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## One Episode in Southern Jewry's Response to Desegregation: An Historical Memoir

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MURRAY FRIEDMAN

**I**n July 1954, I was sent to Richmond to take over the Virginia-North Carolina office of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith. The office was one of the smaller operations of the national organization, which had its headquarters in New York. It was a good place to send an inexperienced young professional to get his seasoning. In coming South, I was entering a society that was very distant from my own background. An American-born product of the Eastern European immigration tide early in the century, I had grown up and passed most of my life in the Orthodox Jewish world of Williamsburg, Brooklyn, where Jews were, in fact, a majority group. I had attended Brooklyn College, a free municipal college, and took part in the liberal-left politics that characterized the student body of that period. I was part of the generation so aptly characterized by novelist Michael Gold as "Jews Without Money," idealistic and not a little unworldly. It was following brief stints working with a housing association and with the B'nai B'rith public relations department in Washington, D.C., and on the recommendation of a Williamsburg friend and neighbor on the staff of ADL, that I was offered the post.

### **Richmond Jewry: Shabbat in Shockoe**

In coming to the former capital of the Confederacy, I found myself plunged into an old Jewish community of eight thousand whose roots went back to the Revolutionary War. Even more perplexing for a person with my background, I was, in effect, the public relations arm of that community and of small-town Jewry in two states. I was the only full-time Jewish community relations, or "defense," official. ADL, in fact, maintained the only professionally staffed operation in this field in the South. Much of the important leadership of the Jewish community and of ADL at this time centered around Reform Congregation Beth Ahabah, which had loyally supported the Confederate cause during the Civil War by sending many of its sons into the army.<sup>1</sup> Current Jewish leaders — men

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*Murray Friedman is Middle Atlantic States Director of the American Jewish Committee. He holds a Ph.D. in American history from Georgetown University and is an adjunct lecturer on minority problems and urban sociology at LaSalle College in Philadelphia.*

like Irving May, chairman of the board of Thalhimers, a department store; William Thalhimer; W. Harry Schwarzschild, Jr., president of the Central National Bank; and Samuel Binswanger, the head of Binswanger Glass Co. — were closely associated with the civic as well as business life of the community. According to the historian of Richmond Jewry, the city was free of the kind of anti-Semitism that had erupted in many Northern cities prior to World War II, but nonetheless its Jews, like their brethren in most small communities, were deeply, almost acutely conscious of their relations with their neighbors and worried about anti-Semitism.<sup>2</sup> There were a small number of areas like Windsor Farms and College Hills where Jews could not buy property, the elite country club was restricted, and a number of the resorts in Virginia Beach, including the Cavalier Club, were barred to them. Many Richmond Jewish leaders served on the advisory board of, or were close to, the Virginia Anti-Defamation League — their “insurance policy,” as Binswanger, its chairman for many years, was fond of saying. He and other important Richmond Jews were members also of the American Council for Judaism, which was opposed to Jews being closely identified with the State of Israel as fostering an image of “dual loyalty” in the minds of other Americans. If the “melting pot,” or cultural assimilation, was the basic philosophical model of post-World War II Jewry, Southern Jews were its most prototypical exponents.

The Richmond ADL office was part of a national organization which had broadened the scope of its activities beyond dealing with prejudice and discrimination against Jews since its founding in 1913 and had become concerned about minority rights generally. It had filed an amicus curiae brief before the Supreme Court calling for an end to racial segregation in the famous Schools cases. Although at this time there were no public opinion polls measuring Jewish attitudes in Richmond, one observer who studied the feelings of Southern Jews in the early sixties reports that they “were significantly more liberal, equalitarian and desegregationist in respect to blacks” than their neighbors.<sup>3</sup> I found few outright Jewish segregationists in Virginia, although there were more in the Deep South. Part of the price Jews paid for the high degree of acceptance and the success they had achieved was that they had to conform to the region’s racial patterns.

The major thrust of a Southern ADL operation governed by a local advisory board was to deal with incidents of anti-Semitism and discrimination. Just prior to my arrival, the Richmond office had been successful in obtaining passage through the state legislature of a law, aimed primarily at resorts in Virginia Beach, banning discriminatory religious advertising. This was one of the first modern civil rights laws in the South. The office also distributed films, film-strips, pamphlets, comic books, car-cards, blotters, bookmarks, and other items to church, civic, and labor groups throughout the region. These provided information on Jews and Jewish holidays, as well as scientific findings on religion and race, and made appeals to the essential oneness of the human family.

The Richmond office sponsored each summer, with the local office of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, an all-day Youth Seminar on Human Relations which brought together black and white high school seniors selected by their principals to discuss how groups could learn to live together. In an almost totally segregated society, this was one of the few places where the races could come together to discuss common problems. The seminar, however, had the backing of important business and civic leaders who probably saw it as their modest effort to prepare for the racial changes they knew were coming. My office carefully monitored, also, acts of violence directed against Jews and blacks. I had a cordial relationship with Virginius Dabney, the editor of the *Richmond Times Dispatch*, which was built, largely, on this issue. While the newspaper supported segregation, Dabney, who earlier in his career had won a Pulitzer Prize for fighting the Klan, would respond vigorously with editorials condemning racial violence when Binswanger or I brought to his attention such incidents as a cross burning on the lawn of a segregation critic or the growth of Klan activities near the Virginia-North Carolina border.

It is worth noting in this respect that much of the historical discussion of the role of Southern Jews in civil rights struggles at this time has focused on individual rabbis, including such courageous figures as Emmett Frank of Arlington, Virginia, Perry Nussbaum of Jackson, Mississippi, and Charles Mantinband of Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas.<sup>4</sup> Prior to the Freedom Rides and marches of the 1960's, however, some of the major work was done by Southern ADL offices and their lay advisory boards. An example is the work of the Atlanta office under Alexander F. Miller, who helped to develop and lobby through state legislatures, with other ADL offices, laws requiring unmasking of the Klan. Reducing the Klan's anonymity struck an important blow at its ability to terrorize whites and blacks. There was, however, no direct ADL involvement in school desegregation cases following the 1954 Supreme Court decision. These were developed by local NAACP attorneys in cooperation with the Legal Defense Fund of the NAACP nationally. As local opposition to court decisions mounted, most Southern Jews hoped to ride out the storm and the social adjustments they believed inevitable.

### **Massive Resistance**

By the summer of 1958, however, it was becoming difficult to do so. Since 1954, a major massive resistance effort had gotten underway to overturn or at least minimize the effect of the Supreme Court decision. Virginia was one of the first states where this effort reached a climax. Nine public schools in Warren County, Charlottesville, and Norfolk were about to lock their doors to thirteen thousand white children in the fall under state legislation which required such school closings and the cutting off of funds when black children were enrolled. Faced with this, Governor J. Lindsay Almond was shortly to announce to the Virginia

Education Association a no-quarter policy. "I shall never willingly witness or become a party to the destruction of education by the mixing of the races in the classrooms," he declared.<sup>5</sup>

Massive resistance, as this policy was called, had become associated with a series of bombings and attempted bombings of synagogues throughout the South by the Ku Klux Klan and local citizens councils. Increasingly, anti-Semitic as well as anti-black agitators were coming into Virginia or distributing pamphlets and other literature attacking Jews generally and charging that they were the real force behind integration. One such magazine, the newly established *Virginian*, published in Newport News, was circulated throughout the state. A local version of the citizens council movement, the Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberties, had come into existence, and while it was, in the gentlemanly Virginia tradition, more moderate in tone and activities than its neighbors to the south, the group nevertheless made it clear that it viewed with strong disfavor any deviation from the pattern of resistance to desegregation.<sup>6</sup> An increasing part of ADL's work in the South, therefore, was now being given over to dealing with the anti-Semitic spillover from the desegregation fight.

Finally, as the white-black confrontation deepened, a series of legislative investigations and harassment efforts directed against "race-mixing" groups like the Urban League, human relations councils, and labor unions were initiated, culminating in the enactment in Virginia and other states of a series of "anti-NAACP" bills. These barred efforts to "influence, encourage, or promote litigation relating to racial activities."<sup>7</sup> Jewish groups feared that they would be included in the sweep of this legislation. The *Virginian* had, in fact, launched a series of sharp attacks on ADL and on me personally for what it alleged was "a mongrelization pitch" contained in ADL materials and activities.<sup>8</sup>

In the massive resistance movement underway, the *Richmond News Leader* and its then little-known editor, James J. Kilpatrick, played a critical role. The Commonwealth at first reacted with mildness to the 1954 decision. However, in subsequent months, led by United States Senator Harry Byrd and the powerful Byrd machine, Virginia had resolved, in the words of the influential Senator, to halt the expansion of federal power and reverse the trend toward "totalitarian government." On November 21, 1955, basing himself on a pamphlet written by a Virginia county attorney, Kilpatrick launched a major editorial campaign calling for legal resistance through a doctrine called "interposition." In the *News Leader* of that date and in subsequent issues, Kilpatrick and his associates examined the nature of the federal union. They argued that the United States was, in fact, a compact of states which had not surrendered their powers when they formed a national government. The powers delegated to the latter "are painstakingly enumerated," the *News Leader* declared, and all other powers belong to the sovereign states. Since the Supreme Court had exceeded its authority, a state could interpose its authority between its citizens and the national government,

Kilpatrick argued. In a style for which he would later become well known as a nationally syndicated conservative columnist and television personality, Kilpatrick built his editorials on references to the ideas of Jefferson, Madison, and John C. Calhoun and reprinted alongside them states' rights documents beginning with the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions of 1778 and a series of public letters written for a Richmond newspaper in 1833.

This campaign was what one historian of massive resistance, Numan V. Bartley, later called "constitutional mumbo jumbo," since at the very least, the Civil War had put an end to these ideas. However, Kilpatrick's arguments satisfied a deep need of many white Southerners. By mid-1957, the *News Leader's* editorials and historical documents, which had been reproduced in pamphlets and other forms, were widely circulated, and eight Southern state legislatures had approved resolutions of interposition. In addition, Texas endorsed the doctrine and North Carolina and Tennessee officially protested against the high court's decision.<sup>9</sup> Kilpatrick had become by 1958 the intellectual leader and, in some respects, the architect of the massive resistance movement in the South.

#### **Anti-Semitism without Anti-Semites?**

On July 7, 1958, the *News Leader* published an editorial entitled, "Anti-Semitism in the South." Noting that Southern Jews were "dismayed at manifestations of anti-Semitism in recent months," it suggested that they ask themselves what was prompting this deplorable violence in an area that had "no tradition of anti-Semitism" and urged them to consider the possibility that the Anti-Defamation League was responsible. "By deliberately involving itself in the controversy over school segregation, this branch of B'nai B'rith is identifying all Jewry with the advocacy of compulsory integration," the editorial declared. It pointed out that the previous week the Richmond regional office had sent "some pro-integration literature" to an NAACP workshop in Charlottesville, one of the cities preparing to close its schools. This would obviously stir up anti-Semitism, whereupon the "ADL can lustily combat it by declaring, 'Look how much anti-Semitism there is.'" The *News Leader* conceded ADL's right "to interest itself in any phase of bigotry," but such militancy as the regional office had manifested in sending the materials to the Charlottesville workshop invited "retaliation," the editorial warned. It concluded by asking "some of the South's many esteemed and influential Jews" what possible service they could find "in a Jewish organization that foments hostility to Jews."

As with Kilpatrick's massive resistance efforts, this editorial touched a vital nerve in Richmond and in the South. Many whites sincerely felt they knew blacks and were unable to understand how people whose political skills and intelligence they tended to minimize could be seeking to overturn the racial system that had existed for so many years. After all, their maids and employees had assured them that they had nothing to do with the NAACP. Whites were largely unaware of the new mood

among poor as well as middle-class blacks who had become increasingly restless with the discrimination and disadvantage they faced. They knew little of the new class of black lawyers and young people graduated by Howard University and other black institutions who were intellectually and philosophically prepared to challenge the system that prescribed for them a role as permanent second-class citizens.<sup>10</sup> Since blacks could not be responsible for the agitation for change, there must be others who were behind these efforts, many whites felt. Though Kilpatrick had limited his attack to the Richmond ADL office, he provided a plausible answer to the problem that had been bothering so many Southern whites. "Jewish agitators" and organizations like ADL were the force behind the demand for integration.

A strict constitutionalist and libertarian philosophically, Kilpatrick was deeply angered by what he felt to be the usurpation of authority by the high court.<sup>11</sup> In mounting a massive resistance campaign he sought to rally all Southerners in opposition. He had skillfully helped to build a movement that was sweeping across the South, but there are indications that he did not want it to get out of hand. Two months before his attack upon ADL, the *News Leader* carried an editorial, "Conservatism and the Lunatic Fringe," in which he warned about the dangers.<sup>12</sup> To his credit, Kilpatrick had editorially opposed the "anti-NAACP" bills as a violation of freedom of expression. The editorial attack on ADL, however, was taken by many Jews as a not-so-subtle warning to Southern Jews generally: if they involved themselves in the desegregation fight, they would be visited with anti-Semitism and even violence.

The editorial was soon being widely circulated and became a subject of discussion throughout the South. The director of the ADL in Atlanta, on July 23, sent a copy to the national office; it had been forwarded to him from Nashville, he reported, and seemed to be "an offset job indicating heavy distribution." He noted that copies were circulating in Atlanta and felt they would soon be "springing up like mushrooms in the rainy weather we have been having."<sup>13</sup> The theme of Kilpatrick's piece was picked up by segregation supporters. When Rabbi Emmet A. Frank, in a Yom Kippur sermon from his pulpit in Arlington, Virginia, criticized the Byrd machine and massive resistance, the Arlington chapter of the Defenders demanded that the Jewish community of northern Virginia condemn his slanderous statements and innuendos, warning that they "will cause irreparable damage to the hitherto friendly relations between Jews and Christians. . . ." Shortly thereafter, the Unitarian church in Arlington had to be emptied as a result of a bomb threat just before Rabbi Frank was to occupy the pulpit.<sup>14</sup>

The editorial struck with enormous force in the tiny Jewish community of Richmond. The Virginia ADL Board had sought carefully to negotiate the treacherous shoals of the desegregation controversy since 1954. Six months after the Supreme Court handed down its historic decision, the board adopted a resolution calling upon the national organization in New York to "take no position which would interfere with the right

of a state advisory board and local ADL units to deal with this problem according to conditions in the area of local jurisdiction." It accepted the high court's decision as "the law of the land" and urged creation of fact-finding groups on how to implement that decision in cooperation with other organizations of an "inter-faith character." In November 1957, as the segregation battle heated up, the Virginia Board adopted another resolution narrowing its focus somewhat. This held that "in accordance with the religious principles of Judaism, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith in the Commonwealth of Virginia affirms that its basic policies are to combat anti-Semitism and improve interfaith relations."<sup>15</sup>

The Virginia Board, through its chairman, Sam Binswanger, had regularly protested against certain national ADL policies and tactics — an instance being the latter's role in the Levittown, Pa. racial collisions. Binswanger argued that ADL should confine its role to combating anti-Semitism and to positive programming in the field of interfaith understanding. While he recognized that it would be difficult to accomplish this, since racial and religious animosities were often intertwined, he believed that every effort should be made. Several months before the *News Leader* editorial, the Virginia ADL Executive Committee had called for a meeting of Southern and national ADL leadership. Held in Atlanta in May, the discussions revolved mainly around bombings and attempted bombings of synagogues in the South. The Virginia group came away from these sessions, as a local report later noted, "with the definite feeling . . . that ADL leadership was sympathetic to the position of the Southern Jew in this crisis situation. . . ." One result of the Atlanta meetings was that in June a number of ADL staff from other parts of the country were deployed briefly to Southern offices, including Richmond, on an emergency basis.

The day after the *News Leader* editorial, Binswanger convened a meeting of the key Richmond Jewish leaders to examine the materials discussed in the editorial and the advisability of continuing to distribute those relating to race. Phone conversations were held by Binswanger and Harry Schwarzschild the following day with Benjamin R. Epstein, national director of ADL in New York, the latter urging a local response to the editorial. Both men demurred, emphasizing "the political nature of the current situation in Richmond" and "rising tensions."<sup>16</sup>

On July 9, a full meeting of the Virginia ADL Executive Committee was held, attended by Lester Waldman as representative of the national ADL office. Waldman brought with him the draft of a letter of response, and after a long, inconclusive discussion it was agreed to hold another meeting the following day. That evening the Richmond Jewish Community Council, the central planning and fund-raising body of Richmond Jewry, held an emergency meeting and adopted a resolution that no response be made to the editorial. On July 10, the ADL Executive Committee met again with other leaders of the Jewish community present. It was agreed that a committee would call upon the editor and publisher of the *News Leader* "to protest the attack upon the ADL and to indicate

that the entire Jewish community viewed the appearance of the editorial with alarm since it served to foster religious tensions and might even invite further violence." Waldman told the group that the ADL headquarters in New York preferred a letter of record but would abide by the judgment of the local community.<sup>17</sup>

Apparently, this "protest" was toned down considerably when Binswanger, Schwarzschild, and Irving May met on July 14 with Kilpatrick and a representative of the publisher, who was in Europe. In a report later to the local ADL group, Binswanger said that the committee had expressed concern about the editorial but sought to assure Kilpatrick that they were not integrationists. While ADL, along with other national Jewish religious groups, had taken advanced positions on the race issue, these were not necessarily endorsed by Virginia ADL, the committee told Kilpatrick. They added that the local ADL leadership wanted to promote interfaith understanding and the position of the Jew in America. Finally, they told Kilpatrick that they realized he was not anti-Semitic. Kilpatrick responded that he was pleased that he was not seen as hostile to Jews and endorsed the concept of interfaith understanding. He noted, however, that since the materials sent to the Charlottesville NAACP workshop were not along these lines, the Richmond office was intruding directly into the race issue. He showed them a listing of ADL materials sent there to indicate that many of the items dealt directly with race.<sup>18</sup> The committee was assured that there would be no additional editorials on the subject and that the issue would not be prolonged by publishing letters to the editor.

Kilpatrick told the committee that he was annoyed with me personally not only because I had intruded in racial matters but because I had interfered, he said, with his freedom of expression. He said that he and another columnist had to watch every word they wrote to insure that their statements would not be considered anti-Semitic. He was referring in his own case, I believe, to several conversations I had held with him in which I pointed out that anti-Jewish elements were attempting to use the *News Leader*. His writings were being liberally quoted in the *Virginian*, which was also advertising in the newspaper. The latter had published a letter by an alleged "Israel Cohen" attacking the role of Jews in the integration controversy; the letter was later found to be a hoax. When the *Washington Star*, which had similarly run the fake letter, learned there was no Israel Cohen, it wrote an exposé to show how bigots used letters-to-the-editor columns to gain attention for their views. In calling these matters to Kilpatrick's attention, I felt he was indifferent to, and apparently resented, my interventions.<sup>19</sup>

Kilpatrick's own account of the meeting confirms Binswanger's report. In a letter to a North Carolina Jewish businessman, he described the discussion as "congenial." Far "from expressing 'distress' at an 'attack' on the ADL they expressed almost exactly the opposite point of view," he wrote. "While they were sorry that we had felt it necessary to publish the editorial, they felt it would do a great deal of good. . . ." The Richmond

editor noted that the committee wanted "to assure us that they intended to use their influence with the ADL toward the end that the ADL's involvement in the school segregation controversy could be minimized." Kilpatrick conceded that "The editorial stirred up a small rash of lunatic fringe letters," but concluded, "I filed all of those in the nearest wastebasket, and so far as I know the matter is now closed."<sup>20</sup>

### **ADL: Caught in the Line of Fire**

But the matter was far from closed. Kilpatrick's effort to drive ADL and Jews out of the desegregation struggle was being considered now with great seriousness by Jews in the South. ADL was sharply divided. The national organization, with its Northern liberal orientation, was anxious to protect what it believed to be its fundamental role of battling for human rights for all. Moreover, in areas of northern Virginia and to a lesser degree in the state's other major city, Norfolk, where the *Virginian Pilot* stood in opposition to the Byrd machine, there was less disposition among Jews to go along with massive resistance and school closings. For many Jews in Richmond and farther to the south, however, the episode underlined their belief that ADL had gone beyond its primary purpose of combating anti-Semitism and had plunged Jewish communities into unnecessary confrontations with their neighbors.

Cesar Cone, the North Carolina Jewish businessman who corresponded with Kilpatrick, wrote Epstein on July 30 that he thought ADL was operating on the same basis as the NAACP: the staff sought to create incidents to perpetuate itself and enlarge its numbers and salaries. Charles J. Block, a Jewish attorney in Macon, Georgia — writer of a book supporting segregation on legal grounds — wrote Kilpatrick that he agreed with him. He hoped the Richmond editor would publish another editorial along the same lines and this time include in his attack groups like the American Jewish Committee and the American Jewish Congress. If the activities of these organizations did not cease, he added, a Southern Jewish Committee should be formed.<sup>21</sup> Kilpatrick promptly passed the letter along to Binswanger.

There is some indication, also, that the *News Leader* episode had become embroiled in broader Jewish political wars. Apparently, the anti-Israel American Council for Judaism had sent copies of the *News Leader* editorial to Cone and other important Southern Jewish leaders, presumably to demonstrate that ADL was jeopardizing their interests in the same manner as their support for Israel did. National ADL leaders believed that these Southern Jews were being encouraged to write Kilpatrick supporting his attack on the organization. Confronted with this charge, the lay head of the American Council for Judaism, Clarence Coleman, indicated that he had no knowledge of any such effort but acknowledged that he knew of the *News Leader* editorial and approved of it.<sup>22</sup> Stimulated or not, there is little doubt that the critical letters ADL was receiving from some Southern Jews represented the real feelings of many Jews in the South.

Virginia ADL leaders, however, were more moderate than the position articulated by Block. While unhappy with the editorial, they did not want war with the national organization. Working with the latter, Binswanger sought to calm Block. At the July 10 meeting of the Virginia ADL Executive Committee, Schwarzschild expressed his personal thanks that Waldman had been sent down from New York to help with the problem, and a unanimous resolution of appreciation was adopted. While there was some discussion about recommending to national ADL that the Richmond office be closed, the idea was apparently not seriously considered. Nor was it ever recommended that I be removed from my job. The sense of the local ADL leaders was that I had not received sufficient guidance by them on the nature and scope of my activities, which would now be more clearly defined.

At the July 10 meeting, it was agreed to appoint a subcommittee "to survey the regional office's program and use of materials." An Evaluation Committee was organized to prepare a report and recommend to the ADL National Commission such modifications of regional office procedures as might be necessary. All activities of the Richmond office "which impinged on the desegregation issue would proceed only after consultation with the Board chairman." I did not object to this. I wrote to the national office, "I consider my role to be that of holding the group together and preventing a final rupture with National ADL. Oddly enough, this relationship is still a friendly one." There would be some modification in the local program, I reported, but when the "crisis in Virginia eases up, we could then return to our full program."<sup>23</sup>

The focus now shifted to the work of the Evaluation Committee. At the suggestion of Philip Klutznick, then head of B'nai B'rith and later Secretary of Commerce under President Carter, Joseph Cohen of Kansas City, chairman of ADL's community service operations, was sent to Richmond to meet with the committee.<sup>24</sup> An effort had been made, in constructing this group, to provide balance between "conservatives" and "liberals." "By conservative," I wrote Cohen on August 4, "I mean that [the use of] any materials or programs that impinge on race, however remotely, get voted down." The six meetings held by the group were long-drawn-out sessions that often went well into the early hours of the morning. ADL and B'nai B'rith leaders from northern Virginia and Norfolk regularly traveled to Richmond to take part in them and returned home afterwards. I wrote Cohen that I was not too worried about the curtailment of some of our educational activities but was most "disturbed by the disposition of the conservatives to halt our program for the maintenance of law and order."

Early in its deliberations, the committee adopted a formula that "the regional office will temporarily withhold from use literature, films and activities that can reasonably be interpreted to deal with the integration-segregation question." This formula was to be in effect until December 1, when it would be reviewed. In its final report, the committee agreed to halt distribution of a number of items that touched on race. It canceled

the agency's sponsorship of the Youth Seminar, an action which I strongly opposed. Binswanger had been particularly fond of this program despite his opposition to ADL involvement in racial matters, but by this time he was ill and did not take part a great deal in the work of the Evaluation Committee. The committee approved, however, "participating with other groups in a program to maintain law and order" and a proposed news release describing a new ADL publication, *The South Speaks Out for Law and Order*. In such efforts, the committee agreed, the Richmond office could be used on an interracial basis. This was an oblique reference to the fact that the Richmond branch of the newly formed Virginia Committee to Preserve the Public Schools held its early meetings in the ADL office. The report concluded that the importance and usefulness of the agency's work was at its height as a result of "the crisis in human relations in the area." It declared it "vitaly important" that "Virginia Jewry continue to be serviced with an alert and vigorous ADL in the difficult months ahead."<sup>25</sup>

The Virginia ADL report was a major item for consideration at the ADL National Commission meetings in New York on September 20 and 21. These were attended by representatives of Virginia ADL led by its current head, David Arenstein of Richmond, a moderate. In his remarks, Arenstein pledged full support to the established program and policy of ADL. He added that Virginians were convinced that integration was morally and legally wrong and this climate in the state made normal ADL operations difficult. He urged that "the Virginia Board be permitted to implement . . . [national] policy according to its best judgment." He was backed by the few "liberals" and "conservatives" from the Virginia Board. Ceasar Cone of Greensboro argued that ADL "should at this point concern itself exclusively with problems of anti-Semitism and not become involved in the rights of other minorities." Gerald Graze, a member of the Evaluation Committee from northern Virginia, pleaded, however, that "a rule of reason be applied but it should not be one of submission to the fears of intimidation of segregationists." Joseph Cohen, who had visited Richmond on behalf of the national organization, argued that the League "must not retreat from its basic policy."

Following adjournment on the evening of September 20, the discussion continued the following day. The chairman of the commission, Henry E. Schultz, pointed out that ADL must adhere to its established policy but there was room for the Virginia group to implement it according to its best judgment. Klutznick emphasized that the "proper mechanics on both a staff and lay level be established in order to handle the emergencies as they arise. . . ." At the conclusion of the discussion, it was agreed unanimously that the agency would reaffirm its October 27, 1957, resolution that any action taken by ADL affecting a regional constituency be undertaken only after consultation with that constituency. A special committee of national ADL leaders was to be created to interpret policy with respect to problems of the South, presumably on an ad hoc basis.

### **“A Startling About-Face”**

In effect, the national organization had gone along with the Virginia group's recommendations. Without shifting away from the organization's pro-integration stance, it was prepared to move in a cautious manner in the super-heated atmosphere of Virginia.<sup>26</sup> To do otherwise would cause a permanent break with its Southern constituency, which had to face the consequences that Kilpatrick had so sharply pointed to. This was a setback, to be sure; nevertheless it was felt that time was running out on massive resistance and the full ADL program would inevitably be resumed. This was my feeling then, and in retrospect I believe the decision was tactically necessary. There were a few in the national ADL headquarters, however, who felt that Virginia ADL and I had gone too far in capitulating to local pressures.

Elated by the reaction they had received in New York, the Virginians returned home to continue their review of ADL materials. It was clear, however, that their hearts were not in it. After a few desultory visits to the office to screen films and look at pamphlets, the effort trailed off. By this time, too, the broader massive resistance drama being played out in Virginia was drawing to a close. The state's growing middle-class and business leadership found themselves increasingly restless with the prospects of school closings and social instability. In a startling about-face, Kilpatrick told the Richmond Rotary Club on November 11 that the courts would probably rule against the state's massive resistance laws. He called for “new tactics and new weapons to preserve segregation,” admitting by implication that in some areas there might be integration.<sup>27</sup>

On January 29, following court rulings that Virginia's laws closing schools and withholding funds were violations of the state's constitution, Governor Almond told a special session of the Virginia General Assembly, “It is not enough for gentlemen to cry, ‘Don't give up the ship!’ . . . No fair minded person would be so unreasonable as to seek to hold me responsible for failure to exercise powers which the state is powerless to bestow.” The following Monday, twenty-one black children walked quietly into heretofore-white public schools in Norfolk and Arlington under the protection of state and local police. With the first desegregation in Virginia, the issue was now moving to a peaceful resolution, and the pressures felt by the Jewish community declined. Even before this, in October, the Richmond office joined with B'nai B'rith Women and a number of women's church groups in Norfolk in a major conference on human relations. The operations of the Virginia office under a new director – by this time I had accepted an invitation to join the American Jewish Committee in Philadelphia – had returned to normal. School desegregation struggles now shifted to other communities, including Jewish communities farther to the south.

## NOTES

This article is based on my personal recollections and files I kept on this episode now deposited with the American Jewish Archives. I would like to express appreciation to Stanley F. Chyet, director, Magnin School of Graduate Studies of Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles, for his advice in preparing this analysis.

1. Myron Berman, *Richmond's Jewry: Shabbat in Shockoe, 1769-1976* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979), pp. 181–182, 188–190.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 189.
3. Alfred O. Hero, Jr., "Southern Jews and Public Policy," in Nathan M. Kaganoff and Melvin I. Urofsky, *Turn to the South* (Waltham, Mass.: American Jewish Historical Society, and Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979), p. 144.
4. For further discussion of the role of rabbis, see P. Allen Krause, "Rabbis and Negro Rights in the South, 1954–1967," *American Jewish Archives* 21, no. 1 (April, 1969); Leonard Dinnerstein, "Southern Jewry and the Desegregation Crisis, 1954–1970," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 62 (1972–73): 231–241.
5. Murray Friedman, "Virginia Jewry in the School Crisis: Anti-Semitism and Desegregation," *Commentary*, January 1959, p. 17.
6. The February–March 1958 issue of the *Defenders' News and Views* carried a photograph of Thurgood Marshall, NAACP special counsel, receiving a plaque from Kivie Kaplan, described as co-chairman of the NAACP's Life Membership Committee, and Arthur Spingarn, NAACP President. The caption noted, "The NAACP Is Not a Negro Organization and Never Has Been." Later, it advertised a publication, *Our Nordic Race*, which charged that "agitator Jews . . . in close cooperation with a group of Nordic Race Traitors are almost wholly responsible for the destructive 'one race, one color' Marxist campaign that has brought strife and disunity to our country and to the rest of Western civilization." Friedman, "Virginia Jewry in the School Crisis," p. 20.
7. Numan V. Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance: Race and Politics in the South during the 1950's* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), pp. 222–224.
8. See William Stephenson and Phyllis Kyle, "ADL Attempts Sneaky Invasion of Virginia's Public Schools," December 1956, p. 1. Author's file.
9. Bartley, *Rise of Massive Resistance*, p. 129.
10. For a good discussion of the new black mood, see Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975).
11. For Kilpatrick's views on states' rights, see his book, *The Sovereign States* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1957).
12. I wrote to him on May 8, 1958, to compliment him on the editorial.
13. Arthur J. Levin to Alex Miller, Author's file.
14. Friedman, "Virginia Jewry in the School Crisis," p. 21.
15. Report of Evaluation Committee of the Virginia ADL Advisory Board, September 7, 1958, Author's file.
16. Benjamin R. Epstein to ADL National Commission, July 16, 1958, Author's file.
17. *Ibid.*
18. A memorandum I wrote at the time listed the materials. They included Parts 1 and 2 of the film *Songs of Friendship*, a "Dolls for Democracy" kit, the comic book *About People*, the pamphlets *Shall Children Be Free*, *Little Songs on Big Subjects*, *The St. Louis Story*, *Prejudice – How Do People Get That Way?*, *Your Neighbor Reads*, and *Your Neighbor Worships*, and a set of "Bible on Brotherhood" posters. Most of these materials contained information about or broad appeals for group understanding or information about Jews. The *St. Louis Story* was a description of how this city went about desegregating its schools. Murray Friedman to Alex Miller, July 7, 1958, Author's file.
19. Binswanger's account of the meeting with Kilpatrick was given at a meeting of the Evaluation Committee of the Virginia ADL Advisory Board on July 16 and was reported in a memorandum I wrote to Benjamin R. Epstein on July 21, 1958. Author's file.
20. James J. Kilpatrick to Ceasar Cone, July 23, 1958. Cone passed this letter on to ADL. Author's file.
21. July 14, 1958, Author's file. Block's book was called *We Need Not Integrate to Educate*.
22. Benjamin R. Epstein to Bernard Nath, July 30, 1958. Bernard Nath to Arnold Forster, August 12, 1958. Author's file.
23. Murray Friedman to Benjamin R. Epstein, July 21, 1958, Author's file.

24. Alexander F. Miller to Murray Friedman, August 11, 1958, Author's file.
25. Report of Evaluation Committee of the Virginia ADL Advisory Board, September 7, 1958, Author's file.
26. Minutes of the ADL National Commission meeting, September 20-21, 1958, Author's file.
27. Bartley, *Rise of Massive Resistance*, p. 321; Murray Friedman, "Virginia Desegregates – The Breakdown of Massive Resistance" (unpublished manuscript, 1959), Author's file.