

An Open Letter

*Signed by 119 Outstanding Gentile Citizens and first published
in the New York Times of January 17, 1921. Initiated by John Spargo*

The undersigned, citizens of Gentile birth and Christian faith, view with profound regret and disapproval the appearance in this country of what is apparently an organized campaign of anti-Semitism, conducted in close conformity to and co-operation with similar campaigns in Europe. We regret exceedingly the publication of a number of book pamphlets and newspaper articles designed to foster distrust and suspicion of our fellow-citizens of Jewish ancestry and faith—distrust and suspicion of their loyalty and patriotism.

These publications, to which wide circulation is being given, are thus introducing into our national political life a new and dangerous spirit, one that is wholly at variance with our traditions and ideals and subversive of our system of government. American citizenship and American democracy are thus challenged and menaced. We protest against this organized campaign of prejudice and hatred, not only because of its manifest injustice to those against whom it is directed, but also and especially, because we are convinced that it is wholly incompatible with loyal and intelligent American citizenship. The logical outcome of the success of such a campaign must necessarily be the division of our citizens along racial and religious lines, and ultimately, the introduction of religious tests and qualifications to determine citizen-ship.

The loyalty and patriotism of our fellow-citizens of the Jewish faith is equal to that of any part of our people, and requires no defense at our hands. From the foundation of this Republic down to the World War, men and women of Jewish ancestry and faith have taken an honorable part in building up this great nation and maintaining its prestige and honor among the nations of the world. There is not the slightest justification, therefore, for a campaign of anti-Semitism in this country.

Anti-Semitism is almost invariably associated with lawlessness and with brutality and injustice. It is also invariably found closely inter-twined with other sinister forces, particularly those which corrupt, reactionary and oppressive.

We believe it should not be left to men and women of Jewish faith to fight this evil, but that it is in a very special sense the duty of citizens who are not Jews by ancestry or faith. We therefore make earnest protest against this vicious propaganda, and call upon our fellow-citizens of Gentile birth and Christian faith to unite their efforts to ours, to the end that it may be crushed. In particular, we call upon those who are molders of public opinion—the clergy and ministers of all Christian churches, publicists, teachers, editors and statesmen—to strike at his un-American and un-Christian agitation.

The undersigned:

Woodrow Wilson
William Howard Taft
Wm. Cardinal O'Connell
Lyman Abbott
Jane Addams
John S. Agar
Newton D. Baker
Ray Stannard Baker
James M. Beck

Charles A. Beard
Bernard I. Bell
Arthur E. Bestor
Albert J. Beveridge
Mabel T. Boardman
Evangeline Booth
Benjamin Brewster
Chauncey B. Brewster
Jeffrey R. Brackett

Horace J. Bridges
Henry Bruere
William Jennings Bryan
Nicholas Murray Butler
Bainbridge Colby
Alice B. Coleman
George W. Coleman
Paul D. Cravath
George Creel

Samuel Chord Crothers
Olive Tilford Dargan
R. Fulton Cutting
Clarence Darrow
James R. Day
Henry S. Dennison
W.E.B. Dubois
James Duncan
Robert Erskine Ely
Charles P. Fagnani
W.H.P. Fawnce
Dorothy Canfield Fisher
Irving Fisher
John Ford
Raymond B. Fosdick
Robert Frost
H. A. Garfield
James R. Garfield
Lindley M. Garrison
John Palmer Gavit
Herbert Adams Gibbons
Charles Dana Gibson
Franklin H. Giddings
Martin H. Glynn
George Gray
Edward Everett Hale
James Hartness
Patrick J. Hayes
John Grier Hibbon
Jesse H. Holmes
John Haynes Holmes
Hamilton Holt

Ernest Martin Hopkins
Frederic C. Howe
Henry C. Idle
Inez Haynes Irwin
Will Irwin
George R. James
David Starr Jordan
William W. Keen
Paul U. Kellogg
William Sergeant Kendall
George Kennan
Henry Churchill King
Darwin P. Kingsley
W. P. Ladd
Ira Landrith
Franklin K. Lane
Robert Lansing
Julia C. Lathrop
Ben B. Lindsley
Charles H. Levermore
Frederick Lynch
Edwin Markham
Mrs. Edwin Markham
Daniel Gregory Mason
Joseph Ernest McAfee
J. F. McElwain
Raymond McFarland
E. T. Meredith
James F. Minturn
John Moody
William Fellows Morgan
Charles Clayton Morrison

Philip Stafford Moxom
Joseph Fort Newton
D. J. O'Connell
Mary Boyle O'Reilly
George Wharton Pepper
Louis F. Post
Theodore Roosevelt
Charles Edward Russell
Jacob Gould Schurman
Vida D. Scudder
Samuel Seabury
Thomas J. Shahan
Charles M. Sheldon
Edwin E. Slosson
Preston Slosson
Robert E. Speer
Charles Stelzle
Paul Moore Strayer
Marion Talbot
Ida M. Tarbell
Harry F. Ward
Everett P. Wheller
Gaylord S. White
George W. Wickersham
Charles David Williams
Carles Zueblin
John Spargo

Editor's note: *The virulently anti-Semitic and wholly fictitious "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," which originated in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century, found its way to America during the "First Red Scare," of 1917-20. Some publications replaced the Jews with communists in their editions, conflating Judaism and communism, and villainizing American Jews, especially of Eastern European origin. Violence and harsh discrimination were common in our land. The Protocols were widely read in military and diplomatic circles and gave rise to the State Department's tilt toward the Arab world and anti-Zionism - a tilt that lasted for a century. John Spargo was one of the founders of the American socialist and progressive movements. He eventually broke with the left and became a Republican and outspoken anti-communist. You can identify all the signers and find the full text of the Times' article, as well as separate letters by the President and clergy at:*

<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F10F10F93D5D14738DDDAE0994D9405B818EF1D3>