

ADL candidate caught 'Jew-baiting'

by Anton Chaitkin

The Human Relations Commission of the city of New Orleans charged on Feb. 25 that mayoral candidate Donald Mintz's campaign operatives had distributed racist and anti-Semitic flyers which "originated in the Mintz campaign." Mintz is an attorney and a former Port Authority chairman. But the case has taken on an explosive political character because Mintz is a member of the National Commission of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith; his uncle Bernard D. Mintz of New Orleans is a national vice chairman of the ADL. Donald Mintz faces State Sen. Marc Morial, the son of New Orleans' first black Mayor, Ernest ("Dutch") Morial, in a special run-off election on March 5.

City investigators learned that Mintz had sent out flyers which attacked himself, and called Jews "Christ-killers" and blacks "jungle apes." Mintz mailed the flyers to Jews throughout the country, and raised \$250,000 in donations from outside New Orleans.

The *New York Times* quoted Mary Zervigon, a member of the city's Human Relations Commission, blasting "the reverse spin of a candidate attacking himself in these flyers in order to gain some advantage." Morial's campaign manager Bob Tucker said, "Mr. Mintz self-inflicted a racial wound where there was none, and he did it to raise funds nationally."

The *New York Times* reported that the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council has examined the flyers and concluded that they are phony, not the work of a "hate group." The *Times* quoted an official of the council: "People who received the fundraising letter called us and we shared with them our reservations and concern, but let them make their own judgment as to how to deal with it."

The New York Jewish newspaper *Forward* has put a spotlight on the Mintz case. In its Feb. 18 issue, *Forward* wrote that in Miami, "prominent Jews were horrified when they opened mailings to read samples of such literature, alleging that 'Zionist, nigger-loving Kikes' . . . [are] destroying 'R-E-A-L patriots like [Nazi war criminal] Joseph Mengele and David Duke.' In Boston, fundraising appeals enclosed the same flyers as evidence that Mr. Mintz had been 'targeted by anti-Semitic forces in a vicious, hateful smear campaign.' "

"But," the Jewish paper continued, "questions are being

asked about whether Mr. Mintz . . . is truly the victim of anti-Semitism or whether he's cynically raising the issue as a bogeyman, trivializing anti-Semitism to scare up—literally—nationwide support." The *Forward* revealed that current ADL National Chairman Melvin Salberg and former ADL Chairman Kenneth Bialkin were both contributing to the Mintz campaign. As Jews who got the flyers began complaining and the heat turned up, Bialkin—a lawyer for cocaine king Robert Vesco—cautioned Mintz about the fundraising tactic: "I asked them to either tone down those paragraphs, or else send me some evidence."

Mintz aide indicted

On Feb. 4, Mintz campaign operative Napoleon Moses was indicted for paying someone to distribute unsigned (and thus illegal) racist flyers in an election campaign. Mintz described him as an unpaid campaign worker, friend, and confidant.

USA Today columnist DeWayne Wickham reported on Feb. 28: "According to the *Forward* . . . Moses paid a political operative \$600 to distribute 20,000 flyers bearing an anti-Semitic message.

"Also, Moses reportedly tried to distribute the flyer" on "Christ-killers" and "jungle apes."

Wickham added, "Morial's supporters say those flyers and others attacking Mintz for his closeness to blacks were part of a cynical scheme to portray the Jewish candidate as the victim of a hate campaign. Mintz, they say, was hoping to cash in on these attacks by getting financial backing from Jews around the country and a big sympathy vote from New Orleans' blacks, who make up 61% of the registered voters" in the city.

The *Houston Chronicle* reported Feb. 6, two days after the indictment of Mintz's campaign worker, that an anonymous leaflet had been circulated calling Morial a bisexual drug abuser who had fathered several illegitimate children.

The Human Relations Commission's Feb. 25 report is only tentative and has not been officially released, pending the receipt of written counter-arguments from Donald Mintz. The commission may issue a final report either on or after March 2, but Mintz may manage to delay or otherwise temper the blow until after the March 5 election.

Mintz has reportedly prevented members of his staff from testifying before the commission, thus avoiding cross-examination. Mintz campaign manager Michele Tierney refused to testify to the commission because she was not granted immunity from prosecution.

A Feb. 11 Mintz campaign press release calls the District Attorney biased. And, in a Feb. 25 press release, Mintz declares that the commission proceedings have been "unfair, manipulated by the Morial campaign . . . and orchestrated by a . . . supporter of Morial."

The chairman of the commission is New Orleans Rabbi Edward P. Cohn.