and, therefore, by implication against

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the individuals belonging to that movement. If I should charge that Mr. Henry Ford is engaged in this anti-Semitic propaganda for purely selfish and mercenary reasons, that he has become the spokesman and agent of great unscrupulous capitalist interests who seek to destroy their Jewish competitors and to profit thereby, he would find it difficult to establish the contrary by definite and concrete proof. As a matter of justice, nothing of the sort should be expected. The burden of proof rests upon the person making the accusation. In like fashion, when the *Dearborn Independent* charges that the international Socialist movement is one of the agents of a vicious Jewish conspiracy against Christian civilization, it is in honor bound to submit proofs. This it has not done, nor has any other paper making the charge. I *know* that the charge is a cruel and cowardly falsehood, a libel upon millions of honest and honorable men and women, to utter which is an infamy and degradation.

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The charge is one that has been leveled against practically every movement of protest that has been developed in modern times. It was leveled against the Protestant Reformation; against the French Revolution; against Mazzini and his followers in Italy; against the German Revolutionists of 1848; against British Trade-Unionists. I have no doubt that a little research would reveal the fact that the same charge was directed against the Abolitionists in this country. Vicious interests are never very scrupulous in their choice of weapons. In those Protestant countries in which the number of Catholics is much larger than the number of Jews it is a common practice to charge that movements of protest and revolt are instigated and led by the Catholic hierarchy. Where the number of Jews is very great the appeal is made to racial hatred. In Catholic countries, in the same way, accusation is directed against Protestantism or Judaism, according to circumstance.

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Wherever and by whosoever made, appeals to racial and religious prejudices and hatreds in defense of vested interests merit the condemnation of all honest and righteous men. When made in a country which, like the United States, possesses millions of peoples of many diverse lands and races not yet welded into national homogeneity, who must live and work together, such accusations become the most dangerous form of treason. Whoever propagates in this country antagonism to any race or creed represented in our citizenship, whether it be against Jews, Poles, Germans, Irish, English, or negroes; or against Judaism, Catholicism, or Protestantism, assails the very foundation of our most cherished and characteristic American institutions.