

Socialists and the Fight Against Anti-Semitism

An Answer to the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League By Peter Seidman



Introduction 3

Open Letter to the Anti-Defamation League 3

Does Anti-Zionism Equal Anti-Semitism? An Answer to the Anti-Defamation League 6

The Real Story of the Fight to Save European Refugees from Hitler's Terror 14

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INTRODUCTION

In November 1972 the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League (ADL) opened an attack on left opponents of Zionism. Singling out the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) for its outspoken defense of the Palestine liberation movement during the 1972 election campaign, the ADL charged that the SWP had "crossed the line into outright anti-Semitism." The material in this pamphlet is an answer to the ADL. The first selection is a letter sent to the ADL by Linda Jenness and Andrew Pulley, SWP presidential and vice-presidential candidates in 1972, demanding a public retraction of the ADL's slanderous charges.

OPEN LETTER TO THE ADL

December 6, 1972

Mr. Arnold Forster
General Counsel
Anti-Defamation League
315 Lexington Ave.
New York, N. Y. 10016

Dear Mr. Forster,

In a report to your fifty-ninth annual meeting, Lawrence Peirez, chairman of your "fact-finding" committee, charged that the positions of the Socialist Workers Party—especially as expressed in our 1972 presidential campaign—have "crossed the line into outright anti-Semitism."

This allegation is a slander, and we demand that you publicly retract it.

Anyone the least bit familiar with our election campaign and the views and record of the Socialist Workers Party knows that the SWP has always been a staunch opponent of anti-Semitism and of racism and bigotry of any kind. We have

championed struggles against anti-Semitism wherever they have appeared—from the United States to the Soviet Union. Our European co-thinkers were in the forefront of the struggle against the anti-Semitic terror of Nazism. Many of them perished in Hitler's death camps. In this country before World War II the SWP carried out a campaign demanding that U. S. borders be opened to Jewish refugees from Nazism.

In the report referred to above, Lawrence Peirez says that the SWP calls for "the outright destruction of Israel," and therefore is anti-Semitic. It is true we see the elimination of the Zionist state of Israel as necessary. But opposition to a specifically "Jewish" state in Palestine cannot be equated with anti-Semitism. Such an equation wrongly identifies the interests of Jews around the world with Israel and Zionism. We believe it is *your* identification of Zionist policies with the Jewish people that helps to fuel anti-Semitism today.

The incorrectness of equating anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism can be more clearly seen by considering the racist, settler regimes of South Africa or Rhodesia. Opposition to the existence of the white-supremacist regimes that usurped power in those countries, and made the black Africans second-class citizens in their own land, obviously cannot be equated with racism against the Dutch or British settlers who live there.

We oppose the state of Israel because it took over the territory of another people, the Palestinian Arabs, and forced them into a life as refugees or as second-class citizens. This was a great wrong perpetrated against the Palestinians, and their resistance struggle is not based on anti-Semitism but is a fight for justice, human dignity, and self-determination.

The Socialist Workers Party supports the Palestinians' struggle to regain their homeland and to establish a democratic, secular Palestine, where Jews and Arabs could live together with equality and religious freedom. We believe that it is in the interests of Jews everywhere, including in Israel, to support this struggle.

Because of the fundamental injustice involved in the creation of Israel, the Israeli state can only maintain itself through allying with the United States and other reactionary imperialist powers against the Arab peoples. To sustain itself, Israel has created a militaristic, undemocratic regime engaging in expansionist aggression against Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

Here in the United States the charge of anti-Semitism has been falsely leveled against Black people and Puerto Ricans when they fight for control of the schools in their communities or for jobs in proportion to their numbers. Thus your organi-

zation charges that anti-Semitism also comes "from extremist segments of other minority groups."

When you side in this way with the fascist-like Jewish Defense League and racists like Newark Assemblyman Anthony Imperiale to oppose the struggles of the Puerto Rican and Black communities—whose interests are you defending? When you brand leaders of these struggles, such as Luis Fuentes, as anti-Semites, you are siding with white racists in the oppression of another people. The anti-Semitic legions of American fascism will come from the ranks of these people whom you are objectively making your allies today.

The danger to the Jewish people does not come from the Socialist Workers Party and the Black and Puerto Rican liberation struggles. The threat to Jews comes from the racist, imperialist government of the U. S. — a government capable of the genocidal war crimes against the people of Vietnam, a government that shut its borders to Jews fleeing Nazi terror, and a government that supports Zionist Israel.

Increasingly, young Jews around the world are coming to see that the only hope for the Jewish people is to side with struggles against *all* forms of racist oppression and exploitation around the world—to side with the struggles against racism in this country, and to side with the struggle of the Palestinian Arabs against the state of Israel and its imperialist backers, for a democratic, secular Palestine.

You identify the welfare of the Jewish people with Zionism and with the racist, militarist, settler-colonial state of Israel. The Socialist Workers Party believes that the ideology of Zionism disarms the Jewish people in the fight against anti-Semitism. We identify the welfare of the Jewish people with support to the just anti-imperialist struggles of the Arab peoples. Do not try to disguise your disagreement with us by using the slanderous charge of anti-Semitism. We repeat our demand that you retract this slander, that you do it publicly and immediately.

Sincerely,

Linda Jenness

Andrew Pulley

Socialist Workers Party candidates for president and vice-president in 1972

DOES ANTI-ZIONISM EQUAL ANTI-SEMITISM? ANSWER TO THE ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE

On December 21, 1972, two weeks after the Jenness-Pulley open letter was sent, sixty people picketed the offices of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) to publicize their demand that the ADL retract its charge that the Socialist Workers Party is "anti-Semitic."

A delegation headed by Linda Jenness, SWP 1972 presidential candidate, met with ADL officials and presented them with an open letter signed by Professor Noam Chomsky, writer Murray Kempton, literary critic Dwight MacDonald, Rabbi A. Bruce Goldman, and others who supported this demand.

The letter said, "while we do not necessarily agree with the program and policies of the Socialist Workers Party, we believe that their opposition to Zionism cannot in any way be equated with anti-Semitism.

"We respect the right of the Socialist Workers Party and others to express their opinions about the situation in the Middle East without being unjustly attacked in this manner."

The ADL officials told Jenness that they would not retract their charges. They issued a press statement reaffirming their characterization of the SWP as anti-Semitic.

The ADL representatives also presented Jenness with a "fact sheet" entitled "Danger on the Left," which they claimed documented their charges that the SWP was anti-Semitic.

Zionism no defense for the Jewish people

Presumably, this document represents the best effort of the ADL to prove its charges against the Socialist Workers Party. However, "Danger on the Left" not only fails to do so but also exposes the threat Zionism poses to Jewish people around the world.

This "fact sheet" contains no evidence of SWP statements or actions defaming the Jewish people, or supporting their oppression. No such evidence exists. The sole basis for the "anti-Semitic" charge is the fact that the SWP is opposed to Zionism.

The Socialist Workers Party has always made clear the dis-

inction between its opposition to Zionism, which declares that the Jewish people all over the globe have a right to establish and maintain an exclusively Jewish state in Palestine, and its support to the legitimate struggle of Jews, and of all oppressed peoples, against any form of racism and racial oppression.

The ADL and other Zionist groups maintain that the present state of Israel is the only defense Jews have against anti-Semitism. The ADL repeats this Zionist argument in "Danger on the Left": "In the wake of the Nazi Holocaust, the question asked by a whole people, if not by the whole world—Where are the persecuted to go?—was answered in the birth of the long-promised Jewish state. Wherever they may be today, Jews overwhelmingly believe that, whatever legitimate controversies may exist in the Middle East and whatever the conflicting viewpoints between Israeli and Arab, Israel's existence as a sovereign state is absolutely non-negotiable." Therefore, the ADL says, "Manifestos and propaganda calling for the destruction or the dissolution of the Jewish state are . . . direct assaults against world Jewry and, along with activities supporting those sworn to destroy Israel, constitute the ultimate anti-Semitism."

The crux of the ADL argument is that because Jews have been the victim of oppression, and because the Zionist movement believes that the only defense against that oppression is to be found in the state of Israel, anyone who disagrees with this policy is an anti-Semite and a threat to world Jewry.

However, the fact that more than a million and a half Palestinians have been driven from their homes and land in order to clear the way for this Israeli "haven" for the Jewish people creates some contradictions for the Zionists. For if in fact the very establishment of the state of Israel required the expulsion and exile of another nation, there are surely grounds to oppose Zionism without being anti-Semitic.

How can safe refuge be found in a state that must militarily conquer a nation of two and a half million people, occupy its land, and be in endless war with the refugees it has created, and with all the surrounding nations? How can Israel be a "haven" for the Jews when it is totally dependent for its survival on aid from U. S. imperialism, which is an enemy of the oppressed around the world?

How can one people find security and protection from racism in a state that breeds racism against the Palestinians in order to justify its occupation of their homeland? How can Jewish people find peace in a state that must create a militarist society to maintain the expulsion of the Palestinians from their own country?

The ADL quotes the 1971 SWP resolution on the Middle East, which, after explaining these contradictions of Zionism, concludes: "We explain to the Israeli Jews, as we have in the past, that their future lies only in aligning themselves with the Palestinian and general Arab liberation movements, wholeheartedly and without any reservation whatsoever. It will be to the extent that they do this that they can escape from the trap that Zionism and imperialism have set for them in the Mideast."

This statement constitutes for the ADL, "The ultimately anti-Semitic impact of the SWP propaganda," because of "its insistence that the Jewish people surrender their security and their entire future to the Arab guerrillas 'without any reservation whatsoever.'"

In order to resolve their contradictions, the Zionists have had to explain the struggle of the Palestinians to regain their land as motivated by "anti-Semitism." Therefore, according to this logic, anyone who supports the self-determination of the Palestinian people is anti-Semitic. By this reasoning, we are asked to believe that the twenty-five-year struggle of the Palestinians for the right to control their own future is in reality simply an expression of anti-Semitic rage that must equal or exceed the worst excesses of Hitlerism.

How ADL distorts Palestinian struggle

The real basis of the Palestinian liberation struggle lies not in anti-Semitism but in opposition to the Zionist policies that led to the creation of Israel at the expense of the Arab inhabitants of Palestine.

It is true that because the Zionists carried out their crimes in the name of "the Jewish people," it has been possible for reactionary forces in the Middle East to use the anti-Zionist feelings of Palestinians as a base for anti-Semitic campaigns. But this is not the basic issue in the fight against the state of Israel, nor are the Palestinian liberation fighters motivated by anti-Semitism.

The ADL deliberately misquotes the statements of Palestinians in order to "prove" its charge that they are anti-Semitic. For example, the "fact sheet" quotes from *The Militant* of October 9, 1970, a passage from a document entitled "Towards a Democratic State in Palestine," issued by Al Fateh, a Palestinian liberation organization. The ADL describes this as a "broad attack on the Jews of all countries," and prints the passage as follows: "Jews contributed men, money and influence to make Israel a reality and to perpetuate the crimes committed against the Palestinians. The people of the Book . . . changed roles

from oppressed to oppressor." The ADL claims that this quote shows, in a "glaringly apparent" way, "disdain for the Jewish people."

What did the Al Fateh resolution really say? First of all, the whole point of the resolution was to define what was meant by the call for a democratic and secular Palestine—where an end to Zionist exclusivism would mean not that the "Jews would be driven into the sea" but that peoples regardless of their religion or culture would live peacefully as equals.

Second, the document noted the growing number of Jews who had allied themselves with the Palestinians in support of these views. And third, the particular passage selectively quoted by the ADL revealed the very real sensitivity to the condition of the Jews expressed by Al Fateh in its resolution.

Here is how the resolution appeared in *The Militant*: "Jews contributed men, money and influence to make Israel a reality and to perpetuate the crimes committed against the Palestinians. The people of the Book, the men of light, the victims of Russian pogroms, of Nazi genocide, of Dachau and other Polish concentration camps shut their eyes and ears in Palestine and changed roles from oppressed to oppressor. This is THE Jewish dilemma of modern times."

Far from "disdain," this document reveals that genuine fighters against oppression challenge injustice of every kind. In their resolutions, the ADL and other Zionist organizations have shown no such sensitivity to the plight of the people Israel oppresses. It is strong testimony to the liberating and humanitarian thrust of the Arab revolution that it is the oppressed, from the despair of their refugee camps, who seek to define the moral dilemma of their oppressors.

Another "proof" the ADL offers for its charge of anti-Semitism against the SWP is the editorial that appeared in *The Militant* on September 15, 1972, after the death of eleven Israeli athletes kidnapped by members of Black September, a Palestinian organization. The ADL quotes this passage from the editorial: "The deaths of eleven Israeli participants in the Olympics on September 5 brought forth a hypocritical uproar of indignation from government officials and news media in capitalist countries around the world."

The ADL then proceeds to attack *The Militant* because "there was no uproar of indignation whatsoever from *The Militant*, which criticized the murderous outrage merely as being 'ineffective' and a 'diversion.' The SWP paper added that the purpose of the world's outcry had been 'to make the criminal look like the victim'—thus laying the blame for the mas-

sacre on the corpses of the murdered Jews while blaming the Arab terrorists only for a mistake in tactics."

But this is a lie. *The Militant* did not place the blame for the massacre on the eleven Israeli victims. Rather, the editorial blamed the Zionist state of Israel: "The entire publicity campaign is designed by the capitalist rulers to bolster the image cultivated by Israel as a small, defenseless country at the mercy of the Arab people. The reality is the opposite."

"The state of Israel—backed to the hilt by U. S. military might—is based upon the brutal suppression of three million Palestinian Arabs. The Israeli government expelled hundreds of thousands of Arabs from their homeland, expropriated their land and property, and condemned them to miserable lives in refugee camps. The Israeli state's wars of aggression have cost the lives of many thousands of Arab civilians. The 'humanitarian' Israeli state tortures Arab liberation fighters that it captures, uses napalm against Arab civilians, and destroys entire villages as retribution for acts of resistance by Palestinian liberation fighters."

"Such Israeli atrocities against the Arab people do not produce headlines or condemnations from capitalist government officials and politicians."

In fact, as long as the Zionist state exists, the people of Israel will face Munich-like dangers or worse—because the state of Israel stands in the way of liberation for an entire oppressed nation. This is precisely why revolutionists oppose Zionism as any kind of defense for the Jewish people.

The capitalist press did not record its outrage at Munich because of its concern for the Jewish people—no, the headlines were aimed *against* the Arab revolution. The enormous publicity given the killings by the media cannot be explained simply because they occurred dramatically at the Olympics. On October 2, 1968, just ten days prior to the opening of the Olympics in Mexico City, the Mexican government sent 5,000 troops and 300 tanks against a peaceful mass rally protesting political repression in Mexico. At least fifty young people were murdered and 1,000 wounded. The *Militant* editorial pointed out:

"When that happened there was no international protest from capitalist heads of state. Even news coverage on this cold-blooded massacre was suppressed. The U. S. State Department stated only that 'The disturbances in Mexico City affected only a small part of the population and order is now restored.'"

Moreover, when the Olympic games were held in Munich in 1936, capitalist newspapers did not publicize the anti-Semitic

exclusion of Jewish athletes from the German team, nor any of the other anti-Semitic crimes of the Nazi government. Has the capitalist press become more benevolent since then? Or is it not that the advancement of imperialist aims today, unlike in 1936, requires headlines about the death of the Israeli athletes.

Zionism allies Jews with reactionary forces

The Zionists maintain that Israel is a secure and necessary haven for Jews in this world. But they do not confront the socialist argument that Israel, whose existence is based on the conquest of the majority by a minority and which must protect this conquest by reliance on imperialism, represents a dangerous trap for the Jewish people. While revolutionists urge the Jewish people to unite with oppressed Palestinians and other oppressed peoples in struggle against capitalism and imperialism, the Zionists urge reliance on these reactionary forces.

In "Danger on the Left," the ADL says that "political extremism—that of the Left as well as that of the more familiar Right—presents a dire and continuing threat to Jewish security. The extremists' anti-Israel war is only one aspect of the peril they present to the Jewish community. Their fundamental struggle is against the democratic system and those liberal values that have afforded safety and opportunity to an historically beleaguered minority people. The creation of social ferment, including the condoning, the advocacy and even the use of violence, is the tactic of their 'revolution,' and it is in revolutionary violence and assaults against the democratic process that Jewish security has been endangered and in which overt anti-Semitism easily breeds."

The lineup of forces presented by the ADL is clear. On the one hand are Israel, the U. S., and Zionism; and on the other the Palestinian liberation movement, the radical left, and the anti-Semites. The ADL presents this as democracy and tolerance poised against genocide, bigotry, and violence. The ADL even goes so far as to criticize revolutionary opponents of the capitalist state of Israel for ignoring "Israel's socialism and the fact that it is a political democracy born in a war of true national liberation. To recognize these facts would be to contradict the romantic, simplistic image and purpose now assigned to the Arab guerrillas; so Israel becomes an 'imperialist' power and the enemy of the 'people's' war."

The absurdity of this world view is readily apparent. It is precisely the U. S. and its allies, including the Israeli govern-

ment, that today represent genocidal military policies. The U. S. war against the people of Southeast Asia ranks with Hitler's policy of extermination of the Jews of Europe in its unmitigated savagery. The government of Israel has continually supported that war.

Perhaps for this reason, "Danger on the Left" contains a lengthy section aimed at red-baiting and attacking the U. S. antiwar movement. It is ironic that the ADL, which insists that the state of Israel is necessary so that the *Jewish* people will never again suffer as they did at the hands of Hitler's Germany, attacks a movement in this country that is fighting to stop the U. S. policy of genocide in Indochina.

Referring to the SWP and the Young Socialist Alliance, "Danger on the Left" declares: "The Trotskyists have opposed the injection of issues other than Vietnam into the programs of the National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC) and the Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam (SMC), the two anti-war groups they *dominate*. They fear that the injection of other issues would divide their hard-won coalition and lose them the allies and the following they have acquired by *exploiting* the widespread opposition to the Vietnam war. But they regard the lessons, the techniques, and even the loyalties garnered in the anti-war movement as 'transferrable' to other concerns when the time is right. One such concern is the war to destroy Israel.

"The resolution adopted by the Socialist Workers Party at its August, 1971 convention likened the Palestinian guerrillas to *America's enemies in Vietnam*. And it declared:

"The mass anti-war movement has sensitized large numbers of people to the role of U. S. imperialism and to solidarity with the colonial revolution. The expansion of these movements will be important factors in the increasing growth of sentiment in solidarity with the Arab revolution.'" (Emphasis added.)

The charge that the Trotskyists "dominate" the antiwar movement in order to "exploit" antiwar sentiment is utterly false and absurd, as is the claim that the Vietnamese revolutionaries are the "enemies" of the American people. The logical outcome of the ADL's Zionist position is a program of red-baiting the antiwar movement; supporting U. S. aggression in Vietnam; defending the capitalist system, which today is the major source of anti-Semitism in the world; and cheerleading for the military expansion of the Israeli state.

It is no wonder that as more and more young Jews begin to sympathize with the struggles of oppressed people around

the world, they find themselves joining and supporting causes and movements that put them at odds with the international political stance of the Israeli government and the Zionist organizations. This has been the case with Jews who support the antiwar movement, and it has been true of many Jews who have become supporters of the Black liberation struggle in the U. S. and other struggles for self-determination around the world.

And, despite the ADL's attempts to spread "anti-Semitism" slanders, young Jews continue to join the very organizations that the ADL increasingly subjects to attack—the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance.

For further reading

The Jewish Question

A Marxist Interpretation

Abram Leon

Explains the historical roots of anti-Semitism and how in times of social crisis it is used by the capitalists to mobilize reactionary forces against the labor movement and divide working people in face of their common exploiters. \$17.95

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Leon Trotsky

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George Novack

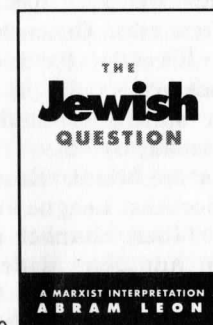
"The salvation of the Jewish people," George Novack explains, "cannot come from reliance on Zionist chauvinism, American imperialism, or Stalinist bureaucratism. They cannot achieve security for themselves or anyone else so long as the root causes of discrimination, racism, and reactionary nationalism continue to exist. Booklet. \$2.50

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Leon Trotsky

Writing in the heat of struggle against the rising fascist movement, the Russian revolutionary leader examines the origin and nature of fascism and advances a working-class strategy to combat it. 479 pp. \$28.95

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THE REAL STORY OF THE FIGHT TO SAVE EUROPEAN REFUGEES FROM HITLER'S TERROR

In November 1972 the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of the B'nai B'rith issued a "fact sheet" entitled "Danger on the Left." This slanderous document attacked the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA), and other organizations that oppose Zionism, as being "anti-Semitic."

The ADL's "fact sheet" has been reprinted in the *Congressional Record*. Articles reporting on its contents have appeared twice in the *New York Times* and also in the "Race Relations Reporter," a newsletter published by the Race Relations Information Center in Nashville, Tennessee.

Recently, the ideas contained in "Danger on the Left" have served as the basis for a new attack on the SWP and YSA, a statement entitled "The YSA, Anti-Semitism & Israel . . ." issued by the "Youth Committee for Peace and Democracy in the Middle East," a group supported by the Young People's Socialist League and the Social Democrats, U. S. A.

Albert Shanker and some other Teachers union leaders have, in addition, made use of the "anti-Semitism" charge to slander Black and Puerto Rican militants struggling to place the schools in their communities under the control of their Black and Puerto Rican majorities.

What motivates the publication of the ADL's document and the wide circulation of its charges against the left at this time is certainly not a sharp rise in anti-Semitism here in the U. S. Nor is it any encouragement of anti-Semitism by the SWP or YSA, or other radicals, as is claimed in "Danger on the Left."

Rather, what underlies the circulation of this "fact sheet" at this time is a desire on the part of the ADL, and those who agree with its views, to slander all opponents of the racist and militarist state of Israel as "anti-Semites." This is an attempt to intimidate the growing numbers of people willing to listen to the ideas of radical opponents of Zionism.

The ADL, the Young People's Socialist League, and other pro-Zionist organizations are committed to the continued existence of the state of Israel. But Israel was founded and can

only continue to exist at the expense of the Palestinian people, who were violently expelled from their land by the Zionists.

The continued oppression of the Palestinians by Israel is only made possible by the support Israel receives from U. S. imperialism. And so, defenders of the Zionist state must also be defenders of the capitalist system upon which it depends.

ADL defends capitalism

As defenders of the capitalist system, it is not surprising that the ADL opposes revolutionaries and other participants in movements for social change whose ideas and actions *challenge* the capitalist system. The ADL believes that Jews should depend on this system for protection from anti-Semitism, both in Israel and here in the U. S. However, instead of arguing out these differences in a rational way, ADL resorts to *slander* and accuses anti-Zionist radicals of being "anti-Semitic."

They say in "Danger on the Left": "Their [anti-Zionist radicals] fundamental struggle is against the democratic system and those liberal values that have afforded safety and opportunity to an historically beleaguered minority people. The creation of social ferment, including the condoning, the advocacy and even the use of violence, is the tactic of their 'revolution,' and it is in revolutionary violence and assaults against the democratic process that Jewish security has been endangered and in which overt anti-Semitism easily breeds."

This portrayal of revolutionists as the source of violence and assaults against the democratic process is false from top to bottom, as is the idea that revolutionary activity and radicalization in society in general are the breeding grounds for overt anti-Semitism.

The policies of the ADL, which urge reliance on the "democratic system" and "liberal values" of capitalism, in fact fatally weaken the ability of Jews to defend themselves from anti-Semitism.

In this article we will take up, as a case study of this terrible weakness of the ADL's analysis, the history of the most horrible anti-Semitic outrages of human history—the barbaric Nazi campaign of genocide against the Jews during the 1930s and 1940s.

Capitalism and anti-Semitism

Following World War I German capitalism faced unparalleled economic crisis. Lacking investment funds and squeezed out of foreign markets, the economy reeled from bouts of intensive inflation to prolonged recession and massive unemployment.

This produced a tremendous radicalization of the powerful and well-organized working class. Ultimately, in order to maintain its profits, a section of the ruling class chose a collision course with the workers aimed at breaking the backs of their unions and political parties.

The mass movement of small shopkeepers, professionals, and other middle class and lumpen elements crazed by the effects of the economic crisis and welded together by Hitler behind his fascist National Socialist Party became a weapon of big capital against the workers movement.

Anti-Semitism, along with anti-Communism, was part of the ideological glue used to hold the Nazi movement together and to direct its fury against the Jews and the workers. In this way, and given the failure of the Communist and Socialist parties of Germany to provide effective leadership in the struggle against it, fascism served to turn the middle class victims of the capitalist crisis against the workers and the Jews, who were also victims, instead of against the real criminals—the capitalist ruling class.

When Hitler became chancellor of the German government in 1933, he transformed the anti-Semitic actions of the Nazi goon squads into official state policy against the 350,000 Jews of Germany. In April 1933, the Nazi regime imposed an official boycott on all Jewish businesses. In that year, Jews began to be excluded from all the professions and many of the cities and towns of Germany.

By September 1935, the Nuremberg Laws were passed, which deprived all German Jews of their citizenship. German Jews were excluded from the 1936 Olympic games in Munich.

The Nazis unleashed a campaign of physical terror against Jews, making public announcements that their police chiefs could not be "responsible for the safety of enemies of the Reich." By 1933, the *New York Times* had carried descriptions of the prison camp at Dachau. That year, there was one estimate that said there were 80,000 prisoners in sixty-five camps throughout Germany.

Following the assassination of a Nazi ambassador in Paris by Herschel Grynszpan, the son of a Polish Jew expelled from Germany by the Nazis, the Nazis unleashed a pogrom against the German Jews on November 10, 1938—the infamous "*Kristallnacht*," the "Night of Broken Glass." This orgy of revenge for the death of the German diplomat included the burning of some 195 synagogues, the destruction of more than 800 Jewish-owned shops, and the looting of some 7,500 others.

Twenty thousand Jews were arrested and sent to concentration camps. And on November 12, 1938, the German government imposed a collective fine of approximately \$400,000,000 (one billion marks) upon German Jews as "money atonement" for the death of Vom Rath, Grynszpan's victim.

During this time, anti-Semitic regimes were also bearing down on the 725,000 Jews in Hungary, the 900,000 Jews in Rumania, and the 3.3 million Jews in Poland. With the conquest by German imperialism of Austria (with 200,000 Jews) and Czechoslovakia (with 350,000 Jews), the anti-Jewish terror threatened to engulf all of Europe.

A matter of life and death

In the wake of this mounting Nazi repression, refuge in other countries became a matter of life and death for hundreds of thousands of Jews and other fighters against fascism as well. By May 1939, for example, there were enough applications for U.S. entry visas on file in the U.S. consular offices in Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia to fill the existing U.S. immigration quotas for the next five years!

The Roosevelt administration, the upholder of the "liberal democratic values" so beloved by the B'nai B'rith, followed a consistent policy of barring entry to this country for these refugees, thereby condemning many of them to death. This policy of the U.S. government showed that any serious effort to save the victims of European anti-Semitism would require a fight *against* Roosevelt's administration, and not reliance on it.

The Socialist Appeal, a predecessor of *The Militant*, in an editorial that appeared on July 9, 1938, explained the reason why: "Capitalism in its death agony can no more solve the refugee problem than any of the other social problems clamoring for solution. The existence of these refugee hordes is in itself a symptom of its social decay and political reaction. . . .

"Revolutionary socialists must everywhere fight for unrestricted immigration into their countries, and especially for the right of asylum for all victims of reaction."

New Deal and refugees

Following Hitler's march into Austria in March 1938, President Roosevelt announced plans for an international conference to aid refugees from Germany and Austria to be held at Evian, France. Roosevelt launched this conference with a statement about how the U.S. has always been a haven for the oppressed and a land of the free.

But in motivating the conference, he explained that no country that attended would be expected to raise its immigration quotas to solve the refugee crisis, that the U. S. would not raise its quota, and that all funds for projects of the conference would be raised from private agencies.

This general approach of the New Deal to the refugee crisis was first conceived in the State Department, where Cordell Hull, then secretary of state, circulated a memorandum in response to growing public outcries over the events in Europe. Hull said it would be better for the State Department to "get out in front and attempt to guide the pressure, *primarily with a view toward forestalling attempts to have the immigration laws liberalized.*" (Emphasis added.)

With this kind of purpose discreetly buried behind a lot of government hoopla about "America's concern for the refugees" it is not at all surprising that the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees that finally emerged from the Evian Conference was a farce. By August 1939, this committee, which was supposed to represent the relief efforts of thirty-two nations, had a bank balance of \$9,672!

Many other examples can be given of the callous way in which U. S. immigration quotas, visa procedures, and consular regulations were used to impede the entry of Jewish refugees and others seeking to flee from Hitler's advancing armies. These are well documented in at least three books that students of this subject may wish to read: *While Six Million Died* by Arthur D. Morse (New York, 1967); *Paper Walls, America and the Refugee Crisis* by David S. Wyman (New York, 1968); and *The Politics of Rescue, The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1938-1945* by Henry L. Feingold (New Brunswick, N. J., 1970).

The outcome of all these artificial barriers to immigration was that even the existing quotas were not filled. Between 1933 and 1943, more than 400,000 more people could have legally entered the U. S. from countries under Nazi domination than were actually permitted. Between 1938, the year of "*Kristallnacht*," and 1941, the year the involvement of the U. S. in the second world war made transportation from Europe almost totally unavailable to refugees—a period of time when the acute plight of the refugees was at the height of public attention—there were still some 60,000 unfilled places in the U. S. immigration quota.

More revealing than this, of course, is the fact that quotas existed at all. At a time when so many lives were threatened, the U. S. insisted on maintaining an immigration quota system

based on restrictive legislation aimed at cutting off the flow of immigrants into the country.

In 1944, John Pehle, at the request of U. S. Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, issued a study of State Department refugee policy since 1938, which he entitled: "Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of the Jews." Any honest estimate of the Roosevelt administration's policies would confirm these findings.

Zionist opposition to lifting quotas

In 1942, Rabbi Stephen Wise, the leading Zionist spokesman in the U. S., complained to his friend Felix Frankfurter, "I don't know whether I'm getting to be the J of Jude, but I find that a good part of my work is to explain to my fellow Jews why our government cannot do all the things asked or expected of it."

As was pointed out above, the Roosevelt administration, far from aiding the masses of European refugees from Nazi terror, had in fact stood quietly by while hundreds of thousands of Jews and others were being murdered. Estimates as to the total number of refugees that were permitted to enter the U. S. between 1933 and 1945 vary from about 150,000 to a high of about 250,000. A very small number indeed compared to the millions of victims of fascism.

Why at this time did Rabbi Wise consider it his job "to explain to my fellow Jews why our government cannot do all the things asked or expected of it?"

Zionist and many leading non-Zionist Jewish organizations had different but complementary reasons for uncritically supporting the New Deal despite Roosevelt's murderous inaction during the refugee crisis. The Zionists had as a primary aim securing the backing of U. S. imperialism for a Jewish state in Palestine. Zionists in the U. S. followed the same strategy as their cothinkers in Europe, seeking to show how the founding of Israel would benefit imperialism's plans in the Middle East.

They felt that any struggle against New Deal immigration policies might interfere with Zionist attempts to woo U. S. support for their plans. Further, Zionists believed that rescue operations in general tended to divert resources from their efforts to establish an exclusive Jewish state in Palestine.

Wise was once asked, for example, what he thought of the idea of resettling the refugees in the former German colony of Tanganyika, one of a number of racist and impractical schemes talked about by Roosevelt. Wise's answer is very revealing: "I would rather have my fellow Jews die in Ger-

many than live somehow, anyhow, in the lands which bear the imprint of yesterday's occupation by Germany, in lands which may tomorrow be yielded back . . . to Germany."

David Ben-Gurion, Zionist leader and later prime minister of the state of Israel, was very outspoken about the need to order priorities. Ben-Gurion warned the Zionist executive in a letter dated December 17, 1938: "The fate of Jews in Germany is not an end but a beginning. Other anti-Semitic states will learn from Hitler. Millions of Jews face annihilation, the refugee problem has assumed worldwide proportions, and urgency. Britain is trying to separate the issue of the refugees from that of Palestine . . . If Jews will have to choose between the refugees, saving Jews from concentration camps, and assisting a national museum in Palestine, mercy will have the upper hand and the whole energy of the people will be channeled into saving Jews from various countries. Zionism will be struck off the agenda not only in world public opinion, in Britain and the U.S.A., but elsewhere in Jewish public opinion. If we allow a separation between the refugee problem and the Palestine problem, we are risking the existence of Zionism."

Even in 1943, when there could be no doubt about the ferocity of Hitler's genocide attack on the Jewish people, Itzhak Greenbaum, head of the Jewish Agency Rescue Committee, declared to the Zionist Executive Council: "If I am asked could you give from UJA [United Jewish Appeal] moneys to rescue Jews? I say 'No; and I say again, No.' In my opinion we have to resist that wave which puts Zionist activities in the second line."

A number of major Jewish organizations, like the B'nai B'rith and the American Jewish Committee, had not yet become Zionist by 1938-39. These organizations had their own reasons, complementary to those of the Zionists, for wishing to support U.S. imperialism even at the expense of the fight against U.S. immigration policies restricting the admission of the European refugees.

'Good Americans'

The B'nai B'rith, the American Jewish Committee, and the American Jewish Congress were organizations controlled largely by the wealthiest and most assimilated U.S. Jews, many of whose families had emigrated to the U.S. in the early nineteenth century, primarily from Germany. They were the elite of American Jewish society. They thought of themselves as "good Americans" just as many of the elite Jews of Germany—

on the eve of Hitler's rise to power—thought of themselves as "good Germans."

These Jewish leaders believed that any influx of Jewish refugees from Europe would undermine their assimilation into U.S. society. They believed that large concentrations of non-English speaking Jews from the ghettos of Europe would in fact provoke an anti-Semitic reaction here in the U.S.

They argued that the best defense against anti-Semitism was for Jews to appear as "American" as possible, that is, as the most patriotic supporters of the New Deal. They wanted to project the image that Stephen Wise did to the American Jewish Congress, when he told it that Jews "are Americans, first, last, and all the time. Nothing else that we are, whether by faith or race or fate, qualifies our Americanism."

These Zionist and non-Zionist Jewish leaders sought every chance to show how "American" they could be. They even went along with the Roosevelt administration's astonishing argument that one reason for the restrictive visa regulations was to prevent an influx of revolutionaries and Nazi agents "disguised" as refugees! This excuse was used to deny refuge to thousands of victims of anti-Semitic terror and fighters against fascism.

Some non-Zionist Jews who for their own reasons did not wish to struggle against the U.S. government for the admission of the refugees found a useful rationale in the Zionist claim that *only* in a Jewish state in Palestine could the Jewish people find any real security. After all, if this was so, then they wouldn't have to struggle to help the refugees find safety in the U.S.

Conversely, from the Zionist point of view, any such struggles that might have proven successful would only have undermined their arguments that the Jewish state they sought to create in Palestine could provide the only security from anti-Semitic attacks.

This coincidence of interests led to a criminal policy in which the major Zionist and non-Zionist U.S. Jewish organizations subordinated the interests of the Jewish refugees to their policy of support to Roosevelt.

And this is why Rabbi Wise, who wondered whether he was "getting to be the J of Jude" spent so much of his time explaining to his fellow Jews "why our government cannot do all the things asked or expected of it."

The policy followed by Wise and other Jewish and Zionist leaders was one of total abstention from *any* meaningful struggle to aid the victims of fascist anti-Semitism in Europe to obtain refuge here in the U.S.

It is true that the major Jewish and Zionist organizations contributed money and personnel to rescue operations in Europe, and that they also organized a number of rallies bringing attention to the plight of Jews suffering under Nazism.

But with the exception of a few organizations—such as the Jewish Labor Committee, at that time a non-Zionist organization, and Peter Bergson's Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe, a maverick group in the Zionist movement—the major U.S. Jewish organizations never demanded that the U.S. government "open the doors" to the victims, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, of fascism in Europe.

A shameful record

Their shameful failure to do so is part of the historical record.

Following a Nazi boycott of all Jewish merchants in Germany in April 1933, many organizations, Jewish and non-Jewish, called for an international boycott of German goods, including a demand that the U.S. impose a trade embargo on Germany. The B'nai B'rith and the American Jewish Committee opposed the call for a boycott, warning against any "public agitation in the form of boycotts and mass demonstrations."

These, they considered, "serve only as ineffectual channels for the release of emotion. They furnish the persecutors with a pretext to justify the wrongs they perpetrate and, on the other hand, distract those who desire to help with more constructive efforts."

The protest of the oppressed serves only to furnish a justification for the oppressor!

David Brody, a scholar who made a study of how the Jewish press dealt with the refugee crisis, reported the following in the June 1956 *Publication of the American Jewish Historical Society*: "Almost nothing is to be found in the Jewish literature between 1938 and 1942 expressing significant dissatisfaction with the immigration laws. *B'nai B'rith Magazine* had run periodically editorials on 'the Old America,' when the door was open to all who wished to enter; this might be construed as an implicit criticism of the quota restrictions. After 1938, such editorials no longer appeared. The *Annual Reports* of the American Jewish Committee made no adverse mention from 1938 to 1942 of the immigration laws. The American Jewish Congress also maintained silence. . . . The significant exception to this position was the non-Zionist labor organizations belonging to the Jewish Labor Committee."

Immigration limits

In April 1939, Rabbi Wise testified before a congressional hearing on immigration. Wise said: "I want to make it plain, so far as I am concerned, there is no intention whatsoever to depart from the immigration laws which at present obtain. I have heard no sane person propose any departure or deviation from the existing law now in force.

" . . . I feel that the country and the Congress should not be asked to do more than take care of a limited number of children. The bill provides for 10,000 each year for a period of two years. After all, we cannot take care of all of them. Germany has a population of five or six hundred thousand Jews."

When asked to state the position of the B'nai B'rith and the American Jewish Committee on proposed legislation that would loosen U.S. visa requirements and permit more German refugees to enter the country, Max J. Kohler testified on behalf of those organizations to the House Committee on Immigration: "I think that is a salutary thing, but our plea is in behalf of non-laborers and some exceptional persons."

"I oppose special legislation for their [German refugees] benefit."

This was the record of those who today accuse the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance of being "anti-Semitic."

The record of the SWP

We have shown how and why leaders of Zionist and most Jewish organizations in the U.S. raised no significant protests against the policies of the Roosevelt administration that left hundreds of thousands of refugees, Jews and others, to die at the hands of the fascist anti-Semites in Europe beginning in the 1930s.

It is ironic that today leaders of these very same Jewish organizations, like the B'nai B'rith, are attacking the Socialist Workers Party for being "anti-Semitic." For in contrast to the policies of the B'nai B'rith during the worst campaign of genocidal terror against Jews in the history of the world, the Socialist Workers Party did not stand idly by, but rather engaged, with others, in a struggle to force Washington to admit the refugees.

Furthermore, the SWP saw that the fight to admit the refugees was a crucial component of the broader fight against a growing fascist and anti-Semitic movement that developed in the U.S. during the 1930s.

The SWP disagreed with the view put forward by most Jewish and Zionist leaders that Jews should rely on the "democratic system" and "liberal values" represented by the Roosevelt administration as a shield against anti-Semitism. It also argued against the idea that the creation of an exclusive Jewish state in Palestine represented any real protection for Jews from the anti-Semitic terror sweeping Europe.

The SWP explained, in contrast to the ideas put forward by most of the Jewish and Zionist organizations, that Roosevelt and the capitalist government he headed were not at all allies of the Jews in any fight against anti-Semitism.

In fact, the Roosevelt administration was a hotbed of anti-Semitic officials and actions. Despite Roosevelt's carefully cultivated reputation as a friend and benefactor of the Jews, he placed the handling of all problems relating to the refugees from Nazi terror in Europe in the hands of bigots who could safely be relied upon not to take any meaningful action to save the European Jews. For example, Breckinridge Long, the man Roosevelt appointed as assistant secretary of state for refugee problems, was an early admirer of fascist Italy, where he had served as an ambassador.

In 1933, Long had sent a letter to Roosevelt containing this favorable description of conditions under Mussolini: "Many men are in uniform. The Fascisti in their black shirts are apparent in every community. They are dapper and well dressed and stand up straight and lend an atmosphere of individuality and importance to their surroundings . . . The trains are punctual, well-equipped and fast . . ."

In 1941, Long wrote in his diary of his approval of the then U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union Laurence Steinhardt's clear cut opposition to "immigration in large numbers from Russia and Poland of the Eastern Europeans whom he characterizes as entirely unfit to become citizens of this country. He says they are lawless, scheming, defiant—and in many ways unassimilable. He said the general type of intending immigrant was just the same as the criminal Jews who crowd our police court dockets in New York and with whom he is acquainted. . . . I think he is right—not as regards the Russian and Polish Jew alone, but the lower level of all that Slav population of Eastern Europe and Western Asia."

Myron Taylor, a former president of the U.S. Steel Corporation who played a key role in the Roosevelt administration's refugee work, had two pictures on the wall of his office: one was of Roosevelt, the other of Mussolini.

So much for the "friends and benefactors" of the Jewish refugees!

The Roosevelt administration, despite the bigotry of its officials and the criminal nature of its refugee policies, was not, of course, a fascist government. In Germany, because of its weaker economic position internationally, the ruling class had been forced to crush the radicalization of the workers under the blows of fascism. But U.S. capitalism had responded to the radicalization with a series of concessions and reforms.

These reforms helped avert the threat of revolution by maintaining the workers' illusions in "the democratic system" and its "liberal values," despite the terrible unemployment and brutal attacks on union organizing drives of the 1930s.

These illusions allowed the capitalists to cloak the realities of their rule, the brutality of which was so readily apparent in the naked dictatorship of the German and Italian fascist states. Hence, the New Deal provided a more economical form of government for the capitalist rulers of the U.S. than the costly police state of their German counterparts.

In order to maintain the illusions of the working masses in Roosevelt, the cooperation of the trade-union bureaucracy, the leaders of the Communist and Socialist parties, and of the major Jewish and Zionist organizations was necessary. By following an active policy of collaboration with Roosevelt, these misleaders prevented their followers from carrying out any meaningful struggle against unemployment, for trade unions, or against anti-Semitism.

This did not mean that no fascist threat existed in the U.S. during the 1930s. The social crisis in the U.S. had created the conditions out of which, as in Germany, layers of the middle classes and demoralized workers could be organized into fascist groups. Father Coughlin's Social Justice Movement, the Silver Shirts of William Dudley Pelley, and the German-American Bund of Fritz Kuhn were examples of these kinds of organizations.

Unlike the case in Germany, no section of the U.S. ruling class stood solidly behind any of these fascist movements. This did not mean, however, that at some later time the capitalists might not have turned to active backing of these groups.

In sharp contrast to the policies of many Zionist and Jewish leaders of the time, the SWP understood that uncritical reliance on the New Deal was no defense against the fascist danger in the U.S. Also, the SWP understood that the fight against fascism at home was clearly linked to the fight for the rights of asylum for victims of fascism in Europe. This strategy

was clearly spelled out in an editorial entitled "Open the Doors!" that appeared in the October 29, 1938, *Socialist Appeal*, a predecessor to *The Militant*:

"The only real answer to the barbarism practised by the reactionary capitalists in the name of national culture, is the mobilization of working class forces on the basis of international solidarity against all class and national oppression. In the performance of this duty of organizing practical aid for the disinherited and mistreated victims of fascist reaction, the working class forges unbreakable international links in the chain of its struggle to pull civilization out of the mire.

"The American proletariat must unite to help the refugees so that in this very process they may prevent the same thing from taking place in their own country. By making their power felt in warding off the blows of reaction delivered against the oppressed of other countries, the American workers at the same time mobilize their strength to defeat similar attempts at oppression at home.

". . . the American workers, including the Jewish workers, can perform a far more useful service to the refugees, including the Jews, by making forceful demands not on the British government [to admit the refugees to Palestine] which need not and will not pay the slightest attention, but on 'their own' government. We must demand the open door for refugees not merely in far-away Palestine, but here at home in the United States. Why has not Roosevelt attempted to have the quota law completely abolished—or even revised upwards? This would be really practical aid to the refugees. It would be an excellent way to combat anti-Semitism because it would mean an educational campaign against race prejudice conducted in the ranks of the working class.

"Organize the masses around this demand for the open door and this demand will make itself felt! For the abolition of the quota law and for the reestablishment of the United States as a haven for political refugees! This is the only real democracy—the fight for the Open Door for all refugees!"

Following the "Night of Broken Glass" pogrom in Germany, the *Socialist Appeal* of November 19, 1938, carried this front page statement by the national committee of the SWP:

". . . Workers!

"Solidarity with those who suffer at the hands of fascism is one of the best ways of establishing, in this country, an unbreakable wall against the advance of American Fascism.

"Unite! Join hands!

"Show the Hitlerite assassins and pogromists the real po-

sition of American labor by your protest meetings!

"Show them that the American working class means it seriously when it says that it detests Anti-Semitism and the Anti-Semites like the plague!

"Show the victims of the Fascist terror that you mean it seriously, by stretching out to them the hands of fraternal solidarity, by demanding of the American government the free and unrestricted right of asylum for the Jewish scapegoats of Fascist barbarism!"

The campaign to 'Open the Door'

The SWP viewed the campaign to demand that the U.S. admit the European refugees from Nazi terror as part of an overall struggle against the growth of any fascist movement here in the U.S.

The SWP argued that in order for such a struggle to be successful, it would have to be carried out in a massive way, uniting in action not only those who were already convinced radicals but much broader forces as well.

As a step toward launching such a campaign, all the arguments put forward by the fascists and right-wingers, as well as by many liberal Jewish and Zionist leaders, to discourage the masses from actions demanding changes in the immigration law had to be answered and refuted.

The *Socialist Appeal*, which reflected the views of the SWP, explained why the demand for opening the door to refugees should be supported by working people. It linked this demand to their struggles against unemployment, for the building of trade unions, and other issues of concern to the workers.

Refugees and unemployment

For example, the December 3, 1938, *Socialist Appeal*, in a front-page editorial, "Who Opposes the Open Door?" explains what was wrong with the argument that admitting the refugees would only increase unemployment. This objection was used by the capitalists to gain support for their closed door policies among U.S. workers, who were plagued with high unemployment. Appearing just two weeks after the infamous "Night of the Broken Glass," the editorial concentrated on the German Jews who were, at that time, directly threatened by the Nazi terror.

The *Socialist Appeal* exposed the hypocrisy of the argument that admitting German Jewish refugees would worsen the unemployment problem: "This is the reverse of the argument that killing off all the unemployed would get rid of unemployment. But the truth is that unemployment is a functional disease

of capitalism, caused not by the lack of any need for work to be done but by the requirements of capitalist profit . . . In point of fact . . . the introduction of a new body of consumers . . . [might indirectly result in] an increase of general employment."

". . . However, the objection loses all weight when we merely reflect that there are *now* in the United States about 12,000,000 or more unemployed. The problem of unemployment is not going to be solved one way or another by the addition or subtraction of half a million persons. . . ."

The *Socialist Appeal* presented a program that would aid both the victims of Nazism *and* of unemployment. The SWP called on workers to fight for the right of everyone to a decent job and standard of living. This could be done by fighting to divide the hours of work available equally between all who wanted to work, without cutting pay for anyone.

Another common argument against admitting the refugees, and one generally accepted by many Jewish and Zionist leaders, was that if Jews were admitted to the U.S., their presence would only increase and aggravate anti-Semitism.

The December 3 *Socialist Appeal* explained, however, that "fighting for and carrying through the demand to admit the refugees is today the most effective blow that could be struck *against* anti-Semitism. . . ."

"Anti-Semitism arises out of the needs of decaying capitalism, not from the attitude of the Jews. There is no doubt that it is making headway in this country. There is no doubt that in some quarters it becomes more open in the face of the demand to admit the refugees.

"But it will not retire if the Jews try to hide in the sand. It will, as reaction always does, grow stronger at the weakness of its opponents. Anti-Semitism has to be *smashed*; it will not be conciliated into disappearing. . . ."

"In this way, reaction, which lurks behind anti-Semitism, will be prevented from consolidating; and the ranks of the genuinely progressive forces within the country, steeled by a firm and unambiguous battle, will be better prepared for the broader struggles that lie ahead."

SWP in action

The SWP carried out two kinds of campaigns aimed at doing as much as possible, given its limited resources, to put its ideas into action.

First was participation in the American Fund for Political Prisoners and Refugees, an organization established in June

1938 with George Novack, an SWP leader, as its secretary, and with John Dewey, Suzanne LaFollette, Sidney Hook, Meyer Schapiro, and Vincent R. Dunne on its national campaign committee. One function of the Fund was to raise money for the relief of some of the worst-off victims of fascism in Europe—the persecuted revolutionists who were ignored by the official "rescue and relief" agencies. Chapters were set up in cities across the country to raise these funds.

However, American Fund supporters also organized public meetings, petition drives and educational work in unions, and other activities to win broad support and endorsement for resolutions and actions demanding that the government open the doors to *all* the refugees.

After only five months, for example, New York City supporters of the Fund had distributed more than 15,000 manifestos demanding the admission of the refugees; pasted up more than 25,000 stickers; and held street meetings in every borough. The SWP produced a special one-cent edition of the *Socialist Appeal* on the refugee issue; 10,000 of these were sold in New York. And the Young People's Socialist League, at that time a youth organization in solidarity with the SWP, vigorously sought support on campuses for the demand to open the door.

Nationally, a massive petition drive was launched to win support for the demand that Congress admit the refugees. A reading of *Socialist Appeal* during 1938 and 1939 shows that the Fund obtained endorsement of its demand from, among many others: Executive Board, General Drivers Union, Local 544, Minneapolis; Carl Skoglund; Ferdinand Lundberg, author of *America's 60 Families*; James T. Farrell, author of *Studs Lonigan*; Local 5, American Federation of Teachers, New York; Toledo Industrial Union Council, CIO; Boston United Office and Professional Workers Union, CIO; Harris County (Houston) CIO; and the Executive Committee of the Essex County (New Jersey) Workers Alliance, an organization representing thousands of unemployed workers in the Newark area. Thousands of individuals whose organizations may not have endorsed the Fund's appeal heard the arguments of its supporters at meetings throughout the country.

Antifascist demonstrations

In addition to its support for the American Fund, the SWP was also active in alerting U.S. workers to the need for vigilant action against the fascist and anti-Semitic goon squads of the Coughlins, Pelleys, and Kuhns. The most dramatic of these actions was called by the SWP for February 20, 1939, when

a fascist meeting was scheduled for Madison Square Garden in New York.

Fifty thousand workers turned out to show their opposition to the fascists. The massive demonstration was attacked by the police force of New York's Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia (a pro-Roosevelt "progressive"). The massive turnout was achieved despite a boycott of the demonstration by the Communist and Socialist parties.

Communist Party (CP) policies were always designed to promote the interests of the bureaucratic Stalinist rulers of the USSR, not to further the class struggle in the U.S. The CP sought to convince the U.S. ruling class that a friendly policy toward the Soviet Union would result in the CP using its influence among U.S. workers to blunt the class struggle. Hence CP leaders opposed any genuinely independent struggle against fascism that might threaten to bring workers into direct conflict with Roosevelt's New Deal.

The CP's Kremlin mentors had failed to lift even a finger to make the vast territories of the USSR available as a place of refuge for capitalism's victims in Europe. So the very existence of the demand on Washington that it "Open the Doors!" was an embarrassment—particularly after the signing of the Stalin-Hitler pact in August 1939.

The major Jewish papers in the city also warned their readers against participating in the February 20 antifascist action. The *Day* said: "Jews of New York, do not let your sorrows guide you! Avoid Madison Square Garden this evening. . . . Don't demonstrate! Don't give the Nazis the chance to get the publicity they desire so much."

Another Jewish paper, the *Forward*, wrote, "Reports have come . . . that certain irresponsible organizations are sending people to today's Nazi rally in Madison Square Garden in order to demonstrate there.

"There can be no more shameful thing for the Jews and opponents of the Nazis than such demonstrations which will lead to bloody fights and riots . . .

"Avoid the area around Madison Square Garden today and do not participate in any demonstration around the hall."

Six years after Hitler came to power in Germany, a Jewish newspaper is explaining that in order to avoid shameful fights and bloody riots, Jews and others should not demonstrate against the fascists!

Fourth International

The efforts of the SWP during the 1930s flowed from a revolutionary socialist analysis of and opposition to capitalism,

the source of both anti-Semitism and fascism in today's world. In Europe, cothinkers of the SWP in the Fourth International, who shared these views, fought bravely against the fascists. Many of them sacrificed their lives in the struggle.

The importance of the fight against anti-Semitism and for relief for its victims was stressed at the founding conference of the Fourth International in October 1938. *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, the central programmatic document written by Leon Trotsky and approved at the conference, says:

"An uncompromising disclosure of the roots of race prejudice and all forms and shades of national arrogance and chauvinism, particularly anti-Semitism, should become part of the daily work of all sections of the Fourth International, as the most important part of the struggle against imperialism and war. Our basic slogan remains: Workers of the World Unite!" That analysis holds equally well today.

The *silence* of the major Jewish and Zionist leaders and organizations in the U.S. greatly hindered efforts to involve the masses of Jews in a campaign to fight anti-Semitism in the U.S. and offer some practical relief to hundreds of thousands of victims of Nazi terror in Europe.

The desire of the Zionist leaders to win the support of U.S. imperialism for a Jewish state in Palestine is what caused them to act in ways so detrimental to the real needs and interests of the Jewish people. The Zionist leaders follow the same strategy today. This is why they attack as "anti-Semitic" the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance.

But it is the Zionist organizations like the ADL, who defend—in the name of *all* Jews—the relative privileges of the Israeli Jews at the expense of the Palestinian people, that are acting against the best interests of the Jews. It is the Zionist organizations like the ADL, who attack—in the name of *all* Jews (as in documents like "Danger on the Left")—the struggles of Blacks, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans against oppression, that help genuine anti-Semites to gain a hearing among the oppressed, who are a majority of the people around the world.

These policies separate the Jewish people from their potential *allies* in any future fight against *real* anti-Semitism. The slanderous and fabricated charges of "anti-Semitism" hurled today by the Anti-Defamation League against revolutionary socialists and other fighters against capitalist injustice only serve to mislead the Jewish people by urging them to rely on the capitalist government of the United States, a policy that had disastrous consequences for the Jewish people during the 1930s.