

# Henry Ford: American anti-Semitism and the class struggle

By Nancy Russell  
18 April 2003

Henry Ford and the Jews: the Mass Production of Hate by Neil Baldwin, *Public Affairs*. New York. 2001, paperback release December 17, 2002

Neil Baldwin's *Henry Ford and the Jews* is an instructive volume. It documents Ford's major role in fanning anti-Semitism, both in the US and internationally.

Named "Man of the Millennium" by *Automotive News*, and businessman of the century by *Forbes Magazine*, Henry Ford continues to be an American icon—a model of inventiveness, entrepreneurial drive and success. The media is presently outdoing itself in eulogizing the Ford family as it marks the June 2003 centenary of the founding of Ford Motor Company, by far the world's largest family-controlled industrial corporation.

It was the irony, if not hypocrisy, of the Ford Motor Company's sponsorship of the TV production of *Schindler's List* that prompted Baldwin to take up this story. For the author, this association underscored the degree to which the significance of Henry Ford's anti-Semitism had been suppressed.

The resulting book deals with the sources of Ford's views, the extent of his influence, the fraudulent nature of his 1927 apology to the Jews, and the auto baron's long association with virulent anti-Semites. The author seeks to show that Ford was unrepentant and remained culpable for the publication and dissemination of some of the vilest anti-Semitic tracts of the twentieth century.

Ford's contribution to the rise of anti-Semitism internationally lies primarily, according to Baldwin's book, with his propaganda campaign of 1920-22, followed by a more cunning patronage of anti-Semitic forces. The author documents how the industrialist spent a fortune in publishing and disseminating the "Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion"[1] and conducting a two-year campaign of anti-Semitic agitation in the *Dearborn Independent*, his personal newspaper, beginning May 20, 1920. These tracts, compiled and published as *The International Jew*, were circulated widely and translated into a number of languages.

The impact of this initiative was significant. Henry Ford was at the time one of the most successful businessmen in the world, with a net worth estimated at well over a billion dollars. He was, in 1920, the sole proprietor of the largest industrial empire that had ever been built, controlling about 60 percent of the American car market, while simultaneously enjoying a reputation as a man of the people and the pioneer of the \$5-a-day wage. The auto magnate's prestige lent credibility to American anti-Semitism. Baldwin's *Henry Ford and the Jews* points to Ford's publications as a major influence on young Nazi adherents in Germany.

Ford's impact on Hitler was evidenced by a framed photograph of the industrialist that hung on Hitler's office wall. Tens of thousands of copies of Ford's anti-Semitic tracts were circulated in Germany in 1921-22, just as Hitler was gaining control of the Nazi Party. *Mein Kampf* contains sections that appear to be lifted from the *Dearborn Independent*.

Hitler refers to the industrialist, the only American mentioned in his

biography, stating, "Every year makes them [the Jews] more and more the controlling masters of the producers in a nation of 120 million; only a single great man, Ford, to their fury still maintains full independence." [2]

Ford was delighted, on his seventy-fifth birthday, to receive a special honor from Hitler, the Grand Service Cross of the Supreme Order of the German Eagle. The honor was bestowed on Ford on July 30, 1938—four months after the Anschluss and the mass terror against Viennese Jews—at a birthday dinner attended by more than 1,500 prominent Detroiters. This was the highest honor of the Reich that could be bestowed on a foreign national, and the German consul traveled to Detroit to personally drape the golden cross with swastikas over Ford's chest.

Throughout his life, Ford encouraged the circulation and reprinting of his attacks on Jews, despite ostensibly disavowing them, according to the materials unearthed by Baldwin.

Ford's contribution to the propagation of anti-Semitism went beyond the printed word. He worked actively to cultivate a like-minded community. Initially gathered around the *Dearborn Independent*, these men constituted a major force in the evolution of American anti-Semitism, and included a large number of pro-fascist figures. Baldwin recounts how Ford supported, ideologically and/or financially, a large number of strident anti-Semites.

Ernest Liebold, Ford's second-in-command, was a life-long and bitter anti-Semite. He handled all of the daily business affairs for Ford from 1911 to 1927. "How proud Liebold was of this project [*The International Jew* series], now that he had clambered decisively to the top of the heap.... Liebold was the spark plug in the Jewish series and was anti-Semitic in terms of wanting to eradicate the Jews," Baldwin relates.

Liebold ran the Henry Ford Hospital (from which Jewish physicians were barred), the Toledo and Ironton Railroad, the *Dearborn Independent*, and was in charge of Ford's cash-in-hand, which usually amounted to some \$1 million in discretionary funds.

There was William J. Cameron, brought on board the *Dearborn Independent* to write *The International Jew* series. He went on to found the Anglo-Saxon Federation of America, an anti-Semitic Christian Identity movement.[3]

Also on the payroll for a time was Boris Brasol, a young Russian tsarist who had been a leading Black Hundred figure.[4] His first filing for the *Independent* was "The Bolshevik Menace to Russia," published in April 1919. It was he who translated the *Protocols* into English and brought them to Ford's attention. In 1918 he worked as an operative for US Army Military Intelligence, and in the 1930s became a Nazi agent.

Leading pro-Nazi Americans of the 1930s, Father Coughlin and Gerald K. Smith, were also associates and there are widely held suspicions that they received financial contributions from Ford. Charles Lindbergh and family were close friends.

But beyond the exposure of these facts, Baldwin's volume asks the more fundamental biographical and historical question: why did Henry Ford become so anti-Semitic? What were the social forces at work?

The answers are not so obvious. As with all social questions, they are multilayered. In dealing with this question, the author is only partially successful. Baldwin seeks to examine the specific American conditions that shaped Ford's ideology, in large part because he feels that the 1980 book by Albert Lee, also entitled *Henry Ford and the Jews* (out of print, but available), is inadequate in this regard.

Baldwin presents a picture of life in the rural Midwest at the turn of the century and deals with American anti-Semitism and other trends in rural thought. To explain Ford's susceptibilities to these prejudices, however, Baldwin emphasizes his intellectual limitations.

The author's presentation makes clear that Ford was representative of a social type. This man who looms so large in American history, an engineer who developed the assembly line and ushered in the industrial age, with genius (and luck) sufficient to amass one of the greatest fortunes of his age, was hostile to the study of history, suspicious of intellectual activity and contemptuous of higher education. (He forbade his son from attending college.)

Ford was born in 1863 in Dearbornville, Michigan, the "rural backwoods of fundamentalist America," in Baldwin's words. His book learning appears to have started and ended with the McGuffey reader, the dominant textbook in American schools for nearly a century. These volumes sought to inject Biblical study into all subjects, unabashedly stating that Protestant Christianity was the only true religion in America. McGuffey described Jews as "strangers to the morality contained in the Gospel," and the reader featured stereotypical portrayals of diamond-dealers and "Shylocks."

"McGuffeyland" was the type of world in which a boy worked with his hands and benefited from the products of hard labor, far removed from the dens of urban iniquity. Such was the lifelong orientation of Henry Ford. (His recreation of an idyllic agrarian society, an homage to tinkering and invention, stands today as Greenfield Village—ironically, a paean to a world his life's work destroyed.)[5]

Baldwin points to the anti-Semitic thread within the populism of the turn of the century, noting that Ford's idealization of the farmer and his adoption of anti-Semitic views constituted a significant current of the time. For example, in 1878, when Ford was 15 years old, the Central Greenback Club of Detroit issued a statement declaring that the railroad scandals and economic depression were due to the "Rothchilds across the water." Such statements were commonplace in the pulp periodicals of the day.

Lee's 1980 book *Henry Ford and the Jews* puts the issue more bluntly: "In Populist thinking we find all of the fundamentals of Ford's economic anti-Semitism. It was a childish assumption which linked all finance to Jewry.... In the Populist model, the quintessential American was a man who worked with his hands. The antithesis was the man who manipulated ideas and money—the financier, the creditor who makes his living 'at the expense' of the toil of 'real Americans.'"[6]

This backward current was exacerbated by a xenophobic reaction to mass European immigration (beginning in the 1880s and extending through the early twentieth century). Baldwin cites best-selling pamphlets calling for the preservation of America's Christian identity and an end to the "reckless corruption" caused by Jews and immigrants.

One factor in Ford's development that made him receptive to such simplistic and reactionary views was his extreme pragmatism. He was a man who rarely read (*Bambi* was his all time favorite book, says Lee), and developed a visceral hatred for the urbane and well-educated intellectual.

He was a hyperkinetic manager, constantly in motion in his facility—in the machine shop, in the power plant, in the drafting room. Baldwin observes, "Colleagues quickly learned that the last place to look for him was in his office, because to Ford, thought equaled action." [7] Ford's deep, ingrained prejudice against thought, history and philosophy fed into

and complemented his hatred of the Jews.

In a telling anecdote about work at the *Dearborn Independent*, Baldwin quotes editorial board member Fred Black, "One morning, Ford might shake hands all around, sit down, and blurt out in a general way, 'I have an idea!' Then the men would discuss it and 'flesh it out' while he leaned back and listened. But Ford would not tolerate lengthy discourse about any matter, large or small. He would attend to a presentation or a plan for an article for a few minutes—fifteen minutes was considered the outside limit—and then 'on the basis of a hunch,' come to a decision." [8]

Ford's anti-intellectualism became notorious in the course of a libel suit he conducted against the *Chicago Tribune*. Under questioning at the 1919 trial, Ford was incapable of discussing the fundamental principles of government, the dates of the American Revolution, or the identity of Benedict Arnold. He concluded with the exasperated statement that epitomized the worst of American pragmatism: "History is more or less the bunk."

In addition to the rural prejudices of the day and Ford's mechanistic and pragmatic approach to issues, Baldwin points to Ford's anti-Semitic associates as a major source of his views. Ford surrounded himself with men who were deeply anti-Semitic, many of whom made this belief the axis of their working lives. But here one would have to say that the influence was mutual. Ford chose to associate with those who shared his own prejudices.

Ford's friends among the bourgeoisie, such as the Firestones, John Burroughs and Thomas Edison, shared his antipathy towards the Jews. Edison wrote to a friend, explaining how troubling it was that Jews had a "natural talent" for becoming rich. "While there are some 'terrible examples' in mercantile pursuits, the moment they get into art, music and science and literature, the Jew is fine. I wish they would all stop making money." [9]

Lastly, Baldwin emphasizes the economic factors that stoked Ford's anti-Semitism. "Vilifying the 'international banker' Jews—the Rothschilds and Warburgs of the world—and their schemes to keep their hands on the cash flow of nations, Ford was, here too, certainly not alone among American business moguls of his generation," writes Baldwin. [10] However, he adds, Ford was unique in his determination to promulgate his views.

When World War I erupted, Ford was infuriated to discover that his business could be affected by what he considered untrustworthy political forces. He came to believe that it was the Jews who were responsible.

Baldwin writes, "Between 1910 (when he was already in his late forties and the Model T had been launched) and 1918, Henry Ford metamorphosed from ignorant idealist to embittered anti-Semite." [11] Baldwin continues, "He found a target to blame for his boredom, disillusionment and middle-aged unhappiness. He grabbed onto the Jews and never let go." The author adds that "the barometer of Henry Ford's Jewish antipathies also rose and fell in tandem with the chronically uneven fortunes and missteps of his automobile business."

In his assessment, the author bundles together a number of objective and psychological factors, all of which no doubt contributed to Ford's views. But in examining the specific place of Henry Ford in history, one must consider how social trends were refracted within the mind of a man in his specific socioeconomic position.

Ford's vitriol against the Jews may have originated in the backwardness of American nativism, but it evolved into a more explicit class weapon. The dates are decisive: Ford's attitudes changed markedly between 1910 and 1918. Baldwin fails to elaborate the social context of this metamorphosis.

In 1915 Ford declared himself an opponent of World War I, pledging to devote himself and his fortune to "oppose this spirit of militarism." That year he launched an ill-fated "Peace Ship," costing a half million dollars, in an attempt to galvanize public opinion against the war. By all accounts

his “pacifism” was a form of isolationism: America shouldn’t concern itself with foreign affairs; attending to business was paramount. At the conclusion of his expedition Ford returned, convinced that “German-Jewish bankers” were the cause of the war.

Notwithstanding his political opposition, Ford found a way to accommodate to the war, profitably switching to military production and innovating there as well. (His German operations continued under Ford-Werke, majority-owned by Ford USA. Later, under the Nazis, the Ford plant, unlike other American-owned property, was never confiscated by the German government. It continued to produce trucks for the German army and, reportedly, turbines for the V-2 rocket. Meanwhile, Ford’s US Rouge plant was producing jeeps, aircraft motors and tanks for the American military.)

In contradistinction to the war, the 1917 Russian Revolution and its effect on workers throughout the world was not something to which Ford could adapt. It was one thing for the Jews to be responsible for the war; for them to be responsible (as Ford saw it) for the seizure of private property, the nationalization of resources and the encouragement of revolutionary movements across the globe was quite another matter.

At the most decisive level, Ford’s anti-Semitism became an integral part of the reaction of a section of the American bourgeoisie to the Russian Revolution and the rise of the labor movement both at home and abroad. This is the essential point that Baldwin misses.

Anti-Semitism was for Ford a pivotal element in his lifelong war against the encroachments on his entrepreneurial empire. It was perhaps the most reprehensible aspect of his ideological and political activity, but it was inextricably linked to the efforts of the premier American industrialist to deal with the “labor problem.”

Even prior to Hitler, Ford made the stereotypical amalgam between the Jews, the Russian Revolution and the labor movement. In the *Independent*, the Soviet Union was referred to as “the present Jewish government of Russia.”[12]

“There are more Communists in the United States than there are in Soviet Russia. Their aim is the same and their racial character is the same.... The power house of Communist influence and propaganda in the United States is in the Jewish trade unions which, almost without exception, adhere to a Bolshevik program for the respective industries and for the country as a whole” stated the *Protocols*, the *Dearborn Independent* and *The International Jew*.

Says Albert Lee in his *Henry Ford and the Jews*, “Communism and unionism were all part of the same plot, according to Ford, and then Hitler. In his autobiography, *My Life and Work*, Ford said, ‘There seems to be a determined effort to fasten the Bolshevik stain on American labor.... Workingmen are made the tools of some manipulator who seeks his own ends through them.’”

Lee’s book, which, in general, is more hard-hitting than Baldwin’s, goes on to powerfully document parallels in argumentation between Ford’s autobiography and *Mein Kampf*. [13]

This side of Ford’s anti-Semitism, a racism directed in a specifically class manner, is acknowledged, but not emphasized by Baldwin. One of his major aims in writing his book is to disprove Ford’s whitewash job, his 1927 “apology,” and show Ford for what he was—and he is successful on this level.

However, the most important underlying thread in Ford’s antipathy for the Jews is his political trajectory as a proto-fascist, which is bound up with his class interest in suppressing the working class and preventing at all costs its independent industrial and political organization.

For example, in the chapter sarcastically entitled “Working Man’s Friend,” Baldwin provides some very telling information about the famous Ford decision of January 5, 1914 to reduce the workday to eight hours and pay \$5 a day to his employees. Ford had been criticized by the *Wall Street Journal* for injecting “Biblical or spiritual principles into a

field in which they do not belong” and the newspaper suspected that a moralistic plan afoot.

There was an element of truth in this. Ford simultaneously launched his infamous Sociological Department to “put a soul into the company.” The auto baron called upon an Episcopal dean to join him. “I want you, Mark, to put Jesus Christ in my factory,” he said. The man was chosen to oversee all personnel issues.[14]

It turned out that Jesus’ alter ego needed not a dozen disciples, but a small army to get the job done for Ford. The Sociological Department began with a staff of more than 50 investigators, but grew to 160 within two years. Its “apostles” would drive the crowded back streets of Detroit and Dearborn with a sheaf of printed questionnaires.

Their job was to establish standards of behavior throughout the company. To qualify for the \$5-a-day wage, the employee had to put up with an exhaustive domestic inspection, show that he was sober, clean of person, saving money through regular deposits, and not living “riotously.”[15]

This was a very conscious social experiment. Jesus saved men, Ford hoped, from gambling and drinking—habits that made them late for work or unproductive. But above all, Christianity was an ideological vaccine against Jewish Bolshevism, socialism and trade unionism. The fascistic and all-powerful Sociological Department constituted a major effort on Ford’s behalf to control the hearts, minds and bodies of his workers.

This was a period of rising militancy and growing organization of the working class. The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and the Socialist Party both were major forces within American society. One of the responses of the US government to the energized labor and socialist movements was the Espionage and Sedition Acts, laws broadly used to persecute the IWW, the Socialist Party and many dissenting workers. To implement this repression, the government established the American Protective League (APL) as a semiofficial auxiliary of the Justice Department.[16]

The Ford apparatus changed with the times. The book, *The Five Dollar Day*, by Steven Meyer, provides graphic details of the extraordinary collaboration between Ford and the APL, an organization which grew to 1,200 units with approximately 250,000 members—a vast network of spies and informants.

The APL’s most active division was in Detroit, where operatives were stationed in each important factory of the city. At the Highland Park Ford Plant, the Sociological Department coordinated and centralized the Ford network of about 100 APL spies. Ford managers supervised the APL agents in the shops and handed over to the APL the company’s gargantuan “Records of Investigation” that had been maintained since the inauguration of the \$5-a-day wage. Within a year of the Russian Revolution, more than 30,000 investigations had been conducted in Detroit, with information passed on to the Department of Justice, military intelligence and local law enforcement.

Any remark considered “disloyal” by an APL agent would result in a worker being written up. Ford supervisors and APL operatives constantly applied pressure on employees to conform in myriad ways. For example, individuals would be required to purchase Liberty Bonds and donate to the YMCA and the Red Cross. Those workers who did not comply were labeled “undesirable aliens” and/or “traitors.” This could lead to termination or legal prosecution. Such was the level of intimidation pervading the shops of Ford Motor Company. The most intense scrutiny was directed at suspected members of the IWW or those professing to believe in socialism.

1919 was not only the year of the purchase of the *Dearborn Independent*; it was also the year Ford dissolved his Sociological Department into his soon-to-be-notorious “Service Department.” (This was the organization that ex-boxer and security chief Harry Bennett formed into a private army of thugs and gangsters to terrorize workers and

prevent unionization in the 1930s.) Ford's Service Department would grow to be the largest private police force in the world.

In 1924, Jonathon Norton Leonard drew "a sketch of what it meant" to work in the Ford factory. "No one who works for Ford," he wrote, "is safe from spies—from superintendents on down to the poor creature who must clean a certain number of toilets an hour. There are spies who ask embarrassing questions of visitors' guides, spies who worm their way into labor unions, spies who speak every language under the sun. The system does not stop at the factory gates. An anonymous letter accusing a man of stealing Ford parts is enough to bring him before the 'Service Department.' He is forced to sign a 'Permission for Search' which allows Ford detectives to ransack his home, turn out all his poor possessions in hopes of finding a Ford incandescent lamp or a generator armature. There are spies to watch these in turn" (quoted in Meyer's *The Five Dollar Day*).

Ford spy reports from 1919 include detailed descriptions of a Detroit celebration of the Russian Revolution, meetings of the International Association of Machinists, Automotive Workers Union meetings, IWW meetings, a noon-hour gathering of Romanian Bolsheviks, and even the Modern Brotherhood of America, a fraternal insurance organization.

Despite this, Ford Motor Company in 1919 was hit with 16 separate strikes, but avoided unionization—assisted by the notorious Palmer Raids and a national Red Scare.

This was the political context of Ford's barrage of anti-Semitic articles launched in 1920. He began right off equating Bolshevism and Judaism. The *Dearborn Independent's* "Ford's One Page" stated: "What of the Melting Pot? The problem is not ... with the pot so much as it is the base metal. Some metals cannot be assimilated, refuse to mix with the molten mass of the citizenship, but remain ugly, indissoluble lumps. How did this base metal get in? ... what about those aliens who have given us so much trouble, these Bolsheviks messing up our industries and disturbing our civil life." [17]

Adding fuel to the mounting fears of the bourgeoisie, socialist Eugene V. Debs ran for president in 1920, receiving one million votes.

An unending stream of vile propaganda was disseminated around the world, courtesy of the Ford fortune. Between 1920 and 1922 Ford reprinted his articles in four brochures and a more comprehensive book, *The International Jew*, which was translated into most European languages and widely circulated. Among other things, Jews were accused of controlling the world's banks, harboring a racial program of domination, starting World War I, plotting the destruction of Christian civilization, and twisting the nation's youth through farm clubs that aimed to train them in "communistic ideas."

As libel suits and countersuits developed over the course of two years, Ford maneuvered. He eventually issued a phony "apology" to Jews in 1927, mainly due to a sales slump and the need to launch the Model A without the cloud of scandal over his business. The *Dearborn Independent*, with no other reason to exist, closed at the end of the year. His publications, however, continued to be published throughout the world, and continue to be circulated to this day. [18]

Ford's life had a logic. He lived through a convulsive and revolutionary period of great social, political and technological change, and these events passed through him. Baldwin's research into the nature of Ford's anti-Semitism is valuable, but limited by his inability to understand the huge social forces driving Ford's attacks on Jews.

Taken apart from these titanic movements, Ford appears as an eccentric maverick, a somewhat solitary figure. Despite the fact that, on the whole, American politicians and corporate leaders rejected Ford's violently and overtly anti-Semitic program, his views were a component element in the bitter reaction of the American and world bourgeoisie to the rising threat of socialism.

Baldwin minimizes the effect of revolutionary currents on Ford and, in

the end, states blandly, ahistorically and complacently: "Anti-Semitism will reside in all cultures, de facto, as long as Jews exist—but in America it is moving toward a distant fringe."

In contrast, the pamphlet "Anti-Semitism, Fascism and the Holocaust" places the development of modern anti-Semitism in its true political context. Author David North writes, "Political anti-Semitism was not confined to Germany.... Anti-Semitism was seen by its proponents as the most effective means of mobilizing mass support against not only the emerging socialist proletariat, but all elements of liberal democracy as well. On the basis of anti-Semitism, a new national consensus was to be forged, transcending the class divisions that had been created by the process of capitalist industrialization and upon which the appeal of socialism was based." [19]

Anti-Semitism has had a very specific content since the spread of industrial capitalism in the late nineteenth century. It is used to divide the working class, like all forms of racism. But additionally, it is honed as a specific weapon against the socialist aspirations of the working class. Anti-Semitism and racism, alongside the age-old ploy of religion, have provided an indispensable ideological bulwark against scientific socialism.

As Leon Trotsky wrote in 1938: "Before exhausting or drowning mankind in blood, capitalism befouls the world atmosphere with the poisonous vapors of national and race hatred. Anti-Semitism today is one of the most malignant convulsions of capitalism's death agony."

#### Notes:

1. *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* were a forgery written by the Russian secret police, the Okhrana, between 1894 and 1899. They purported to be the minutes and proceedings of the leadership of the first Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, but their original purpose was to accuse Jews of inciting the 1905 Russian Revolution.

2. Albert Lee, *Henry Ford and the Jews*, Stein and Day, New York, p.59.

3. This Anglo-Israelite or British-Israelite movement believed that the Anglo-Saxon race were lineally descended from the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, and they were God's chosen people, not the tribe of "treacherous" Judah. It was Anglo-Saxons who were descended by the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel; and Great Britain and the US were the true Holy Land. They believed the inferior, usurper Jews could claim no rightful place in God's inheritance (Baldwin, p. 263).

4. Black Hundreds were reactionary, anti-Semitic groups formed in Russia during and the 1905 Revolution. Sponsored by the tsarist regime, they were composed largely of landowners, police, clergy and rich peasants, and conducted raids against revolutionaries and pogroms against Jews.

5. Greenfield Village is a reconstruction of 100 historic buildings, including the birthplaces a famous inventors, located near Ford's family estate in Dearborn, Michigan. It is a tourist mecca visited by over 1.6 million people annually.

6. Lee, p.148.

7. Neil Baldwin, *Henry Ford and the Jews*, p 23.

8. *Ibid*, p. 75.

9. *Ibid*. p. 90.

10. *Ibid*, p. 326.

11. *Ibid*, p. 327.

12. Jonathan R. Logsdon, "Power, Ignorance and Anti-Semitism" available at: [http://history.hanover.edu/hhr/99/hhr99\\_2.html](http://history.hanover.edu/hhr/99/hhr99_2.html)

13. Lee, pp. 62-65

14. Ford had good reason to be concerned, the new assembly line work was itself an major incentive to rebellion:

According to Ford, in his *My Life and Work*, mass production meant "the reduction of the necessity for thought on the part of the worker and the reduction of his thoughts to a minimum." Machines were closely spaced for optimal efficiency, and material was delivered to the worker at a

waist-high level so that unnecessary motion was not expended in walking, reaching, stooping, or bending. The worker not only had to subordinate himself to the pace of the machine but also had to be able to withstand the boredom inevitable in repeating the same motions hour after hour. A fifteen-minute lunch break, which included time to use the restroom, was the only interruption in the fatiguing monotony of repetitive labor. Straw bosses and company “spotters”—another new element in the work force—enforced rules and regulations that forbade leaning against machines, sitting, squatting, talking, whistling, or smoking on the job. Workers learned to communicate clandestinely without moving their lips in the “Ford whisper” and wore frozen expressions known as “Fordization of the face.” American National Biography online at: <http://www.anb.org/articles/10/10-00578-article.html#h0>

15. *The Five Dollar Day*, by Steven Meyer, does a more thorough job of presenting the chilling work of social control attempted by Ford. In 1917 a Sociological Department report describes the work of 52 investigators visiting 77 districts throughout Detroit and its suburbs. Each district contained an average of 523 workers. Each investigator had an average caseload of 727 workers making 5.35 regular investigations each day, five “absentee calls” and 15 “outside calls”. For each investigation Ford maintained a record consisting of every available source of information, churches, fraternal organizations, the government, family bibles, passports—everything that will give the truth about the men were scrutinized. “Every worker” the company had ruled “must account for his share of the “profits.” To this end, the company wanted to know whether or not the worker was purchasing a home, whether he had a savings account and whether he had debt. It required the bank account number, name of the bank and balance of any accounts; for debts, the company needed to know the holder of the debt, its reason and the balance (p. 130).

16. See WSWS article: “Operation TIPS: Bush plan to recruit 1 million domestic spies”

17. Baldwin, *Ibid.*, page 80

18. For example: <http://abbc.com/ford/intro.htm>

19. David North, “Anti-Semitism, Fascism & the Holocaust: A critical review of Daniel Goldhagen’s *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*”

To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>