

# ADL REPORTS ON ANTI-SEMITISM

By Louis Harap

EACH year the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, a leading Jewish "defense" agency, issues a public report of developments for that year in anti-Semitism and discrimination. This year the report is embodied in *A Measure of Freedom*, by Arnold Forster (Doubleday, \$2.50), who is the ADL national director of civil rights work. The book has received enormous publicity, which is all to the good, so far as it goes. For there is much in the report that is informative and valuable. The report makes more revelations about anti-Semitism and fascists than the ADL has ever done publicly up to now. Yet the conclusions of the report remain as platitudinous and vague as ever.

"The facts put together between the covers of this volume," writes Forster, "stress the unwholesome racial and religious prejudices and undemocratic discriminations in the United States. They are but blemishes which disfigure an otherwise healthy body politic." (p. 211) One would never suspect from this statement that the traditional fabric of American freedom had corroded so seriously.

How then explain both the unprecedented—for the ADL—release of facts, and the reiteration of smug conclusions about "health" of the body politic? For the answer we need to recall that the ADL is financed by the Joint Defense Appeal, combined fund-raising agency of the ADL and the American Jewish Committee. Although the funds are collected from the Jewish community as a whole, control of these agencies is vested tightly in a group of wealthy Jews, whose fear of and concern about anti-Semitism is never urgent or demanding enough to cause them to drop their dread of mass movements against anti-Semitism.

## ***Big Business Support of Fascists***

But the menace of anti-Semitism in the past few years of cold war hysteria has loomed so large that the Jewish masses are not inclined to remain supine before the threat. These agencies can continue to ignore this heightened danger only at the risk of forfeiting influence in the community. And wealthy Jews are a little scared, too. The ADL and the Committee are therefore forced to deal a little more forthrightly with these problems than heretofore. This explains why they have joined the rest of the Jewish community in a well-nigh unanimous opposition to the Mundt bill, which would bring naked fascism close to America. Nevertheless the Forster report stops short of drawing the inevitable conclusions from the developments it records.

In the chapters on the anti-Semitic and fascist hate-mongers the report turns up some information of a kind that has often enough been published before, but never,

so far as I know, by the ADL, although that agency must have far more and perhaps even more startling information in its files. "Money," writes Forster, "is the mainspring of organized anti-Semitism." (p. 80) This is, of course, not a novel idea. It is by now common knowledge that without the millions given to Hitler by German industrialists, nazism would have gotten nowhere. That America, too, has its industrialists who are financial angels and prime movers of pro-fascist movements, is no secret either. What is new is that the ADL should name big business names. Forster reveals that about \$1,000,000 went into the coffers of pro-fascists in 1949, chiefly to Gerald L. K. Smith, Merwin K. Hart, Gerald Winrod, Upton Close, Joseph Kamp, Allen Zoll and Wesley Smith. Among the contributors to or supporters of pro-fascist organizations named by Forster are Charles M. White, president of the Republic Steel Corporation; Frank H. Lee, Jr., owner of Lee Hats in Connecticut; Lamot and Irene du Pont; J. Howard Pew, head of the Sun Oil Company; E. F. Hutton, Wall Street broker; De Witt Wallace, publisher of *Reader's Digest*; William Buckley, of Pantepec Oil of Caracas, Venezuela; George Montgomery, of the Wall Street law firm of Couderd Brothers; and Robert Donner, retired steel tycoon.

This list gives only an inkling of the extent to which big business supports pro-fascist movements. Among the contributors to Merwin K. Hart's pro-fascist National Economic Council cited by Forster were American Car and Foundry Company, American Rolling Mill, Armstrong Cork, Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, Sears Roebuck, Union Carbide and Carbon Company and Remington Rand. But even this peep into the tie-up of big business with American fascism, gives some idea where the danger to American democracy and the Jews stems, although Forster carefully refrains from drawing any conclusions from the facts he reveals.

## ***Discrimination Surveyed***

Almost half of the book is taken up with surveys of attitudes regarding anti-Semitism and discrimination conducted under ADL auspices and by others. The prevalence of anti-Semitic attitudes among the general population is studied. Several surveys of social ostracism by the majority against minorities reveals, as is indeed obvious, that, with certain regional differences, the Negroes are the most oppressed group, while the Jews are less discriminated against than Chinese, Mexicans and Filipinos.

The quota system in colleges and professional schools is the subject of several studies which only give precision to

the generally known facts about the spread of this practice. The book takes a firm stand against "separate-but-equal" education for Negroes, that is, opposes acceptance of the view that Negroes should be provided with "equal" facilities in education, but in segregated schools.

A chapter is devoted to studies of anti-Semitism among college students, both freshmen and seniors. College students were found to be less anti-Semitic than the general adult population. On the other hand, the surveys seem to indicate that no appreciable decline in anti-Semitism occurs after four years, leading to the conclusion that college education itself has no definite influence in decreasing anti-Semitism. A chapter on legislative efforts in 1949 to decrease discrimination in all fields shows a pretty dismal record on the whole, despite the report's complacent view that "the over-all picture was heartening." (p. 120)

A significant fact emerged from this mass of surveys of discrimination and group hatred—the paucity of studies on discrimination in employment. It is true, as Forster remarks, that "Discrimination in employment is, in a sense, the most serious aspect of religious and racial intolerance." (p. 198) Equal right to a job is the basic form of freedom and from it flow enormous consequences for the social, political and economic structure of a society. But, as Forster notes, there is "surprisingly little survey data that bears" (p. 106) on the attitudes of people toward job discrimination. Yet of the hundred pages devoted to surveys in the ADL report, only one page is occupied with discrimination in employment. In other words, despite Forster's verbal awareness of the cardinal importance of this type of discrimination, the ADL like other survey groups, has allocated practically no funds for a study of this question. Why not? Is it because the middle class approach to problems naturally cuts off basic consideration of questions relating to labor? Is it because study of discrimination in employment would step on the toes of the big business elements of which the ADL is itself a part?

### ***Hostility to Mass Action***

But the ADL approach in this report has even more serious weakness. There is no attempt to analyze the nature of anti-Semitism, anti-Negroism, discrimination or minority oppression generally. In Carey McWilliams' review in this magazine in July 1949 of the ADL report for 1948, he relevantly remarks: "the materials in this volume are presented in much the manner that an official of the weather bureau would announce certain facts. . . . The only way materials of this sort could possibly have any meaning would be against some stated theoretical background; some statement, that is, of the nature of the problem. . . . I find it difficult to believe that the ADL is utterly without a point of view about the problem which is its sole reason for being; but if such a point of view exists, it is not apparent in this volume." The same could be said about this year's report, which does not analyze the problem.

Scrutiny of the report from the background of actual

events in the past year confirms what is generally known about the techniques of the ADL. Besides collecting facts about fascist and anti-Semitic movements in the United States—which facts are by design certainly not exploited to a hundredth degree of their effective possibilities in the struggle against anti-Semitism and fascism—the ADL concentrates on promotion of legislative and court action on discrimination—without mobilization of mass support. Like that other big business agency for "defense" of the Jewish people, the American Jewish Committee, the ADL opposes mass action and mass pressure to combat minority oppression. Dependence is rather placed on the operations of professional "experts" and of influential individuals. Except where popular pressure is irresistible, as in the case of the great civil rights mobilization in Washington in January, the ADL and the American Jewish Committee are among the most effective agents in Jewish life for suppressing mass action against corrosive anti-democratic practices of minority oppression and discrimination. Forster's report ignores mass actions to this end.

For instance, in the course of his discussion of the klan, Forster notices in passing that the klan in New Jersey burned a cross after a meeting of "a group of local citizens who had assembled to protest the death sentence of the 'Trenton Six'." (p. 20) And that is all. No mention of the fact that this was a "Northern Scottsboro" case or that a tremendous mass movement sparked by the Civil Rights Congress has thus far saved the lives of the six and exposed one of the most shameless government frame-ups of Negroes in American history. Another instance: in his discussion of the important case of anti-Negro discrimination in the tax-exempt Stuyvesant Town housing development (pp. 205-6), Forster limits himself to notice of the court action brought by several Negro veterans. No mention of the great mass campaign to break down discrimination, no mention of the support given to this movement by Stuyvesant Town residents, no mention of the dramatic and courageous action of Town residents in having the Negro family, the Hendrixes, as long-term guests. This omission is quite deliberate. The ADL does its utmost to prevent *the people* from participating in the fight against minority oppression and discrimination. Nowhere in the whole discussion of the fight against discrimination of various kinds is mention made of the essential role played by mass pressure in forcing legislation against discrimination.

### ***What Is the Source?***

The gravest defect of the report, however, is its total failure to locate the source of the greatest threat in the past year to the Jews, the Negroes, all minorities and to democracy itself. I refer to the heightened dangers arising from the cold war. Whatever one may believe about the cold war, the facts are clear. What we have seen in the United States in the past few years is a repeat performance of the nazi strategy of exploiting the anti-communist big lie to befuddle the people into an acceptance of tyranny.

Has the ADL learned nothing from the nazi nightmare? The report appears unaware of the fact that the wild red-baiting practiced by the anti-Semites and fascists so roundly condemned in the book, is hardly distinguishable from the red scare that has been carefully nurtured by the government and all the organs of communication. In other words, America in 1949 was ominously close to Germany in 1932. One would never suspect this from the report.

A qualitative change in the fascist threat occurred in 1949, hence the greater frankness of the ADL. It is significant that the ADL *press release* of the book states that "the tense international situation and the cold war have helped to create fears and racial tensions that on several occasions last year flared into violence, the report declares." Yet the report never refers to the "cold war" as such or discusses the relation of the cold war to anti-Semitism. Instead, vague terms like "an unwholesome approach" by Americans to "the communist menace" are used without further comment. The actual closeness of the technique of the hate-mongers to the exploitation of red hysteria in respectable and governmental quarters is not even intimated.

"The 'Peekskill incidents' and the November 'Chicago riots'," says the report, "meaningfully reflected the tensions which existed in 1949." (p. 89) What were these "tensions?" How were they reflected in respectable and governmental circles? What was their source? The report does not say. More than this, the report flouts the evidence of collusion by police and officials in these affairs, as has been noted by all observers, including the American Civil Liberties Union and the American Jewish Congress. Nor does the report take any notice whatever of the grave impairment of constitutional guarantees in the past year, which has received Supreme Court sanction in recent weeks. The reason for this silence is plain: the ADL is unwilling to fight for the Jewish people, if this means taking issue with the cold war-mongers. The campaign to impose a police state on America and the role of the Truman administration seem to be outside the scope of the ADL. Instead, Truman's hypocritical, lavish promises on civil rights legislation without any intention or effort to fulfill them receives approbation. "Congress' failure to enact any civil rights legislation," says the report, "stands in sharp contrast to the earnest pleas of President Truman." (p. 192)

### ***Connection With the Cold War***

It is the responsibility of a Jewish defense agency to grasp and expose the connection of the cold war anti-communist campaign and the propaganda of the anti-Semites and fascists. But the ADL experts are silent on this crucial matter. The connection is implicit in the report itself. Forster gives a long description of the activities of Upton Close, who has made the ADL one of his red-baiting targets. Last year Close issued a pamphlet on *The Anti-Defamation League and its Uses in World Communism*. This alone should give the ADL the clue to the connection between the anti-communist incitement of the cold war and

that of the fascist crackpots. Let us see how this connection can be established with regard to the crackpots discussed by Forster. Senator Joseph McCarthy inserted in the *Congressional Record* of April 13, a two page piece by Upton Close, McCarthy was also one of six senators who helped in the "concerted drive in 1949 to rally sentiment for the release from jail of William Dudley Pelley." (p. 84) McCarthy is also connected with Joseph P. Kamp, another fascist given extended treatment in the report. Kamp is acting chairman of the Constitutional Educational League, which gets "a substantial part of its income from 'subsidies' and contributions which Kamp promotes from large industrial organizations and wealthy individuals interested in his anti-labor, anti-democratic propaganda." (p. 49) It has been proved that McCarthy derived the main line of his attack on Owen Lattimore from a pamphlet by Kamp (see documentation in the New York *Daily Compass*, April 7, 1950). The connection with the cold war could not be any clearer.

But some persons may protest that McCarthy and his like are disapproved and condemned by the more respectable cold war advocates. The difference is only one of degree and slickness, perhaps. President Truman, in his speech of April 24, assured the nation that his administration was doing a job on the communists more effectively than McCarthy. But there is no essential difference between McCarthy and Truman on the main point, that is, exploitation of the red hysteria to expedite the coming of a police state and atomic war. The cold war as a whole is a continuation of the nazi enterprise in the post-war period.

The evidence of the cold war trend to destroy democracy is just as conclusive on the international scene and should be especially clear to a Jewish organization whose purpose is defense. The deliberate revival of fascism in Germany as a calculated cold war policy is a scandal that is too obvious to be denied anywhere—but there is no attention paid to this terrifying fact in the ADL report. The support of fascist and extreme reactionary forces by the Truman administration everywhere—in Greece, in China, in Indo-China in South America, in Europe—all over the world—leaves no doubt as to the anti-democratic character of the cold war. Yet the ADL report is silent on these developments.

Thus, despite useful information contained in the ADL report, it has failed utterly to meet the most dangerous threat to democracy and the Jewish people. The ADL has learned little from the nazi scourge. That event should have taught us that only uncompromising resistance to the red-baiting big lie and its exploitation to kill democracy will save the Jewish people from the annihilation that Hitler could not fully carry out.

It is possible to exert pressure on the ADL to change its ostrich-like attitude. The fact that the ADL and the American Jewish Committee have come out against the Mundt bill shows this to be feasible. The Jewish community, and particularly the membership of B'nai B'rith, should organize to let the ADL know that the real sources of anti-Semitism must be squarely faced, that the technique of the main enemy of democracy and the Jews is the red-baiting hysteria.