

native Fascist in the land. "Present Day Government" was a preposterous tale of "the Jewish plan of a World State," a plan hatched, according to McFadden, by one Israel Moses Sieff, "an Israelite, the director of a chain-store enterprise in England." His was no ordinary chain-store, either; it "handles almost exclusively imports from Soviet Russia. . . ." The agents of Sieff in the United States, the men responsible for engineering the overthrow of the government and of bringing the United States into the Jewish-dominated world system, were, he said, certain members of the Brain Trust. Nor did he shrink from naming names. His list included Felix Frankfurter, Raymond Moley, Rexford Tugwell, Adolf A. Berle, Jr., and "the mysterious Mordecai Ezekiel"—men who were, according to McFadden, "all members of this particular group who are carrying out a world plan."<sup>2</sup>

In the 1930's, McFadden was widely quoted and copies of his radio speech were circulated by demagogues, by anti-Semites and race-baiters, by the fringes of varying degrees of lunacy and, unfortunately, by far too many witless people who knew no better. Even in the 1940's, more than a decade later, copies of McFadden's speech were being reproduced and circulated, fifty for one dollar, by the Crusading Mothers of Pennsylvania. "Present Day Government" had now become "The New Deal Plot to Overthrow Our Constitutional Form of Government." It was perhaps pointless to explain to the Mothers that no dire fate had yet befallen the land or that most of the men whom McFadden had accused ("It is the duty of Congress to seek them out and try them for treason," the Mothers asserted) were no longer in government.<sup>3</sup>

McFadden was adding to anti-Semitism the dignity of the United States Congress, a dignity it did not deserve. But anti-Semitism, perhaps more virulent and more vicious than any time before or since, had lots of friends. The subtle kind of anti-Semitism that was usually associated with country club membership or admission to eastern medical schools, or with a thousand other mean and petty manifestations of racial bias, became in the 1930's an open assault upon Jews (with many of the excesses and the pseudoscientific mumbo-jumbo of the Nazis), and through them upon Roosevelt and the New Deal. The strategic objective of the campaign was to try to convince the unwary that Roosevelt was a Jew, that the New Deal was a Jewish trick contrived to betray the United States into the clutches of international conspirators who were plotting a world state under Jewish domination.

## II

Early in September, 1934, the amiable George Deatherage of St. Albans, West Virginia, a successful engineer-turned-crusader and head of the Knights of the White Camellia (an organization which used the swastika

for its insignia), wrote to President Roosevelt. There was a time, he said, when he was proud that his son had Delano blood in his veins; but not any more. "I want to assure you," he told the President, "that I am going to take the first opportunity I can to kick it out of him." Deatherage's displeasure and his improbable vow regarding his son were occasioned by his discovery that the Delanos were Jews.<sup>4</sup>

The claim that Roosevelt was a Jew seemed to have started from a genealogical chart, allegedly prepared at the Carnegie Institution in Washington, which first appeared as an Associated Press dispatch in the Tucson *Daily Citizen* on March 7, 1934. This at least was the account given by the Reverend Gerald B. Winrod of Wichita, Kansas. Winrod (the "Jayhawk Nazi" as he was often called), a sometime preacher, an unsuccessful candidate for the Senate in the 1938 Republican primary, and publisher of *The Defender* (a monthly magazine with an unconfirmed circulation of 100,000), was able to draw a number of interesting conclusions from the Roosevelt genealogy. "From the viewpoint of eugenics," wrote Winrod, "it explains his [Roosevelt's] natural bent toward radicalism . . . and proves unmistakably, that the Roosevelt Administration offers a biological, as well as political problem."<sup>5</sup>

What the genealogy seemed to prove was that the Roosevelt family had derived originally from the Rossocampo family, exiled from Spain in 1620. Seeking asylum in the Germanies, in Holland and other countries the family adopted a number of variations on the original family name, variations like Rosenberg, Rosenbaum, Rosenblum, Rosenthal, and Rosenvelt. The President was a direct descendant of Claes Martenssen van Roosevelt (or Rosenvelt, depending on who was telling it) who came to the New World, to New Amsterdam, in 1649. In an attempt to clear up the confusion, the *Jewish Chronicle* of Detroit in March, 1935, asked Roosevelt about his ancestry. The President, in his reply (widely quoted, in *The New York Times* and elsewhere), answered quite candidly that "in the distant past they [Roosevelt's ancestors] may have been Jews. All I know about the origin of the Roosevelt family is that they are apparently descended from Claes Martenssen van Roosevelt."<sup>6</sup>

On the Delano side of the family, Roosevelt was also Jewish because, it was claimed, the Delanos were descendants of an Italian-Spanish Jewish family, the Dilanos (Dilans, Dillanos), who eventually arrived in New Amsterdam via Brazil. Since there was now what many regarded as unimpeachable evidence that Roosevelt was descended from Jews on both sides of the family this made Roosevelt "from the standpoint of Jewish Heredity Law AS GOOD A JEW AS BERNARD M. BARUCH," according to one writer.<sup>7</sup>

Most of Roosevelt's critics on the extreme right played the Jewish angle to the hilt, not the least being Robert Edward Edmondson. Born in Ohio of an old Virginian family, Edmondson was sixty-two years old and modestly successful in the public relations and economic consulting