
3-10-2022

Pathway to the Shoah: The Protocols, "Jewish Bolshevism", Rosenberg, Goebbels, Ford, and Hitler

David M. Crowe
Chapman University, crowe@chapman.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/history_books



Part of the [European History Commons](#), [Holocaust and Genocide Studies Commons](#), [Jewish Studies Commons](#), [Military History Commons](#), [Other German Language and Literature Commons](#), [Other History Commons](#), [Political History Commons](#), [Public History Commons](#), [Social History Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Crowe, David M. "Pathway to the Shoah: The Protocols, 'Jewish Bolshevism', Rosenberg, Goebbels, Ford, and Hitler." In *Hitler's 'Mein Kampf' and the Holocaust: A Prelude to Genocide*, edited by Joanne John J. Michalczyk, Michael S. Bryant, and Susan A. Michalczyk. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022.

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the History at Chapman University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in History Faculty Books and Book Chapters by an authorized administrator of Chapman University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact laughtin@chapman.edu.

9

Pathway to the Shoah

The Protocols, “Jewish Bolshevism,” Rosenberg, Goebbels, Ford, and Hitler

David M. Crowe

In the dark months after the defeat at Stalingrad in 1943, Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi Party’s strident, virulently anti-Semitic propaganda minister, wrote in his diary that he had “devoted exhaustive study to *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*” despite the fact that some argued that “they were not suited to present-day propaganda.” After rereading them, he concluded that “we can use them very well,” since *The Protocols* were “as modern today as they were when published for the first time.” The same day, May 13, 1943, he met with Hitler, who told his propaganda minister that he thought they were “absolutely genuine.” He added that regardless of a Jew’s circumstances, whether it be in a ghetto or Wall Street, “they will always pursue the same aims and . . . use the same methods.” Why, he went on, were “there any Jews in the world order?”

That would be like asking why there are potato bugs? Nature is dominated by the law of struggle. There will always be parasites who will spur this struggle on and intensify the process of selection between the strong and the weak. The principle of struggle dominates also in human life. One must merely know the laws of this struggle to be able to face it. The

intellectual does not have the natural means of resisting the Jewish peril because his instincts have been totally blunted. Because of this fact the nations with a high standard of civilization are exposed to this peril first and foremost. In nature life always takes measures against parasites; In the life of nations that is not always the case. From this fact the Jewish peril actually stems. There is therefore no other recourse left for modern nations except to exterminate the Jew.¹

He added that there was no hope of “leading the Jews back into the fold of civilized humanity” regardless of how you punished them because they would “forever remain Jews.” He saw the Jew as an “absolutely intellectual creature,” who has mastered the art of lying and disguising his “innermost thoughts.” The Jew, Hitler concluded, was the “inventor of the lie among human beings.” The English, he told Goebbels, because of their strong materialistic traits, acted very much like Jews and had “acquired most of the Jewish characteristics.” But it was only those countries that “see through the Jew and have been the first to fight him” that are “going to take his place in the domination of the world.”² This was essentially the Nazi message that had driven much of its propaganda since the early days of Hitler’s movement.

By this time, the Nazi “extermination” campaign of Europe’s Jews—the *Endlösung* or Final Solution—was so successful that Heinrich Himmler, the head of the SS, began to close the temporary *Aktion Reinhard* death camps (Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka), where 2.3 million Jews were gassed to death.³ Goebbels considered the mass murder of Jews to be an important part of the Nazi Party’s mission to save the Aryan world from the Jewish threat laid out in *The Protocols*. Goebbels, the head of the Berlin *Gau* (administrative district), bragged about his effort to make the district *Judenfrei* in his diary entry of April 18, 1943. He considered his campaign against Berlin’s Jews to be the “greatest political achievement of my career.”⁴

One of Goebbels’s principal ideological rivals, Alfred Rosenberg, who oversaw the “intellectual and ideological training and education” of the Nazi Party, played an important, early role in promoting *The Protocols* as a blueprint for an alleged Jewish plot to take over the world.⁵ Goebbels always thought *The Protocols*, as a weapon in the Nazi propaganda arsenal, had limited usage, given its questionable Russian origins. In 1939 Rosenberg sent Rudolf Hess a copy of *The Protocols* but warned him not to make any use of them because to do so would result in “a long series of debates, which are not to be desired and could in any case lead to no result.”⁶ Yet despite their misgivings about the authenticity of *The Protocols*, Rosenberg and Goebbels thought their central message, particularly when linked to alleged Jewish ties to communism and other leftist movements, provided them with just the propagandistic weapons they needed to create a new mythology about links between Jews and Soviet Bolshevism. This was an international concept that predated the Nazi era and was promoted by conservative

ideologues such as Henry Ford, who became one of the foremost advocates of the idea of Jewish Bolshevism.

Hitler addressed the question of *The Protocols*' origins in *Mein Kampf* and said the fact they were considered a forgery proved their authenticity. In fact, it was *The Protocols*, he argued, that proved Jewish history was based on lies, which they revealed for all to see. He added that once people understood this, the global Jewish threat would be "broken."⁷ Hitler's ideas about Jews were not particularly unique insofar as a number of other German writers had been discussing the "Jewish Question" for some time. But what did make Hitler's early ideas about the Jews so important, whether it be what he wrote in *Mein Kampf* or in other works, speeches, and directives, was that they provided the core ideological basis for their mass murder during the Second World War.

Adolf Hitler was an intellectual dilettante who sought to use his time in Landsberg prison, where he was incarcerated in 1924 for his involvement in the Beer Hall Putsch, to develop a new theoretical and political ideology to guide the party in the future. By this time the idea of "Jewish Bolshevism"—a concept drawn from the earlier writings of Dietrich Eckart, Alfred Rosenberg, and Henry Ford—had matured. Hitler considered Eckart, who died in 1923, one of his early political mentors and dedicated *Mein Kampf* to him. On the other hand, he was distrustful of Rosenberg, whom he put in charge of the party while he was imprisoned. Though Eckart and Rosenberg played key roles in developing early Nazi ideas about the threat of "Jewish Bolshevism," Hitler, who strongly believed in its core tenets about the Jewish global threat and ties to Soviet Russia, cast it in a Marxist-Jewish context in *Mein Kampf*. This would strengthen his own credentials as the party's foremost theoretician and link "Jewish Bolshevism" to its German roots—Karl Marx and the Soviet-inspired German communist movement.

Wilhelm Marr set the stage for new sociopolitical concepts about Jews in *Der Sieg des Judenthums über das Germanenthum* (The Victory of Judaism over Germanism, 1879). He explained in the preface that he wrote *Der Sieg* to draw attention to the "oppressed's *chmerzenschrei* (cry or scream of pain)."⁸ Marr's principal goal was to draw attention to the "historical triumph of Judaism throughout the world (*den weltgeschichtlichen Triumph des Judenthums*)."⁹ He attacked the religious basis for millennia-old anti-Judaic prejudice¹⁰ and wrote that after being driven out of their homeland, the Semites, or Jews, used age-old skills to create a "state within a state" in Germany, which resulted in the absorption of "Germanism into Judaism."¹¹ This began, he argued, in the Middle Ages when the Jews took control of German trade. This strengthened the German economy but also led to the transformation of Germany into the "new promised land for Semites."¹² The reason for this was simple—"Germanism did not have the mental strength to resist its Jewification."¹³

Marr wrote that this had nothing to do with religion but the obsessive cultural development of the Semite, something Germans seemed incapable

of resisting. In the end, Germans had become slaves in a feudalistic society dominated by Judaic legal and political ideals,¹⁴ while today “Judenthum is the social-political dictator in Germany.”¹⁵ This meant the death of Germany because Germanism was now too weak to resist this cultural onslaught.¹⁶ He concluded that “‘Die Götterdämmerung’ ist für uns angebrochen. Ihr seid die Herren, wir die Knechte . . . **Finis Germanie**” (“The ‘twilight of the god’ had begun for us. You [the Jews] are the masters, we the servants . . . **The End of Germany**”).¹⁷

Marr’s treatise as well as Heinrich von Treitschke’s *Ein Wort über unser Judentum* (A Word about Our Jews)¹⁸ were written in the midst of the debate about the place of Jews in a new, Christian Germany and other parts of Western Europe. Treitschke disagreed with Marr when it came to the Jewish domination of “germandom,” writing that there were far too few Jews in Western Europe to have any serious impact on “national mores.” But he predicted that in light of the “inexhaustible” stream of Jews out of the “Polish cradle” in the East, they would, in future, “command Germany’s stock exchanges and newspapers.” The contemporary German response to the negative role that Jews played in the German press and economy, Treitschke argued, was “a natural reaction of German racial feeling against an alien element that has assumed too large a space in our life.” The Jews, he concluded, were “*unser Unglück* (Our Misfortune),” a phrase that Julius Streicher began to use in 1927 on the front page of *Der Stürmer*, one of the Nazis’ vilest anti-Semitic newspapers.¹⁹

Hitler shared Treitschke’s ideas about the dangers of the “Polish cradle,” in the context of not only the Jews but also Polish Christians. On the eve of the invasion of Poland in 1939, the Führer said that he considered ethnic Poles to be “dreadful racial material” who stood in the way of a greater Aryan-pure Germany. Poland’s Jews, he added, were “the most horrible thing imaginable.” A week before the invasion, Hitler ordered the Wehrmacht to kill “without pity or mercy all men, women, and children of Polish descent or language—only in this way can we obtain the living space (*Lebensraum*) we need.” He added that once the invasion of Poland began, “the way of a Polish ruling class must be liquidated; whatever grows again we might take into our safekeeping and eliminate in due course.”²⁰

The works by Marr, Treitschke, and others helped create the growing anti-Semitic climate throughout Germany, which led to the creation of a number of anti-Semitic organizations and parties such as the *Deutsche Partei* (DSP, German Social Party) and the *Antisemitische Volkspartei* (ASVP, Anti-Semitic People’s Party). They blamed most of Germany’s problems on the Jews, who, they claimed, used socialism and liberalism to spread “national self-doubt.”²¹ Between 1890 and 1893, the ASVP and DSP won a handful of seats in parliamentary elections. In 1894, their leaders created a new party—the *Antisemitische Deutschsoziale Reformpartei* (ASDSRP, Anti-Semitic German Social Reform Party)—which called for new restrictions on Russian-Jewish emigration and Zionist ideology. Over time, these parties

proved politically ineffective but succeeded in spreading their anti-Semitic ideas throughout Germany. According to Richard S. Levy, this helped “poison German-Jewish relations and promoted an atmosphere of ready tolerance for anti-Semitism which the National Socialists were able to use effectively” after the First World War.²²

The question of Jewish emigration from imperial Russia and the rise of Zionism are extremely important because of the significance of these issues to later Nazi ideologues. They are also the reason for the tsarist fabrication of the *Protokoly sionskikh mydretsov* (Protocols of the Elders of Zion). *The Protocols* and the rise of Zionism, of course, can only be understood in the context of the dreadful crisis that faced Russian Jews in the vast Pale of Permanent Jewish Settlement (*Cherta postoianno evreeskoi osldedosti*) after the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881. The Pale, that vast stretch of territory in western Russia that spread from the Baltic to the Black seas, was created by Catherine the Great during partitions of Poland from 1772 to 1795. Though Jews made up no more than 11–12 percent of the Pale’s population, tsarist officials, who considered Jews “immoral and culturally decadent exploiters,”²³ did what they could to restrict their rights in what Simon Dubnow called the “dark continent.”²⁴ But what officials could not restrict was the dramatic growth of the Jewish population in the Pale, which grew from 1.5 million in 1825 to over 5 million at the end of the nineteenth century.²⁵

The same was true when it came to the vibrancy of Jewish life and culture in the Pale, particularly during the more enlightened reign of Alexander II. Jews now began to play a more active role in the Pale’s economy, society, and culture. This led to growing resentment among Orthodox Christians and Greek Catholics, who considered Jews the “killers of Christ.” Russian writers like Yakov Brafman, Ippolit Liutostanskii, and Fyodor Dostoevsky wrote disparaging works that accused Jews of things similar to those found in the works of Marr and Treitschke. Konstantine Podedonostsev, an influential minister in the governments of Alexander III and Nicholas II, claimed that “the Jews have won ownership of everything. Even our press is becoming Jewish.”²⁶ Dostoevsky wrote that Jews wanted “to exterminate or enslave the non-Jewish populations of the world,” while Liutostanskii revived the age-old charge of “blood libel” in *Concerning the Use of Christian Blood by the Jews* (*Ob upotreblenii evreiami kristianskoi krovi dlia religioznykh tseli*).²⁷

A few days after the murder of Alexander II in 1881, several newspapers blamed Jews for his death, even though only one Jew, Gesya Gelfman, was involved in the assassination plot. What followed was a rising tide of *pogroms* (Russian, *progomit*, to break or smash) that caused widespread damage to Jewish property. An investigation by the government claimed the *pogroms* were driven by peasant reactions to “Jewish exploitation.” In 1882, authorities issued a series of May Laws that forbade Jews from living in towns and villages, followed by various decrees and restrictions that seriously affected the economic and professional well-being of the 5.2–

5.3 million Jews who lived in Russia (94 percent in the Pale).²⁸ This new assault against Jews intensified under Nicholas II, a virulent anti-Semite, and led to a new wave of *pogroms* in 1903–6. Russia's large, diverse Jewish community reacted in several different ways. Over two million Jews fled abroad to escape the oppressive political, economic, and social environment in the country, while others decided to remain and assert their national identity in Russia. Some became involved in various political parties that “positioned themselves ideologically between Zionists and Bundists by synthesizing nationalist and socialist thought” as the “dominant ideological force” among “Russian-Jewish activists.” There was also an emphasis on the use of the Yiddish language to develop a new, stronger “Jewish national culture.”²⁹

In 1903, the Russian anti-Semitic newspaper *Znamya* (The Banner) serialized *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* just months after a widely criticized, violent pogrom in Kishinev. Two years later, in the midst of the 1905 Revolution, Nicholas II's government approved the publication of *The Protocols* in the final chapter of the third edition of Sergei Nilus's *The Great within the Small and Antichrist, An Imminent Possibility. Notes of an Orthodox Believer (Velikoe v malomi antikhrisť, kak blizkaya politicheskaya vozmozhnost Zapiski pravoslavnykh)*. The tsar was particularly drawn to *The Protocols* and Nilus's ideas about the threat of Jewish conspirators throughout Russia.³⁰ A staunch supporter of the tsarist autocracy, Nilus was also sympathetic to the anti-Semitic policies of the Union of Russian People (*Soyuz russkogo naroda*), which was founded by Alexander Dubrovin in 1905, and its “black hundreds” (*chornaya sotnya*) that instigated violent *pogroms* throughout the country. Shlomo Lambroza called the “black hundreds” “terrorists of the right, the enforcement agents of reactionary [tsarist] politics.”³¹

The Protocols were based on Édouard Drumont's *La France Juive* (1886), a massive, best-selling anti-Semitic diatribe that blamed all of France's problems on Jews. They were, Drumont wrote, “agents of capitalistic exploitation” and “were responsible for Marxism.” According to Jean-Louis Bredin, Drumont “was able to reconcile anti-Semitism's counter-revolutionary thought, the Catholic tradition, and a populist anticapitalism of socialist tendency. Thanks to anti-Semitism, class conflicts were dissolved.”³² What made all of this worse, he added, was that “hundreds of millions of Aryans are so naïve that they cannot see that they have been duped by a handful of Jews.” The great danger for France, he wrote, was the large influx of Jews from Russia, who threatened to overrun the country.³³

Drumont drew on earlier German anti-Semitic works and Catholic anti-Judaic ideas, particularly the charge that Jews were “Christ killers” who practiced “ritual murder.” The ultimate goal of the Jews, he argued, was to take over the world. His principal theme was that “All comes from the Jew, all returns to the Jew.” Physically, Drumont thought that the Jew was the “essence of ugliness, a badly smelling creature, with a bloodless face,

greenish skin, claw-like hands, the sign of Cain on his forehead. The Jew does not talk, he screams, he bites, he licks, he barks and he scratches.”³⁴

Drumont began *La France Juive* with a lengthy discussion of the Jews in the West, followed by their history in France. The result was a political diatribe that mocked all things Jewish, especially Judaism. According to Frederick Busi, *La France Juive* was a racial treatise that “presented an Semitic-Aryan struggle of cosmic proportions, of distinct races irremediably hostile to one another, whose antagonism has filled the world in the past and will still trouble it in the future.”³⁵ Aryans, Drumont wrote, possessed “the virtue of justice, the feeling of liberty, and conception of beauty.” They were also “enthusiastic, heroic, chivalrous, disinterested, forthright, confiding to a fault.” On the other hand, the Semite was “mercantile, greedy, intriguing, subtle, tricky.”³⁶ He was also a “cryptic . . . slippery” figure who was “difficult to notice.” Jews, he went on, preyed on the Aryan’s “paranoia and sense of helplessness in understanding the working of the modern world.”³⁷ This was also a prominent theme in *The Protocols*.

The assimilated French Jew, Drumont wrote, was part of a Semitic plot to take over France, something “treasonous to God, race, and country.” France, he went on, had lost its way because of the decline of traditional values, something he blamed partially on Freemasonry and Protestantism, which had introduced “Jewish practices into Christianity.” What was tragic about this, he added, was that Judaism was nothing more than “a form of occult devil worship.” The only way to turn the country around, he concluded, was to drive the Jews out of France.³⁸

Yet despite the French origins of some of its ideas, *The Protocols* were intimately tied to the deep strains of anti-Semitism that coursed through the veins of Russian Orthodox teachings in the late imperial period. The First World War and the revolutions that swept through Russia in 1917 gave new life to *The Protocols* with its charges of a Jewish conspiracy to take over the world. The Bolshevik victories later that year and during the revolutionary wars that followed gave birth to a new idea—“Jewish Bolshevism”—that centered around the idea that Bolshevism was a Jewish movement seeking world domination.

When the war broke out in the summer of 1914, the Russian government tried to rally Jewish support by issuing a proclamation, “To Our Dear Jews” (“Nashim dogorim yevreyan”), that reminded them of all the “benefits” they had enjoyed under the Romanovs.³⁹ The Germans responded with a propaganda leaflet in Yiddish and Hebrew, “To the Jews of Poland” (“An die Juden in Poland”), that promised their liberation from “Russian Oppression.”⁴⁰

Initial Jewish support for the Russian war effort was widespread, although this soon changed as the Russians struggled to retain control over Congress Poland and northwestern Russia. Age-old anti-Semitic policies were revived by the Russian military, which claimed Jews were a German fifth column. As German victories mounted, Jews became the principal scapegoats for Russian losses. In 1915, as the Germans pushed Russian troops eastward,

the latter began to attack Jews, steal their property, and deport many into the Russian interior.⁴¹

The Germans occupied Congress Poland and northwestern Russia in the summer of 1915 and created the *OberOst* in the latter. They tried to bring order to both regions and encouraged the development of local cultural and religious institutions for Jews and others. Initially, the Germans tolerated the Jews because they thought they would be useful middlemen who could help transform the *OberOst* into a breadbasket for Germany. But, over time, traditional German anti-Semitism took root and German authorities began to place severe restrictions on Jewish business activities that, according to Raphael Lemkin, caused widespread “hunger, want, and privation” among *OberOst* Jews.⁴²

German anti-Semites also began to link Jews to Bolshevism, something Bogislav von Sechow, a German naval officer, noted as he entered the Reich Navy Office in Berlin on November 11, 1918, the day the war ended. He remembered seeing a red flag atop the building and a “Jewish Bolshevik” in civilian clothes standing guard. A few days later he wrote that “Jews and deserters, a mob that is nothing more than the gutter in the worst sense of the word, now rule Germany. But the hour will come to the Jews, and then woe unto them.”⁴³ Some of the German soldiers who remained in northwestern Russia until the spring of 1919 shared this idea about Jewish ties to Bolshevism. They flowed from a sense throughout Germany during the war that Jews had profited from it and did everything they could to avoid military service.⁴⁴ This, coupled with traditional strains of German anti-Semitism, helped set the stage for the linkage of Jews to Bolshevism in the Weimar Republic.⁴⁵

This new concept would come to haunt Jews during the two wars between Poland and Soviet Russia in 1919 and 1920. In the spring of 1920, Polish-Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully invaded Soviet territory but were gradually driven back as part of Vladimir Lenin’s campaign to recapture lands lost to the Germans and the Poles during and after the First World War. By late summer, the Bolsheviks reached the outskirts of Warsaw, only to be driven back by the Poles, who began to retake lands under Bolshevik control. As they swept into northwestern Russia and Ukraine, Polish forces attacked Jewish communities, arguing that they had staunchly supported the Bolsheviks. According to Irina Astashkevich, the Poles and their allies fervently believed “that all Jews were Bolsheviks and were responsible for the [Bolshevik] Revolution, the Civil War, the fall of the Russian Empire, and the decline of the independent Ukrainian republic, and ‘none entertained the idea that the Ukrainians could be Bolsheviks, even though this was undoubtedly the case.’” What she called the “Judeo-Bolshevik canard” later helped form the nucleus of the Nazi idea of Jewish Bolshevism.⁴⁶

As Polish forces drove the Red Army back into Russia in 1920, two books were published in London that revived this “canard.” The first, George Gustav Telberg and Robert Wilton’s *The Last Days of the Romanovs*, claimed that

Jews, not the Bolsheviks, murdered Nicholas II and his family in the summer of 1918.⁴⁷ This was followed by Victor E. Marsden's translation of *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*. Marsden, a virulent anti-Semite who had been a correspondent in Moscow for London's *Morning Post* just after the Bolsheviks seized power in late 1917, firmly believed it was a Jewish blueprint for world domination. He argued that *The Protocols* were based on a series of meetings of the highly secretive Learned Elders of Zion, who updated a "plan of action" of the "Jewish Nation . . . developed through the ages."⁴⁸

Protocol I had three subheadings that characterized many of the major points of the other twenty-three protocols—"Right is Might, We Are Despots, and We Shall End Liberty." *Protocol III* discussed how the Jewish Nation used different political movements, including communism, anarchism, and socialism, to destroy the aristocracy and take control of the global economy. This class struggle would be orchestrated in such a way to protect Jews and ensure that the *Goyim* would embrace a "sovereignty of reason. Our despotism will be precisely that; for it will know how, by wise severities, to pacificate all unrest, to cauterize liberalism out of all institutions." *Protocol IV* declared that one of the Elders' goals was to "undermine all faith" to "tear out of the mind of the 'Goyim'" while *Protocol VII* stated that Jewish leaders would work "to create ferments, discords and hostility" throughout Europe.⁴⁹

Protocol VIII stated that Jewish elders would use "the very finest shades of expression" and the "knotty points of the lexicon of law justification" to deal with international leaders. They would also surround themselves with prominent *Goyim* bankers, industrialists, and capitalists who would be used to defend Jewish interests. According to *Protocol IX*, the end result would be the creation of a Jewish "Super-State" using the "weapons" of "limitless ambitions, burning greediness, merciless vengeance, hatreds and malice." *Protocol X* argued that all of this would result in the Jewish acquisition of the "throne of the world" and the creation of a Jewish super-state that would "transform every form of government into 'Our Despotism.'"⁵⁰

Protocol XI argued that the "Goyim . . . [were] a flock of sheep, and we are their wolves. And you know what happens when the wolves get hold of the flock?" *Protocol XII* added that once the Jews acquired global power, they would use the press to control public opinion, which *Protocol XIII* said was meant to distract the public. These policies would succeed because of the "brainless heads of the 'Goyim.'" *Protocol XIV* stated that once "we come into our kingdom" it would be essential to "sweep away all other forms of belief." Independent thought and open education would be proscribed, which *Protocol XVI* proclaimed would help "turn the *Goyim* into unthinking submissive brutes." *Protocols XXI–XXII* dealt with vague financial matters, while *Protocols XXIII–XXIV* discussed the final stages of the creation of the new Jewish kingdom. It would be led by the "Chosen One of God" who came from the "dynastic roots of King David." The last *Protocol—XXIV—*ended with the proclamation that "Our supreme lord must be of an exemplary irreproachability."⁵¹

The social and economic chaos in Germany and other parts of postwar Europe played into these fears, which revived interest in *The Protocols*. For some on the right, the Bolshevik victory in Russia was, in reality, a Jewish plot to take over the world. Some pointed to the fact that Karl Marx, the ideological touchstone for the Bolsheviks, was Jewish, as were some in Lenin's inner circle. Alfred Rosenberg, one of Nazi Germany's foremost racial theorists, wrote in *Die Spur des Juden im Wandel der Zeiten* (The Track of the Jew Through the Ages, 1920) that Bolshevism was "a predominantly Jewish undertaking."⁵²

A Russianized Baltic German, Rosenberg was born in Reval (today Tallinn, capital of Estonia) and spent his youth in Russia. He lived in Moscow in 1917 as a student but took little interest in the upheavals that led to the abdication of Nicholas II and Lenin's seizure of power later that year. He came across a copy of *The Protocols* in Russian, which he later edited and published. He returned to Reval later that year to escape the chaos in Moscow and tried unsuccessfully to join the German army after it occupied Reval in the spring of 1918.⁵³

A few weeks after the war ended, Rosenberg went to Berlin and later settled in Munich, where he met Fyodor Vinberg, a Russian aristocrat, who had served as Nicholas II's court equerry. A staunch monarchist, Vinberg was briefly imprisoned by the Bolsheviks and later fought against them in the Russian Civil War. He settled in Munich⁵⁴ and became actively involved with other pro-Russian monarchists and anti-Semites and started a newspaper, *Prizyv* (The Call), to promote his ideas. Vinberg worked closely with Ludwig Müller von Hausen, whose newspaper *Auf Vorposten* (On Outpost Duty) published *The Zunder Document* in 1920. A forged letter, it claimed that Jews were on the verge of taking "command of the world" by bringing "the Russian people under the yoke of Jewish power." A year earlier, Hausen published the first German edition of *The Protocols*, which Vinberg later used as evidence in his *Der Kreuzesweg Russlands* (Russia's Via Dolorosa) to prove his contention that Jews planned to take over the world.⁵⁵

Rosenberg was quite taken by Vinberg and other Russians' fascination with Fyodor Dostoevsky's views on Jews. Rosenberg wrote in *Die Spur* that Jews were motivated principally by the idea of exploiting other people and made note of Dostoevsky's comment in his *Diary of a Writer* that "The Jewish idea is that of profiteering." Rosenberg praised the famed Russian writer in *Pest in Russland! Der Bolschewismus, seine Häupter, Handlanger und Opfer* (Plague in Russia! Bolshevism, Its Heads, Henchmen, and Victims), while Dietrich Eckart, the editor of the Nazi Party newspaper, published an article on Dostoevsky in early 1923 that called him "still the poet and admonisher for today, for perhaps already tomorrow 'may the Anti-Christ come and anarchy rule.'"⁵⁶ Joseph Frank wrote in his masterful biography of Dostoevsky that he was indeed a virulent anti-Semite who took every opportunity he could to blame Russia's Jews for everything wrong in

Russia. In his mind, Jews were “ruthless batters on the misery of others and concealed masters and manipulators of world politics.”⁵⁷

Dietrich Eckart was a writer and playwright who edited an anti-Semitic, anti-Bolshevik journal, *Auf Gut Deutsch* (In Plain German), from 1918 to 1920. He was also Hitler’s mentor during his early postwar years in Munich. Eckart devoted the first seven issues of *Auf Gut Deutsch* to a discussion of the contrast between what he considered the “highest expression” of the *Volksseele* (*Völkish* soul or soul of the people)—the German—and its lowest—the Jew. He saw this as an eternal conflict that went back to biblical times. Eckart argued that Jews stained everything they touched and were the cause of all things wrong in Germany. He also thought “that Jewry would be condemned to death for its crimes.”⁵⁸ In 1920 he argued in *Jewry über alles* (Jewry above everything) that there were close ties between Jews, “finance capitalism,” and Bolshevism. Collectively, this would lead to “a Jewish world dictatorship.”⁵⁹

Eckart published Rosenberg’s first article, “Die russisch-juedische Revolution,” in *Auf Gut Deutsch* in February 1919. Rosenberg wrote that the February Revolution in 1917 began as a democratic revolution but was soon transformed by the “Tatar Lenin” and Jews like Leon “Braunstein” Trotsky into a “racial revolution.” In the following issue of *Auf Gut Deutsch*, Rosenberg urged the German government to do everything it could to overthrow the Bolsheviks, which would lead to the destruction of Russian Jewry and a rapprochement between Berlin and Moscow.⁶⁰

In 1920, Rosenberg published *Der Totengräber Russlands* (Russia’s Gravedigger) in response to the creation of the short-lived Bavarian Soviet Republic that spring. He discussed Jewish plans to foment revolution in Russia, which he called *Judenbolschewismus* (Jewish Bolshevism) and considered Christian leaders who supported Jews as *Judentzer*, who were “outside of the pale of the Christian community.”⁶¹ He also went into great detail about the number of Jews with important roles in Lenin’s Bolshevik government and military and cited Henry Ford’s *Internationale Jude* (The International Jew) as evidence of the international Jewish-Bolshevik threat.⁶² Rosenberg did the same in a later edition of *Die Protokolle der Weisen von Zion*.

Rosenberg’s ideas were shared by some powerful leaders in other countries such as Winston Churchill, Britain’s secretary of state for War and Air. The British politician was given a copy of *The Protocols* and though it is difficult to say if he read it, he certainly agreed with some of its ideas about a worldwide Jewish conspiracy, particularly when it came to the idea of Jewish Bolshevism. He considered the Bolsheviks “an illegitimate minority consisting mainly of Jews over the ‘real’ Russians,” a point he reiterated in a speech in 1921. A staunch anticommunist, he used the idea of the Jewish Bolshevik ties in Soviet Russia to try to convince British Jews to “denounce the renegades in Russia and Poland who are dishonouring their race and religion.”⁶³ In a rambling article in the *Illustrated Sunday Herald* in early 1920, “Zionism versus Bolshevism,” Churchill depicted “Jews as historic international evil doers” yet praised “national [British]” Jews for their contributions to

British society. He wrote that Jews were the “most formidable and the most remarkable race which has ever appeared in the world” and praised Jewish contributions to Christianity. He saw Zionism as an “antidote to Bolshevism” and argued that good Jews had a responsibility to do everything they could to denounce Bolshevism and make “clear to all the world that the Bolshevik movement is not a Jewish movement.”⁶⁴ London’s *Jewish Chronicle* called Churchill’s article “reckless and scandalous.”⁶⁵

Rosenberg argued a year later in *Die Staatsfeindliche Zionismus* (Zionism: The Enemy of the State, 1921) that Zionists in Britain had become powerful enough to successfully convince the British government to issue the Balfour Declaration in late 1917, which promised that Britain would “view with favour the establishment in [Ottoman] Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.”⁶⁶ He added in a later edition of his 1923 *Die Protokolle der Weisen von Zion und die jüdische Weltpolitik* (The Protocols of the Elders of Zion and Jewish World Politics) that the British promise underscored the fact that Jews played a major role in instigating the war in 1914 as a step toward achieving their ultimate goal of world domination.⁶⁷

Eckart, Rosenberg, and Hitler admired Henry Ford because, as Hitler noted in *Mein Kampf*, the American industrial giant maintained his independence in a country, where Jews controlled industry and the stock exchange.⁶⁸ In late 1918, Ford bought *The Dearborn Independent*, which quickly became his soapbox for a variety of issues, particularly Jews and Bolshevism. Over time, he became obsessed with the idea that Jews had caused the war and agreed with Thomas Edison about the place of Jews in American society.⁶⁹ In 1920, spurred by what he thought were US government efforts to strike out against “the radical seeds that have entangled American ideas in their poisonous theories,”⁷⁰ Ford decided to launch an “educational” series on the “Jewish Question” that hopefully would force the Jews “to clean up their own house.”⁷¹

What followed were a series of lengthy articles that appeared in the *Independent* from the spring of 1920 through early 1922 that were later published in four volumes as *The International Jew: The World’s Foremost Problem*. Ford’s ideas were particularly important because they carried the *imprimatur* of one of the world’s foremost industrialists and were published at a time of considerable instability in the United States and Europe. Ford did not write these articles, though he is listed as the author of all of them. They were written by Billy Cameron, who was able to “make sense of the abrupt, enigmatic remarks of his employer.” He also wrote Ford’s column in the *Independent*, “Mr. Ford’s Own Page.”⁷²

Ford made the connection between Jews and Bolshevism on the first page of his first article (May 2, 1920), “The Jew in Character and Business,” which is included in volume I of *The International Jew*. He wrote that the Jew “is charged with being the source of Bolshevism, an accusation which is serious or not according to the circle in which it is made.”⁷³ He added that a substantial body of literature in Germany blamed Jews for the collapse of

the Second Reich, while in England the Jew “is charged with being the real world ruler, who rules as a super-nation over the nations, ruled by the power of gold, and who plays nation against nation for his own purposes.”⁷⁴ The Jew, Ford wrote, is the “world’s enigma,”⁷⁵ an idea that mirrors some of those expressed by Eckart.

Ford devoted his next article to the “Jewish Question” in Germany and again mentioned Bolshevism, which, masquerading as German socialism, was one of the means Jews used to bring about the “downfall of the German order.”⁷⁶ The rest of the article discussed *The Protocols* followed by a series of articles on Jewish Bolshevism. He accepted *The Protocols* as factual and discussed each of them in detail. Ford’s well-written explanation of *The Protocols*, particularly their threat to the United States and Europe, is far better than what was written by Nicholas II’s secret police. This is doubly so because he not only explains each of *The Protocols* in considerable detail but also details how the Jews planned to achieve each of its goals. He considered Germany the “most Jew-controlled country in the world,” followed by the United States.⁷⁷

Volume II of *The International Jew: Jewish Activity in the United States* focused principally on Jewish interference in public education, religion, theatre, the film industry, and the New York Stock Exchange. Ford looked more deeply at the negative influence of Jews on American life in volume III, *Jewish Influence in American Life*, and in chapter 49, “Jewish Hot-Beds of Bolshevism in the U.S.,”⁷⁸ he claimed that Jews were using the same methods in the United States that they used in Russia to spread Bolshevism, particularly among trade unions.⁷⁹ What amazed him was that the United States “stupidly . . . permitted Jewish Bolshevism to flaunt itself so openly during the past few years.”⁸⁰ He also discussed political Zionism and its broad support among some Jews and Christians in the West. He expressed some sympathy for Jews in pre-Zionist Palestine but warned that Bolshevik Jews flowing into Palestine were creating a “situation out of which many believe the next war will come.”⁸¹ Moreover, he wrote,

The Zionist movement, with its intentional development of race consciousness and race peculiarity on the part of the Jew, is an additional obstacle against the efforts of those Jews and Christians who are seeking to break down prejudice and to bring Jews and Christians together within a common recognition of the Golden Rule: that each should treat the other as he, in like instance, would wish to be treated by him.⁸²

The articles in volume IV, *Aspects of Jewish Power in the United States*, addressed the question of Jewish “self-cleansing,” the idea that only Jews could stop “certain abuses” and accept responsibility for what Ford thought were “competitive forces of society.”⁸³ But first they had to deal truthfully

with *The Protocols* and its goals. Ford was also extremely critical of what he called the myth of Jewish patriotism “in the wars of the United States.”⁸⁴ To counter this, he wrote a series of articles that dealt with Jewish support of the treasonous activities of Benedict Arnold during the American Revolution.⁸⁵

Ford also discussed Jewish “concealment and misrepresentation,” particularly when it came to Zionism, the American Jewish Committee, and the Jewish adoption of Christian-sounding surnames.⁸⁶ His final articles addressed growing Jewish criticism of the articles in *The Dearborn Independent* and his attacks on Jewish religious practices.⁸⁷ He also discussed what he called the Great Crime—the Jewish “introduction of corruptive and anti-American ideas into American life.”⁸⁸ He tied this to the idea that “*Bolshevism is Jewish in its origin, its methods, its personnel and its purposes,*”⁸⁹ and linked this to what he considered the principal message of *The Protocols*—a description of “how the Jewish World Power plans to run thing [s] when the time comes.”⁹⁰

In his final chapter in volume IV, “Candid Address to Jews on the Jewish Problem,” Ford stated that the purpose of his articles was to “let in the light—to show the Jews generally that the stench had become too great, and to show the rest of the people where the stench came from.”⁹¹ The greatest obstacle to changing the nature of the “stench,” he went on, was the Jew himself. Ford had no problem with the Jew keeping “all his traditions.” They are not objectionable in any way; the slightest regard for them can only hold them as romantic. But the Jew, he insisted, had to “shed his false notion of ‘the Jew against the world.’”⁹² The same was true when it came to “his false program of breaking down Christendom by the infiltration of Orientalism into business, entertainment and the professions.”⁹³ For Gentiles, he concluded, the best way to deal with the Jewish “stench” was to “erect again our own moral landmarks, which the Oriental Jewish invasion has broken down.”⁹⁴

Theodor Fritsch translated and published an abridged, two-volume edition of *The International Jew* in 1921. Hitler displayed copies of it in his new Nazi Party offices in Munich and had a large portrait of Ford on the wall behind his desk. Fritsch “lauded Henry Ford for the ‘great service’ he had provided to America and the world by attacking the Jews”⁹⁵ in the preface of *Die internationale Jude: ein Weltproblem: Das erste amerikanische Buch über die Judenfrage, herausgegeben von Henry Ford*, and in multiple editions of *Handbuch der Judenfragen*, which Eckart called “our complete spiritual arsenal.”⁹⁶

Adolf Hitler’s interest in Henry Ford went beyond his racial ideas, particularly after Gottfried Feder, one of the Nazi Party’s early racial theorists, told him that he should read a recent article in Fritsch’s journal, *Der Hammer*,⁹⁷ “Henry Ford und die industrielle Zukunft” (“Ford and the Industrial Future”). He praised Ford for his visionary, prophetic willingness to stand up against “purely parasitical entrepreneurship.” Feder also praised Ford in *Der deutsche Staat auf nationaler und sozialer Grundlage* (The

German State on National and Social Foundations, 1923) and called him the “finest and most universally known example” of the Nazi view of the goal and purpose of the national economy.⁹⁸

By this time, Ford had been forced to apologize for his articles after growing outcries from Jewish leaders. This, coupled with a widely publicized trial that charged Ford with defamation of character, convinced him that it was time to “stop this *Dearborn Independent!*” This had more to do with economics than any change in heart when it came to the “Jewish Question.” His “apology” on June 30, 1927, blamed others for the contents of his anti-Semitic publications. He stated that he was now aware that *The Protocols* were “gross forgeries” and, while praising the “virtues of the Jewish people as a whole,” added that this “very flock” had its “black sheep.” He asked forgiveness for the unintentional harm that he had caused and pledged to withdraw all of his anti-Semitic publications in the United States and abroad.⁹⁹ In reality, Henry Ford remained a virulent anti-Semite for the rest of his life.¹⁰⁰

This did little to dampen the Nazi fascination with Henry Ford, although some questions did arise about the efficacy of what he had to say, namely Nazi propaganda. In his diary entry of April 8, 1924, Joseph Goebbels wrote that though he found Ford’s works “extremely interesting . . . wholesome, and enlightening” when it came to the “Jewish Question” outside of Germany, and that it was important “not to be overly captivated by the author’s intriguing evidence.”¹⁰¹ Four days earlier, Goebbels wrote that at the first meeting of an illegal Nazi Party cell in Rheydt, Germany, all “we basically talked about [was] antisemitism.” It was, Goebbels said, a “world idea” that “brings together Germans and Russians.”¹⁰² Consequently, though he had doubts about some of Ford’s ideas, he thought *The International Jew* provided him with a literary pathway to other works about “the burning question of the hour . . . the Jewish question.” This included *The Protocols*, which he found “seductive” but an “anti-Semitic forgery.” On the other hand, Goebbels accepted the “‘inner’ authenticity of the protocols,” which fortified his own ideas about the “Jewish Question” and the idea that “Lenin, Trotsky, [Georgy] Chicherin are Jews.”¹⁰³

But Alfred Rosenberg was the real standard bearer for the concept of “Jewish Bolshevism” in the Nazi Party. In 1922, he published a small piece on the Jewish influence over British politics, *Der Staatsfeindliche Zionismus* (Subversive Zionism),¹⁰⁴ followed a year later by his commentary on *The Protocols*—*Die Protokoller der Weisen von Zion und die jüdische Weltpolitik* (The Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion and Jewish World Politics). In the introduction, he traced the history of *The Protocols* and noted the successes of the Zionist movement and the dominant role played by Jews in countries like the United States and Great Britain. He also mentioned Henry Ford’s discussion of Bernard Baruch’s success in the United States, whom Ford indirectly compared to Leon Trotsky. The United States, Rosenberg added, was now the “größte Ghetto der Welt” (“largest ghetto in the world”). He also blamed Jews for the Russian Revolution in

1917, the German defeat in the First World War, and its postwar financial crisis.¹⁰⁵

His most enduring work, *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts* (The Myth of the 20th Century, 1930), would later haunt him at the Nuremberg trials. *Der Mythos* is filled with Rosenberg's bizarre ideas about race and underscored what he saw as the contrast between the ancient origins of the superior Aryans and the degenerative, corrupt nature of Semites (Jews). He also warned of the dangers of racial mixing with inferior races and partially blamed some of this on the "Judaization" of Christianity.¹⁰⁶ Rosenberg served as Reich minister of the Occupied Eastern Territories (*Ostland*) from 1941 to 1945 and was indicted at Nuremberg for crimes against peace, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and conspiracy.¹⁰⁷ In its judgment, the tribunal stated that Rosenberg was the Nazi Party's "ideologist" who spread his ideas in his newspaper, *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* (*National Socialist Monthly*) and *Der Mythos*, which sold over a million copies.¹⁰⁸

But his principal crime was the role he played in "the formulation and execution of occupation policies" in the *Ostland* (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and parts of Belorussia). This included the "policies of Germanization, exploitation, forced labor, extermination of Jews [over one million] and opponents of Nazi rule." The judges found him guilty of all four charges and cited his "knowledge of the brutal treatment and terror to which the eastern peoples were subjected" as one of the key reasons for their decision. He was sentenced to death and hanged on October 16, 1946.¹⁰⁹

Der Mythos does not mention *The Protocols* because they never played a major role in Nazi propaganda once Hitler published the two volumes of *Mein Kampf* in 1925–6. But its central theme, the Jewish lust for world power, was quite influential, particularly in the context of "Jewish Bolshevism." Hitler's ideas about Jews and Bolshevism evolved in the early 1920s. In a speech in 1922, he told his audience that Jewish financiers were to blame for Germany's problems and later that year likened Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP) in Russia to Jewish capitalism and Marxism. The "Jewification" of the Russian economy, he added, was now taking place in Germany. In a speech in early 1923, he said that the Marxist idea about class struggle was a "swindle propagated by the Jews."¹¹⁰

In *Mein Kampf*, he spoke of Jewish Bolshevism but more in the context of Marxism, which was "itself only the transference, by the Jew, Karl Marx, of a philosophical attitude and conception . . . into the form of a definite political creed."¹¹¹ Jewish Marxism, he added, devalued "the personality of man" and contested the "significance of nationality and race," which robbed "humanity of its existence and culture."

If, with the help of his Marxist creed, the Jew is victorious over the other peoples of the world, his crown will be the funeral wreath of humanity and this planet will, as it did thousands of years ago, move through the

ether devoid of men . . . *by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord.*¹¹²

In early 1927, Hitler wrote “that the Jew is and remains the world enemy, and his weapon, Marxism, a plague of mankind.”¹¹³ He made a similar point in *Hitler's Zweites Buch: Ein Dokument aus dem Jahr 1928* (Hitler's Second Book: A Document of the Year 1928), which deals with the racial dimensions of German foreign policy. Hitler argued that the “Jewish international struggle will always end in bloody Bolshevization—that is to say, in truth, the destruction of the intellectual upper classes associated with the various peoples, so that he himself will be able to rise to mastery over the now leaderless humanity.”¹¹⁴ Marxism, he went on, was the “intellectual father of the Bolshevik Revolution” and was now the “weapon of terror that the Jew applies ruthlessly and brutally.”¹¹⁵

Yet during the 1930 Reichstag election campaign, Hitler told a reporter from *The Times* that the party rejected anti-Semitism and pogroms. But, he added, “if Jews associated themselves with Bolshevism, as many unfortunately did, they would be regarded as enemies.”¹¹⁶ Once in power, Hitler unleashed a torrent of decrees and laws that gradually stripped the Jews from the fabric of German society. This growing demonization of Jews culminated in the massive *Kristallnacht pogrom* on November 9, 1938, that resulted in the widespread destruction of Jewish homes, businesses, synagogues, and community centers. Hitler responded to the international outcry a few months later by telling the Reichstag that Jews never seriously took his pledge that once he took power he would “settle the Jewish problem.” He added, “If the international Jewish financiers in and outside of Europe should succeed in plunging the nations once more into a world war, then the result will not be the Bolshevization of the earth, and thus the victory of Jewry, but the *annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe!*” (Figure 9.1)¹¹⁷

And he kept his word. Hitler told Wehrmacht commanders a week before the invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, to kill all Poles “without pity or mercy.”¹¹⁸ This led to the creation of Nazi Germany's racial laboratory, the *General-gouvernement für die besetzten polnischen Gebiete* (General Government for the Occupied Areas of Poland), where four of the six Nazi death camps were built, along with a large network of ghettos for Poland's large Jewish population.¹¹⁹

Once war broke out, Hitler became more and more obsessed with what Goebbels now called the threats from the “Jewish plutocracy.” In his New Year's address in 1940, Hitler railed against the “Jewish-international capitalists” who had “but one goal—to destroy Germany, to destroy our German Volk!”¹²⁰ A few months later he told those gathered in Munich to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the party program that “we will eliminate this organized terror of this despicable clique of world plutocrats! We have routed these sharks of international finance in Germany, and we will not stand for others telling us what to do now. The German nation has

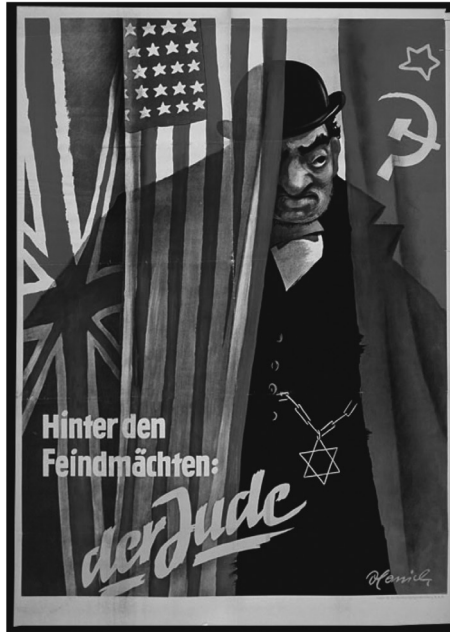


FIGURE 9.1 “Behind the enemy powers: The Jew”. Courtesy of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

the same right to life as other peoples do.”¹²¹ That summer, Hitler linked his dream of *Lebensraum* in the East to the “annihilation of Bolshevism, and extermination of Jewry.” From his perspective, any resistance to his plans would be dealt with by the “extermination of Jewish Bolshevism.”¹²² He was also convinced that the destruction of Russian Jews would lead to the collapse of the Soviet Union.¹²³

By late 1940, Hitler began to develop plans for Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union. Specially trained killing squads, the *Einsatzgruppen*, were to move in quickly behind Wehrmacht frontline troops with broad authority to “pacify” areas under their control with *rücksichtsloser Schärfe* (ruthless severity). According to these units’ *Einsatzgruppen* reports, most of their victims were Jews. In a meeting with senior military commanders on late March 1941, Hitler told them that he expected them to take the lead in this struggle against “*der bolschewistischen Kommissare unter der kommunistische inteligenz*” (“Bolshevik commissars and the Communist intelligentsia”). He added that what was about to take place was

A life and death struggle between two races and two ideologies; between German and Slav; between National Socialism and the criminal code of Jewish Bolshevism, which constitutes the greatest threat to the future of civilization. . . . The ultimate objective of this war was not only the

destruction of the Red Army in the field but the final elimination of the Russian-Bolshevik menace.¹²⁴

By this time, the concept of “Jewish Bolshevism” had become the “*bete noire* of the German officer corps,” fueled by “the idea that Germany needed to counter a ‘peril from the east’—Jewish Bolshevism.” In the summer of 1940, Rear Admiral Kurt Fricke wrote that the Germans had to do what they could to eliminate the “chronic danger of Bolshevism,” while German staff officers serving in Romania discussed at one meeting in October what they thought was a war against global finance interests and the Jews. To Colonel-General Georg von Küchler, victory would only be achieved with the total destruction of Russia.¹²⁵

In late spring 1941, the OKW (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*; Armed Forces Supreme Command) issued a directive that reminded commanders that the Bolsheviks were the “deadly enemy of the National Socialist German people” and that the coming invasion would be a “struggle” that would require “ruthless and energetic actions against Bolshevik agitators, guerillas, saboteurs, and Jews, and the total elimination of all active or possible resistance.”¹²⁶ On June 6 the Wehrmacht issued the Commissar Order, which freed German soldiers of any legal responsibility for their actions against an enemy that used “barbaric, Asiatic fighting methods.” A week before the invasion, Heinrich Himmler, the head of the SS, ordered *Einsatzgruppen* commanders to support Wehrmacht *Selbstreinigungsbemühungen* (self-cleansing efforts) of “anti-communist and anti-Jewish circles.”¹²⁷

Over the next six months, the *Einsatzgruppen* swept through western Russia and murdered 500,000 Jews. The SD’s *Operational Situation Report USSR No. 33* of July 27, 1941, underscored what it considered the strong Jewish ties to Bolshevism in the Soviet Union, while report No. 38 of July 30 reported the execution of 200 communists and Jews in Zhitomir for arson. According to a report from *Einsatzgruppe C*, almost all of the communist leaders in Zhitomir were Jews.¹²⁸ Another report on August 5, 1941, discussed the importance of “hitting the Jewish-Bolshevik upper class [in Belorussia] as efficiently as possible,”¹²⁹ while one a few days later stated that Jews in western Belorussia were hostile toward German forces and did everything they could to “sabotage German orders.”¹³⁰ Otto Ohlendorf, the commander of *Einsatzgruppe D*, testified during the *Einsatzgruppen* trial in 1947–8 that almost of all of the 90,000 Jews murdered by his unit were considered security threats to the Wehrmacht, a standard myth used by the SS, the SD, and the military to justify their murderous campaign against Jews and others in Russia from 1941 to 1944.¹³¹

Collectively, these units, in league with the Wehrmacht and the mass killing campaigns in ghettos and death camps in western Russia and the General Government, were responsible for the murder of millions of Jews during the Shoah. But they were never able to make Europe *Judenfrei*, something Hitler bemoaned in his April 29, 1945, “Political Testament.” He blamed

this on “international statesmen who are either of Jewish origin or work for Jewish interests.” He hoped that the country’s new leadership would adhere to Nazi racial laws and mercilessly resist the “world poisoners, international Jewry.”¹³²

Conclusion

Karl Schleunes described the evolution of Nazi policies toward Jews in Germany before the Second World War as a “twisted road.”¹³³ The same could be said of the concept that the Jews of the world lusted for global power and would go to any extreme, including the embrace of Russian Bolshevism, to achieve their goals. While it could be argued that the roots for such ideas lay in the deep Western traditions of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism, they matured in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries into widely accepted concepts anchored by *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* and the idea of “Jewish Bolshevism.” They became an important part of early Nazi writings about the Jewish threat to Germany and would gradually provide Alfred Rosenberg, Joseph Goebbels, and Adolf Hitler with an ideological justification to argue that Jews were also an essential threat to Germany and the Aryan race. This was one of the central themes in *Mein Kampf*, which became the Nazi Bible. Henry Ford, the storied American industrialist, gave such theories credibility, while Alfred Rosenberg, one of the party’s foremost ideologists, became the standard bearer for the Nazi concept of “Jewish Bolshevism.” He would ultimately address his ideas about the “Jewish threat” during his years as Reichskommissar of the *Ostland*, where he oversaw the murder of over a million Jews. Goebbels and Hitler tried to do the same in other parts of Europe during the Final Solution, though once it became apparent at the end of the war that they had failed, they took their own lives in despair.