

# THE BROTHERS FORD

## capitalists with a conscience

**T**HE RUSSIAN DELEGATE, Georgy Arkadiev, watched young Henry Ford II enter the UN committee room with the predatory satisfaction of the Yankees about to devour the Washington Senators. This was an unexpected and delightful opportunity to the Russian. Ford, who was filling in for another American delegate, was green and inexperienced; he had yet to make his maiden speech at the UN, and thought he was merely filling the seat for a routine meeting.

But the Russians had other plans. Ever since the Soviet delegation had learned that Henry Ford II had rather reluctantly accepted an appointment as alternate United States delegate to the UN, they had been waiting for an opportune moment to embarrass him. To the Soviets, Ford symbolized all the evils of American capitalism.

Arkadiev asked for the floor. Instead of the perfunctory speech the other delegates were expecting, he began a vituperative attack on the United States. Soon he was focusing his fire on capitalism, the impending economic collapse of the U. S., the automotive industry, and even the Ford Foundation. Ford, then just 35, sat next to him, listening impassively. After 40 minutes of scathing attack, the Russian sat down, enveloped in the embarrassed silence.

Ford whispered to the State Department advisor beside him: "I suppose I'd better answer him?"

"Yes," he was told, "you'd better."

Henry had been scratching notes on the back of an envelope. He asked for the floor and for a half-hour effectively rebutted every point the Russian had made—speaking mildly but bluntly in the slight nasal tone he has since discarded. He said many things a diplomat would not say. He was straightforward and completely disarming; and when he finished, some of the other committee members and the gallery applauded, an almost unheard-of-occurrence.

Later, skittering through the rain-drenched dusk of a New York November evening, this symbol of American capitalism couldn't find a cab and had to walk several blocks before he finally cornered one. As he hopped inside, fresh from his Russian conquest, he told his companion worriedly: "I'm going to catch it from my mother-in-law; I'm an hour late for Thanksgiving dinner."

This is the new captain of the Ford empire—a fascinating amalgam of Midwestern folksiness and international intellectualism; of hardheaded business administration and farsighted idealism. With his two younger broth-

ers, Benson and William, Henry Ford II has reasserted the Ford dynasty, but in a far different sense than his famous grandfather. Henry II, who had to grow into the job of president, and his two brothers symbolize the combination of big-business acumen and social and ideological leadership which America must have to face the challenges of a changing world.

Henry put it to me this way when I talked with him in his spacious modern office atop the new Ford Building in Dearborn, Mich.: "It used to be said that the businessman's primary responsibility was to make a profit. That's still true today, but in a very different sense. The business tycoon is dead. New pressures, new forces are at work, and unless the businessman is alert to them and accepts the responsibilities of industrial citizenship, he'll fail economically

as well as socially. The qualities of a successful businessman—to organize people and things, appraise risks, make decisions, and carry out actions—are now being recognized and exploited for the good of all society."

**N**OWHERE is there a better example of this than among the Fords. In 1957, when the Ford Foundation gave \$260 million to 630 privately endowed colleges and universities, a sizable portion to be used for increasing faculty salaries, the entire nation was made dramatically aware of the desperate need in this area. Only an act of comparable size and suddenness could have produced such impressive results. And only the vast resources available to our large corporations could originate such a program.

"Our educational system," says Benson Ford, who sits on the board

**Henry II, Benson, and William continue building their grandfather's fabulous empire; but they work for social betterment, too.**

**by Joseph N. Bell**



Capitalist and commissar meet as Red boss Anastas Mikoyan tours Ford plant with host Henry Ford.

of trustees of the Ford Foundation, "badly needs jacking up. When the Foundation gave money to raise teaching salaries, it was intended as a pump primer—and that's the way it has worked. It alerted millions of Americans to the need for raising academic salaries at every level."

To which Henry added: "Industry's growing demands on our educational system make direct help not just desirable but almost obligatory. We in business should get together with our local educators and legislators to see what needs to be done and what resources are available for the job. Then we ought to meet those needs."

The Ford brothers don't just talk about these things; they do something about them. And the action is sometimes taken at the risk of retaliation against Ford products or the Ford family. This can sometimes be the un-