YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Rabbi Berkowitz

Personal Experience

O.H. 1534

IRVING OZER

Interviewed

by

Matthew Butts

on

July 15, 1992

IRVING OZER

Mr. Irving Ozer was born on May 7, 1919 on the North side of Youngstown, Ohio, the son of Louts and Anna Ozersky. He attended secondary school at the Rayen School, graduating in 1937.

Following high school, Ozer attended Youngstown College, Ohio State University and Pitt University. Mr. Ozer also worked at a number of jobs before joining the United States Air Force in 1941. After his discharge from the Air Force in 1944, Ozer returned to Youngstown. He gained employment with The Albro Packing Company, eventually rising to the position of Executive Vice President by the time he left the company in 1964. At this point, Ozer became involved with Simco Enterprises, serving as Vice President from 1964 to 1966.

Throughout his life in Youngstown, Mr. Ozer remained involved in the local Jewish community. He served as the director of the Youngstown Jewish Community Center and associate executive director of the Jewish Federation over the last twenty years. Ozer also remains an active member of both the local chapter of the B'nai B'rith Organization and the Youngstown District of ZOA.

Presently, Mr. Ozer is semi-retired. He spends much of his time working on a history of the local Jewish community. He resides with his wife Beatrice at 499 Richards Drive Youngstown, Ohio. He continues to be an active leader of the local Jewish and Youngstown communities. Mr. Ozer spends much of his free time listening to and playing music of all kinds.

-- Matthew Butts

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YSU Rabbi Sidney Berkowitz Project

INTERVIEWEE: IRVING OZER

INTERVIEWER: Matthew Butts

SUBJECT: Rabbi Sidney Berkowtiz

DATE: July 15, 1992

B: This is an interview with Irving Ozer for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Rabbi Sidney Berkowitz, by Matthew Butts, on July 15, 1992, at 12:35 P.M.. Tell me about where you were born, your childhood, and your education?

O: I was born in Youngstown in 1919. Outside of about twelve years in Meadville, Pennsylvania, I have lived in Youngstown, except for college and the Armed Services. I came back to Youngstown in 1966 and was drafted to work here at the Jewish Community Center. Several years later, I moved to the Jewish Federation, which was the umbrella organization and became the associate director of the Federation until I retired in 1984. Since then, I have been doing a lot of semi-retirement work in the form of specific jobs to be accomplished, one of which, was to set up a Jewish Community archives and to write the history of the Jewish Community which dates back to Civil War days. We are just finishing up that project.

B: What was it like growing up in Youngstown?

O: Youngstown, at the time I grew up, was a pleasant place to live. There were a lot of blue collar type workers and immigrants. It was a real melting pot. I first went to school at Madison Avenue School. Then I attended the Elm Street School, Hayes Junior High, and finally the Rayen School. I went one year to, at that time, Youngstown College. I was chairman of the committee that agitated for a football team, and not too long afterwards we saw that come into being. I also helped to organize the first marching band. Then, I went to Ohio State. I went into the Army shortly after graduation.

Living in Youngstown was generally a pleasant experience. You took for the granted the glow in the sky all night long. If you lived close enough to downtown, you could sit outside and read the newspaper by the light from the steel mills. Housewives were reconciled to dusting every day because of the smoke in the air. At that time, we did not know anything about ecology or clean air or anything like that. We took it for granted. I guess right now there are a lot of people in Youngstown who would be happy to forget the clean air and have the steel mills working again.

B: You described Youngstown as a melting pot. Where were the various ethnic groups centered within the city while you were growing up?

O: The elite, which were mostly the old time WASP pioneer families like their peers: the Arms, the Wicks, and the Butlers were all along Wick Avenue; then they all moved to the area of Wick Park. Around Wick Park you still see a lot of the big mansions. Fifth Avenue was a beautiful street. The immigrants and the blue collar workers tended to live on the east and west sides. There were blacks, a lot of Italians, Portuguese, Greeks, Polish, Russians, and Lithuanians. For some reason, the people who came from the Nordic countries tended to go to the west side. In terms of the Jewish population, on which I am more knowledgeable, people came and opened businesses of one kind or another. They also worked in businesses which were already in the downtown. Because they were Orthodox Jews by and large, especially at the turn of the century, they wanted to be within walking distances of their businesses and of their temples. The temples were all in the downtown area and the near north and east sides of town.

Jewish people, because of their backgrounds and the amount of oppression they have experienced, tended to congregate into pockets. So, you had the Temple of Emanuel on East Rayen Avenue, now a black church about a block from the library on the other side of the street, which was Russian. The Russian Jews tended to come from more or less homogeneous Shtetles. A Shtetle is a small settlement, in essence, a ghetto, where the Jews lived and were virtually self-sufficient. They had their schools, temples, butchers, grocers, and they developed their own ethnic personality with their own set of superstitions, ways of life, linguistic adaptations. When they came to the United States, they tended to settle in the same place and to bring all of that with them. The Temple of Emanuel was made up of people who lived around Rayen Avenue into Smoky Hollow up to Madison Avenue and on both sides of Wick Avenue. They could then walk to the temple on Sabbath and they were close to their places of business. Some of them rented facilities where they could live above their business or beside or behind their business.

They brought with them the old superstitions and the ethnic cultural habits that they had used in the old country.

When people came from Lithuania, they tended to settle around Himrod Avenue. They started a temple there called the Shaareh Torah. The Hungarian Jews settled a little bit closer to town. They started a temple called The Children of Israel Temple. It was just about where the Choffin Center is now. They tended to settle around there.

The older Jews had come earlier from western Europe, that is: Germany, France, Austria. They had come on the earlier wave of immigration. They tended to settle around what is now Fifth Avenue, the campus and that general area. Their first temple was on the corner of Lincoln Avenue and Holmes Street, which later was renamed Fifth Avenue. Unlike the later immigrants, they had not been forced out of Europe. They were the more educated and more cultured. The fact that they were the first to come, made it easier to be woven into the fabric of the community. They became merchants and industrialists. Do you remember the Strouss-Hirsberg Department Store? They were the founders of that. They tended to live as close to the wealthy gentiles as was feasible, which means on both sides of Wick Avenue and Fifth Avenue. As they moved out further north, the more affluent Jews moved further north.

The Jews on the south side did not start their temple until the 1920's. They were close to town, too, on East Myrtle Avenue. They were in the area now called the Pyatt Street Farmer's Market. They did the same thing and congregated around the temple. As they lived in the United States for a matter of a few years, they became less conscious of their ethnic source and more conscious of being Jews in a Jewish minority in a Christian majority. Gradually, these differences tended to erode. Russians joined the Hungarian temples and Hungarians joined the Russian temples. The Lithuanians did the same thing. There was a gradual erosion and a lessening of the distinctions between the various ethnic groups. As time went on, the Jews of Youngstown began to think more in terms of Youngstown than of Russian, Hungarian, or what have you.

Of course, there has always been a distinction between the religious elements. That is the Orthodox Jews, the Conservative Jews, and the Reformed Jews. Presumably, that will remain for many, many years to come. After the first World War or a little later, a family might decide that they did not want to be Orthodox anymore. It was too demanding, so they went to the Reformed Temple. If they wanted something in between, they set up around 1920, the Anshe EmethTemple on Elm Street near Wick Park.

As time went on and the population decreased, it became difficult to maintain all the different synagogues. You had a reduction in the number of temples in the community and the combining of temples. The temple Emanuel, which was Orthodox and the congregation at Anshe Emeth merged and became congregation El Emeth, which now has a large temple on Logan Avenue near the swim club there. That reflects pretty much what has been going on except, as I say, as time went on, the Jewish people of Youngstown decided that they had to stick together, and they formed what is called the Jewish Federation of Youngstown in 1935. At first it had no home. It operated out of various temples and offices downtown. Then in 1937, they bought a mansion on Bryson Street, now a part of the campus. That became the Jewish Community Center, which

housed the Jewish Federation (the umbrella organization). It also housed a welfare office, which took care of indigent Jews and marital problems.

There were no real drug problems at the time, but as it grew into a rather large operation, it became involved with all of the drugs and depression, marital problems, child abuse, all of those things now within the purview of a welfare department. It is now called the Jewish Family and Children Service. Another department was formed and that was called, the Community Relations Council. It dealt with inter-relations in the community between ethnic, racial, and religious elements. It worked with the Catholic, black, and Protestant communities on brotherhood, bigotry, discrimination and interpreting the large total community.

Since then, in 1965, Heritage Manor, the Jewish Home for the Aged, which is just up the street here, was formed. Now, it has a population of around 70 residents. We also started a rent subsidized apartment building one block down on Granada. That is what the Federation is all about. It is supposed to periodically review the situation of the Jewish community of Youngstown and the Jewish communities of the country and of the world. Also, to analyze problems, evaluate and to decide what needs to be done and to do it. So, we decided that our aging Jewish population had to be faced and that we could not discharge our responsibilities to our parents or elderly by sending them to Pittsburgh and Cleveland because they had problems of their own. So we started our own home and it has become a model for the country. That is basically the Youngstown Jewish community.

B: In your own words, could you describe the basic differences between the Orthodox, the Conservative, and the Reformed Judaism?

O: Yes, only with the understanding that it is going to be very general and undetailed and subject to a lot of interpretation. Basically, the first communities were west European: Germany, Austria, and France. They came from an enlightened community, sophisticated and educated. There was a movement in that area of Europe called reformed. In terms of what we think of reformed today, it was actually Orthodox. The idea being that there were more Germans in their services than the others. In terms of dress, they did not have anything that would cause embarrassment like the long coats and black hats and the sideburns worn by East European Jews, with their prayer shawls hanging out. They tried to be Germans first and Jews second. They brought that attitude with them. Nevertheless, the things that we considered important to Orthodox were still there. They were not allowed to eat non-kosher meats. It had to be slaughtered by an authorized "shochet." You were not allowed to work on the Sabbath or the holidays. That is what they were when they came to Youngstown.

That persisted in Youngstown for probably a decade. Then they decided to affiliate with the American Reform Movement, which was a lot more reformed. Those original members of Rodef Sholom would never have thought of eating shell fish. Now, they serve it on the premises. They would never eat milk products at the same time they were eating meat. They gave up the whole idea of racial slaughter and all of that. They

went out and bought their meat, including ham and bacon. So, it was a big change in the philosophy. They are now what is called Reformed Judaism. Their services are changing now, coming back toward the middle where they are using more Hebrew and more old liturgies. It is a gradual move toward the center.

For the Orthodox, originally, there was the Shaareh Torah on the near East side, there was the Children of Israel, The Temple Emanuel, the Ohev Tzedek on the South side. All of them started out Orthodox. Now, only one of them is Orthodox and the rest have become Conservative.

What does Conservative mean? It means that you make a considered judgement as to what traditions and rituals are important. As a policy, the congregation might decide that they should keep kosher, observe the Sabbath, but the men and women do not have to sit separately. The services could be a little shorter with a little more English. If you have to keep your store open on Friday night, you cannot fight City Hall, you just have to have the store open. This has resulted in a slow gradual erosion of the Orthodox, so you try to conserve the most important aspects of the religion and let go of those which are unmanageable in the American frame of life. So, you ended up with most congregations going toward the middle including Reform. Possibly years down the road, it will all be Conservative.

B: What was the woman's role in each of these?

O: Going back to the inception it was all males, I mean in the United States. Even the west European leaders were mostly male. There were exceptional women who came to the top but they were very, very exceptional. When we got into the formation of the first Conservative temple in Youngstown in the early 1920s, women were beginning to become active. The women's role up until that point had been working in the hospitals and raising children. There were quite devout, as far as teaching the children to be Jews and about their roles and responsibilities. It was mainly the women who did this. The man went out and made a living and went to temple. Maybe it was necessary when he came home from work that he had to spank somebody for what they had done during the day, but the disciplinarian was the mother.

After the first World War and approaching the second World War, women became much more active. They were accepted. You began to see an occasional board member. They became temple presidents and presidents of the Jewish Federation. The problem is, that because of the feminist movement and all that, women are working. A large share of the mothers in the Jewish community are working at least part-time. In terms of community leadership and responsibility, they are on equal level now with the men.

B: Are there any female Rabbis?

O: There are such things. As a matter of fact, the temple El Emeth has a woman cantor. More and more you are seeing women going through the training and being ordained. It

is still the exception, but it is coming. It is a challenge to the women. It is hard now to find men who want to give up their lives to lead their flocks. Women are available and eager to do it.

B: While you were growing up in Youngstown, who was the leader of the Jewish community? Was there any senior Rabbi you would have considered the spokesman for the Jewish community?

O: Not Rabbis necessarily, but individuals, yes. Way back in the sixties there was a man by the name of David Theobald. With his own personal will and determination he brought together these people to form the first congregation, Rodef Sholom. Then following him, people like Strouss and Hirshberg who felt they had a responsibility, being more wealthy, affluent and used to exercising authority. They took on the role of trying to help mold the Jewish community and to meet the needs of the Jewish community. You must remember the family memories.

The Jews had been minorities, discriminated against, oppressed, persecuted, and ghettoized to the extent where the Jew found that the only way he could exist was by him and his brothers working together, especially those way back. "All of Israel is responsible one for the other." That is why the Jews were pioneers in such areas as community organization. The Community Chest and United Way were patterned after the Jewish model. The origination of the first United Way in the country was in Cleveland and took place under the presidency of the Jewish man.

The realization has been there, that if we do not help one another, nobody is going to help us. That is why we have our schools, community centers, Federations, family children services, Community Relations Councils etc. In some larger communities there were hospitals, because nobody was going to do it for us. Many, many of these hospitals have become general community hospitals like Sinai, and Montefiore. The East European Jews came over here as refugees. The German Jews who were already here set up settlement houses to teach them how to speak English and how to be Americans. They were an embarrassment to them because they had worked for years to become accepted in the general community and here comes a bunch of strange people with strange accents who are unable to speak English. They wore strange clothes. Their response to that was rather than ignore them, let's teach them. Let's get them acculturated as quickly as possible so they won't continue to be an embarrassment.

B: When did you first get the opportunity to meet Rabbi Berkowitz?

O: Rabbi Berkowitz came to Youngstown in 1946. By 1946, I had been mustered out from service and had come back to Youngstown for a couple of years and then moved to Meadville, Pennsylvania for twelve years. There was a period there between when he first came until I came back to Youngstown in the middle 1960s before I really got to know him. When I came back, I was asked to join the Federation staff here and because of that, I came to work with him quite closely on some of the things we were both

interested in. I was the staff person in charge of the Jewish Community Relations Council and he was the J.C.R.C. Chairman. We worked on many projects together. That is where I really got to know him.

B: What did he physically look like?

O: He was not an imposing figure. He had a problem in that he was successor to another Rabbi, Dr. I.E. Philo. Philo was a tall, thin, patrician, ascetic looking individual. He had high cheek bones. By contrasts, Berkowitz was a short man. Not fat, but pudgy and round faced. He was almost cherubic looking. What they had in common was the fact that both of them were orators. Both had a tremendous command of the English language. Both of them could write beautifully. Both of them held the pulpit for a long time, I think Philo was 33 years and Berkowitz was 37. Both had the knack of assuming leadership, not just for their congregation, but for the Jewish community.

They worked closely with the clergy of Christian religions, Catholic and Protestant both. Both of them ended up being almost revered by those people. The Bishop asked to speak at Berkowitz's funeral. They were on a first name basis right along. Philo was born in England and Berkowitz was born Terra Haute, Indiana. Philo was also a lawyer. He was practicing law in Akron when he was recruited to the pulpit here in Youngstown. Though they were physically different, they were both a lot the same in the way they carried out their pulpit responsibility.

In terms of Zionism, Philo came to Youngstown to serve a congregation which at that time was anti-Zionist. If you were to trace his speeches over the years you would see where Zionism tried to peek through once in a while, but he kept it pretty well under control until the later years when he and the congregation began to see the writing on the wall. Berkowitz came here and was put under the same injunction of carrying out the policy of the congregation of not favoring a separate country. It was not long until he broke through that and began to sound like a Zionist. Not long before his death, he became president of a local Zionist district. It was the same thing, breaking down the injunction against Zionism of the congregation and gradually convincing the congregation and themselves to follow their natural instincts, favoring Zionism.

B: Within the Youngstown community, Dr. Berkowitz was involved with a lot of activities. Are you familiar with any of them, especially in terms of the Civil Right's Movement?

O: Yes. In 1961, Dr. Berkowitz received an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from the Hebrew Union of College in Cincinnati. In 1970, a local Zionist district awarded him the Brandeis Award. He won the Race Relations Award, Fraternal Order of Eagles Humanitarian Award, B'nai B'rith Man of the Year, the B'nai B'rith Guardian of the Menorah, the Distinguished Service Award from Goodwill Industries, the Paul Harris Award from Rotary, the Kiwanis Honorary Award, the Prime Minister of Israel Medal, the 1981 Brotherhood Man of the Year from the community, the National Jewish Hospital Asthma Center Humanitarian Award. He was recipient of the Arvona Lynch

Goodwill Award that is given annually to a white person by the Roberts Deliberating Club in the Black community.

He was past president of the Child Guidance Center, the Youngstown Interracial Committee, the United Nations Organization of Youngstown, the Intergroup Goodwill Council, the Council of Social Agencies of the Community Chest, the International Service Committee of Rotary International, the Mahoning County Advisory Board for the Aged, the White House Conference on Children and Youth, Mahoning County Mental Health 648 Board, Mahoning County Chapter of the American Red Cross, Mahoning County Tuberculosis Association, Youngstown Rotary Club, Board of Rabbis of Greater Youngstown. He was on the board of Jewish Federation. He was Chairman of the Jewish Community Relations Council.

He was also chairman of the Youngstown Health and Welfare Institute. He served on the Executive Board of the Central Conference of American Rabbi's and was appointed to the organization's Joint Conciliations Commission. He was elected to the board of Trustees of the Youngstown Civil Liberties Union. He also served as president of the Adult Guidance Clinic. He was a State Chaplain to the Jewish War Veterans of Ohio. He was also vice-president of the Health Systems Agency of Eastern Ohio. I am sure there are more, but I cannot think of any right now.

I think that is more than any one man's allotment. Some things are not mentioned in there, like his annual work on the Interfaith Brotherhood Program, his relationship with everybody in the Christian Community from the Bishop down to the lay preachers. He also was close to the leading merchants in the community, the industrialists. He was also an educator. He was consulted constantly by the member of the Mayor's administration. He spoke widely in churches in black communities, white communities, Catholic, Protestant. In later years, he was constantly trying to cement relationships with the Muslim community in Youngstown. He was a man for all seasons.

B: In your own personal contact with him, what was there about his personality? Give me some of his personal attributes?

O: If there is any one thing that comes to my mind it is the fact that he was immersed in not just religion, but he somehow managed to dole himself out to just about every facet of community life. For instance, Goodwill, Community Chest, and United Way. Whatever part of himself he doled out to any particular facet of community life, he did it wholeheartedly. He jumped right in with both feet. He had a confidence that somehow you did not feel was there because he was an imposing looking individual, but somehow he managed to convey that stature. You just felt it. Do you remember when they had the suit in Youngstown on the schools in the middle 1970s, when they were desegregating schools across the country?

B: Yes.

O: They had experienced violence in Boston, Detroit and in many cities when busing was

ordered and the white and black communities resisted it. We saw it coming in the Jewish Community Relations Council. This was while he was chairman of the Jewish Community Relations Council. It was decided that we as the Jewish community could only aggravate the situation by coming out and telling the rest of the community how to conduct themselves.

We had a meeting we decided to pursue it. Berkowitz would go talk to selected members of the community including the Bishop to see if we could put together a coalition representing everybody in the community: white collar, blue collar, poor, rich, education people, industry, churches, everybody. He went and talked to them. He was able to convince all of these people to get together and form what was known as the EOY (Education Oppurtunities of Youngstown). We had meetings with every aspect of the community as to how we would react if the court said that the schools of Youngstown were purposely segregated and ordered desegregation. What the schools would do and what industry would do, and what the churches would do and so on.

We met week after week at the old McKelveys, the old Strouss-Hirsberg, churches, and here [Jewish Federation Center]. We had to get everyone organized to react. Fortunately, the court ruled that the required desegregation had taken place so it became no problem. The fact is, he was able to go between the various communities and get everybody talking in the same terms without becoming himself the perceived leader. Actually, the Bishop came out the perceived leader. That was Berkowitz's strength. That was the kind of guy he was. He was soft spoken. He was very convincing when he talked to you. He could get angry, but he did not get angry in a loud way.

B: A lot of the people I interviewed mentioned his humor.

O: Not as a stand-up comic, but as a person who could see humor in almost any situation. He could say something to diffuse a tense situation. He was not a raconteur or the kind of guy you would hear in a restaurant with a loud voice telling jokes. He was not that kind. It was a human kind of humor. He could take a given situation and find a story to tell that would illustrate what he was trying to say. At the same time, he would relieve the tension and cause people to laugh or smile. That was his type of humor.

B: What do you think his impact on the Youngstown Jewish community was?

O: He had a big impact on his congregation. His congregation grew greatly when he occupied the pulpit. His childhood was one that was greatly influenced by his grandfather who taught him Hebrew at his knee and influenced him to go into the rabbinate. He had a comparatively traditional background because of that. He was always nudging the congregation a little more toward Hebrew, more into the services, more into Hebrew education. You could see him working toward that line.

By the time he died, he already had them a little more toward the center, toward Conservatism. Symptomatic is that they changed their prayer book from what they had been using for years to one which has much more Hebrew and traditional content. Some

of the liturgy and music and all of that is beginning to show up from the Conservative and Orthodox. The ones that you remember from childhood. That is something that you cannot appreciate because your hymns are fairly uniform.

In the Reform movement, the cantors seem to be concentrating more on virtuosity, individual interpretation, on showing off their musical abilities. There have been people who composed their own liturgy that they used. I on the other hand, was brought up in the traditional aspect. I came from an Orthodox family shifting toward Conservatism. I know during the war when I was in Chanute Field, Illinois, Fort Worth, Texas, Boston, Massachusetts, the Fiji Islands, New Zealand, Australia, I went to services there and I heard them praying to the same melodies that I had grown up with; that made me feel secure and warm toward them. That was the cement that held us all together. Ever since then, I have felt that when these people started to change the melodies they were breaking the concrete and separating us. He was moving back toward the traditional. In the same vein, I have gone to services in England, France, and Israel and I have heard these familiar melodies and realize it is something that holds us together. What was the question you asked me? I forgot.

B: What was his total impact on the community?

O: His total impact on the community? He was there among the top councils in the community. He worked for what was good in the communities, except and unless it threatened his congregation; then he would argue. One of the areas which we had to go through was the establishing of a Jewish day school in Youngstown where the kids come and attend regular classes required by state law, plus Hebrew education and Jewish subjects. His congregation resisted and at first he resisted, but you could see what was happening. He was going back and talking to them and convincing them that it might be a good thing for the congregation if they became a part of it. Eventually, they did become a part of it. In my personal opinion, he worked at that. In the beginning, he was almost rabidly opposed to it, but he ended up becoming a part of it.

B: Is there anything that we really have not touched on about him that we should add?

O: He was a child genius, I guess. He received a scholarship to the University of Cincinnati at the age fifteen. He graduated in 1937. I think he was still a teenager when he received the Morganthau Fellowship to Oxford-Cambridge University in England. There he received his Ph.D. in Aramaic. That is the language of Jesus and the Bible. While he was at Cambridge, he became a friend of and studied with Abba Eban of Israel who became a world-class orator. He met his wife in England and brought her here. This is a part of the manuscript for the book I am writing. He was a Chaplain in the Army. He served at Lowery Field, Colorado, Hawaii, Saipan, Okinawa.

I write there that Rabbi Berkowitz had a wonderful sense of humor along with a sense of substance you could almost always find the sun shinning through the dark clouds he so often confronted. He had a deep knowledge of the community and relationships of

family members to one another and he never confused one family business or personal relation with another. He also was an astute business man in terms of the congregation. Under his leadership, his congregation prospered and grew and became the largest congregation in the community. Some of the people that he taught and bar-mitzvahed, have grown up to be the leading citizens in the community.

We compared Philo and Berkowitz. Both were eloquent orators and both employed a prodigious vocabulary in speech and writing. Both believed strongly in a unified Jewish community and felt an obligation to represent that community in the councils of the general community. Both were admired and loved, even revered, by Jews and gentiles of Youngstown alike. There were few people in the Jewish community who were able to maintain a sincere intimate relationship with the black community and he was one of them. I do not think that Philo was able to do what he did. Especially when the black community was confronted with two situations.

The first was the fact that the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement Colored People) was organized and led by Jews for many many years at the beginning. At that time, the blacks did not have a tradition of organizing themselves and how to go about agitating without violence. Jewish people who were concerned helped them to organize. They told them how stage sit-in strikes, passive resistance and the strategies were developed by representatives of the Jewish community. They had the know-how to show them how to do it.

As time went on, the blacks came to resent the fact that non-blacks were running the black organization. The resentment began to show up as bitterness and, "We do not want you! Go home!" and that sort of stuff. Although the Jews were still quite active in it, it was now a black endeavor not a Jewish one. In Youngstown especially, Jews used to accumulate their fortunes by buying up cheap property and renting it out and selling it. The blacks, having lived through the Depression and having had experience with some unprincipled Jews as in any community, who were money first and humanity second. They began to think of Jews as the "Jew landlord."

The third thing was, when the strife between Israel and the Arab world came into being in 1948, gradually over the years, the blacks began to think of themselves in terms of Afro-Americans. If the source was African, then the religion which was so prominent there was Muslim. They began to identify with the Muslim world. Lucias Clay became Muhammad Ali. That happened here too. They then begin to sympathize with the Muslim world. If they sympathized with the Muslim world they had to be opposed to the Zionist world which was the Jews. So those three factors created a rift between the Jewish community and the black community which relationship had been very close at one time.

At about the time that Berkowitz became really involved in community work, there was a very definite enmity in the relationship between Jews and blacks. He was one of the few people who was able to maintain his contact with and continue to hold their respect. There were a few others: Abe Harshman, Jim Pazol and a couple others who could walk into a black community and get together and be recognized and respected. I am running out of gas. What else do you want?

B: I think we have touched on everything that was important. All the questions I had, have been answered. This is a very good interview. Can you think of anything else we can add?

O: Five minutes after you go I will. (laughter) I can say this, through all the intimacy and all that he had with his congregation and his Jewish community, the general community, and the clerical community, I cannot think of a case where it was the buddy-buddy kind of relationship. It was a more highly respected friend of the family sort of thing. He was intimate with the Bishop. They called each other by their first name. I do not think they goofed off, if you know what I mean. It was not a buddy-buddy. It was a genuine friendship kind of thing. In my relations with him I would call him Sid once in a while, but most of the time I would call him Rabbi. If I called him over, I would say, "Dr. Berkowitz, could you come over here a second?" He had that innate dignity that caused you to think of him as a dignitary as opposed to just a person. I cannot think of anything else.

B: Thank you very much.