

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Rabbi Sidney Berkowitz

Personal Experience

O.H. 1517

SAUL FRIEDMAN

Interviewed

by

Matthew T. Butts

on

July 9, 1992

DR. SAUL FRIEDMAN

Dr. Saul Friedman was born on March 8, 1937 in the city of Uniontown, Pennsylvania, the son of the Albert Elias and Rebecca Friedman. In his childhood his parents moved to Borea, Ohio, where he attended secondary school at the Borea High School, graduating in 1955.

Following high school, Friedman attended Kent State University, attaining his Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1959. He continued his education at Ohio State University achieving both his Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy Degrees. Upon his completion of his doctorate, Friedman assumed a professorship in the History Department at Youngstown State University in 1969.

Throughout his life in the Youngstown community, Dr. Friedman remained involved in the local religious community. He remained involved in the local religious community. He remains an active member of both the local chapter of the B'nai Brith Organization, American Professors for Peace in the Middle East, and the Youngstown Zionist District.

Presently, Dr. Friedman continues to serve on the faculty at Youngstown State University. He spends much of his time working on addressing the crime of Racism and the Holocaust of World War II, receiving numerous awards and recognition. He resides with his wife Nancy and son Jason in Canfield, Ohio. He continues to be an active leader in the Youngstown community. Dr. Friedman spends much of his free time following various athletic sporting events.

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INTERVIEWEE: SAUL FRIEDMAN

INTERVIEWER: Matthew T. Butts^R

SUBJECT: Rabbi Berkowitz, Youngstown, Rodef Sholem

DATE: July 9, 1992

B: This is an interview with Dr. Saul Friedman for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on the Rabbi Berkowitz project, including the Youngstown Community and the Youngstown Jewish Community. The interview is taking place at his office, located on the fifth floor of DeBartelo Hall in Youngstown State University, on July 9, 1992, at approximately 11:30 a.m.

Okay. We'll start off with those real fun biographical questions. Can you tell me something about yourself, as far as your childhood and your education, where you grew up.

F: I grew up in the Cleveland area. [I] came to the Youngstown area in 1969, after getting a Ph.D. from Ohio State University, and that's about as much as you're going to need to know at this point.

B: Okay. What was Youngstown like when you arrived here?

F: It was different from what it is today because, for one thing, the steel mills were operating. The atmosphere was grimy. People were warned about parking cars too close to the mills, the soot that would be blowing off of the Struthers mill. For example, when we first came to town, we lived in Poland and lived in the house of the former Dean of the School of Music, Dean Aurand.

Every morning, you could literally wipe your hand along the window sill and come away with grime from the Struther's mills. Now, that's the most important difference. It's really changed the whole nature of the community. The mills shut down in 1975, and that affected everything. It affected the prosperity of the community. It affected the morale of the community. I think it affected the minds of the community.

Since that time, the people are--well, the community has always elected bad public officials, but they have especially outdone themselves in the last couple years. The other thing that's different is that the perception of Youngstown, when we came here, was of "Crime City USA." When you come to Youngstown, you're going to have somebody blow up your cars, or something like that. But, from a different stand point it also changed because when I first came to this town, you could fly in and out of Youngstown Airport. I'm talking about to LaGuardia, Newark, Chicago, all sorts of places, and there were direct flights with regular airplanes. Today, for anybody who really is involved in travel, research, or something of that sort, you have an additional problem because you have to go either to Pittsburgh or to Cleveland. That changes the whole nature of how a town is viewed.

Youngstown and Akron are sister towns in terms of relative size. They've been primarily one industry towns, and Akron went through all kinds of problems with it's rubber industry. But, Akron rebounded and the Akron Airport still functions and people don't make "Akron" jokes. They make "Youngstown" jokes, but they don't make "Akron" jokes. We've been here through, what I like to call the "death throes" of Youngstown. Sooner or later, as in the Mary Tyler Moore show, somebody's going to have to turn off the lights and be the last person out of Youngstown.

The day we arrived here, I used to joke that the way the university operates--you're getting candor at this point--eventually there will only be one person in the history department. Obviously, we've added people who are younger. But at the time, I used to say that the way the university operates, on that final day in our final years, Martin Berger will be the only one who will be teaching in the History Department, and he will be walking up to the fifth floor of the Arts and Science Building, because they won't allow the elevators to run. They'll be conserving electricity, and he'll be carrying with him a candle, because there will be no electricity on the fifth floor either. So, he'll be the last one to leave the area. That's my perception of Youngstown. This is not the garden center of the universe.

B: Physically, what was the downtown area like?

F: Much more alive. Now, you're not old enough to remember twenty-two, twenty-three years ago. There were a couple of major department stores, and I mean major. My wife and I were just talking about the operations of both Strouss' and McKelvey's a couple of days ago. It was pleasant to go downtown and to shop. You could find very nice things out there. Even when the malls, the smaller malls were in operation--I'm talking about up in Liberty Plaza and Austintown Plaza, and so forth--the bigger malls basically ran those shopping centers out of business, which I attribute to DeBartalo, to be perfectly blunt. I mean, here's a man who lives in Youngstown, who made his money in Youngstown, and quite frankly helped kill the downtown Youngstown area. I don't know what the considerations were for his planning his malls out in the suburbs. I don't even want to go into the demographics or economics of it, but it seems to me that somebody should have made a commitment to the downtown area.

Over the course of the years, when different stores were closing down in downtown Youngstown, I remember talking to people and saying that quite frankly the university ought to expand into the downtown area and take over McKelvey's or some other building of that kind. They had a parking facility there, a lot of parking. They could have taken and put the CAST college there, and it would have infused life into downtown Youngstown. Once you've got people there, real people, not just simply street people, hobos or whatever, once you have people, you're going to have jobs, you're going to have restaurants, [and] you're going to have all sorts of things. It didn't happen.

So basically, it's a combination. This goes back to the malaise of Youngstown since the late 1960s, early 1970s. It's a community that's lacked leadership, and unfortunately, even the people who owned the department stores are gone. As an example, this is being done in reference to the Jewish Community. You talk to anybody in the Jewish Community, and they will tell you that, in the twentieth century, one man stands out in terms of his leadership prowess, his ability in the Jewish Community, and in the general Youngstown community, that's Clarence Strouss. Clarence Strouss was not just a businessman, but he was deeply involved in the affairs of the community, the religious affairs of the community, the leadership of the Jewish Community, and so forth. What happened after Strouss died, I think in the 1950s if I'm not mistaken, after Strouss died, his family took over. It's a pattern that you see repeated in virtually every community where they had these German-Jewish immigrants who started selling out of

wagons in the nineteenth century and then started little shops in the nineteenth century and dry goods places and things of that sort. Ultimately, like in Columbus, the Lazarus family or the Boston Filenes, or Kauffman's in Pittsburgh or whatever. They all started the same way, but there was this real go-getting attitude on the part of the immigrants and the first generation.

Then, in the second generation all of a sudden, there wasn't quite the eagerness. Those kids had been raised in wealth. Those kids were not quite as anxious to really work. Many times there were intermarriages, and by the time you get to the third or fourth generation, they were not even Jewish any longer; and eventually the families sell out, which is what happened to Strouss. I have watched since the Strouss' company was sold to Kauffman's. I hate shopping at Kauffman's, because I know Kauffman's came into Youngstown and said they would retain the Strouss name. I knew damned well they were going to change the name and get rid of the Strouss name altogether, which they did. I hate shopping at Kauffman's for that reason, and I'm not even a Youngstowner.

B: Can you talk a little bit about your religious background?

F: I am not Orthodox. I'm not Reform. I would call myself Traditional in the sense that, being raised in a non-Jewish Community, which is what my background really was--I lived in Berea as a kid, which is hardly a Jewish community on the West Side of Cleveland--but because of that, my emphasis was more on the historical background on Judaism and the Jewish people, and a desire to have my own kids be more at home in a traditional Jewish setting. By that, I mean I wanted them to know Hebrew. I wanted them to be more familiar with the prayers and the melodies, the holidays, all of this, which is really what we did not have. My mother came from an Orthodox family, but she raised us very freely. I think we've succeeded in giving our kids a pretty decent Jewish education. They know who they are, and they're very proud of their Jewish roots, traditions.

It's mainly in the orientation of culture, tradition, history, national identity. The religious aspect is another thing. That is part of the whole culture, but anyone who knows me knows, first of all, that I don't worry. I'm a nonconformist. We keep the holidays, but we don't observe the holidays in the manner that a lot of people would like. For example, my wife is not Jewish and as a result we have a Christmas tree in our house, which would set people in the Jewish Community

through the ceiling. But, nobody argues or challenges me for one reason and that is that over the course of the years in the Youngstown Community I've acquired a reputation in a sense of being, if not of being a Jewish pope, at least a Jewish cardinal.
(Laughter).

B: Could you describe for me, the difference between the three sects?

F: Pretty good interview so far! (Laughter)

B: Well, good. (Laughter) Could you describe for me, the difference between the three sects of Judaism?

F: Traditionally or historically, the Jews have all originally been Orthodox, which is very strict. [There is] 100 percent Hebrew, segregation of the sexes in the synagogues, no work on the Shabbats or Sabbath, the observance of the kosher dietary laws.

Opposite to that, in the nineteenth century in Germany and central Europe, when there was emancipation of the Jews, you had the Reform Jewish movement develop, which is basically the movement that Rabbi Berkowitz was identified with. That's a very modernist movement. A movement that says quite frankly, "Look, we no longer are in a ghetto. We have an opportunity to live as free people. We have an opportunity to participate in the economic life of the Christian Community, and it is impossible to shut down on a Saturday because the Christian Community shuts down on a Sunday."

As a result, the economic factors dictate that you have to work on a Saturday. That puts problems on how you pray, so the Reform Community prayed, emphasized Friday nights or they had Sunday morning services in that sense. They didn't believe that it was necessary to cover their heads with the yarmulkehs or skull caps. They didn't believe that it was necessary to pray in Hebrew, because Hebrew never has been sanctified as a sacred language. Culturally, it may have been identified as such, but it never was sacred. They stressed the importance of understanding what you pray. Often times, as in the Christian Community, people would go to mass and they'd mumble things, thinking that they were going along, and a lot of times that's what happens with people. I mean, a guy like Theodore Herzl, for example, learned his Hebrew during his Bar Mitzvah, by rote and recited it, and then became a man. Robert Clary told me that when he was bar mitzvahed in Paris, that the same thing happened. He learned his Hebrew beautifully and sang it. He didn't know what he was singing, he said. The purpose of the Reform movement then was, quite frankly, to put the prayers into a

language people could understand. Also, they didn't see any reason to segregate men and women in religious services and also separate them. Also, they didn't see any reason to follow dietary laws, which may have been relevant two thousand years ago but which weren't any longer applicable in the nineteenth century. As a result, they were basically a modernist movement.

In between, you have a Conservative movement, which acknowledges right in both of those. We do live in a Gentile world. We have to accommodate the realities. You cannot simply shut down you're businesses every time, but at the same time there are certain holidays that require shutting down, for example, Yom Kippur. They still maintain that you should have a blend of Hebrew in your services, because it was important from a cultural standpoint to do that sort of thing. [They still practice] the wearing of skull caps, not the segregation of women or anything of that sort, and there actually are still some conservatives who cling to the dietary laws. I don't and it's always been an amusing situation when, for example, we have the Zionist meeting or a meeting of Jewish leadership or something. They know that if we're at a restaurant, that Friedman will order a cheeseburger and fries. It doesn't matter where the restaurant is. It doesn't matter if it's at McDonald's or that place out in Poland on 224.

B: Inner Circle?

F: No not the Inner Circle. The really deluxe one out there by the Boathouse.

B: The Ground Round?

F: No. It's--well, it doesn't matter. In any event, it's a deluxe restaurant, and I'll order a cheeseburger, which is in violation of Jewish dietary laws. But, I've always felt good about that since the day that I went to dinner with Rabbi Berkowitz and he ordered shrimp. That's not Kosher either.

B: When you arrived in Youngstown, were all the various sects within Judaism present in Youngstown, Conservative, Orthodox. . . .

F: Yes. As a matter of fact, there were more synagogues in 1969 than there are today. For example, there was one Orthodox congregation, The Children of Israel, Rabbi Brockman's, who was a really sweet man. There were people who had a lot of difficulties with Brockman, but Brockman was never anything but kind to me and was always committed. He was a little bit cuckoo in his own lovable way, because his ultimate commitment

was to the memory of the Holocaust. He had not experienced it, but he had relatives who had; and as a result, he was very much involved with this. This was his major contribution. He was always the mohel or the circumciser in town, and The Children of Israel had a small old house up along one of the side streets--I don't know whether it was Crandall or whatever--off of Fifth Avenue. It was a real pit until they moved into a joint building with El Emeth.

B: El Emeth?

F: When we came to town, actually, there were two separate Conservative synagogues on the North Side. There was Temple Anshe Emeth, which is now Neville's Church right there at Wick Park.

B: Okay.

F: You can see the star of David is still there. As a matter of fact, I taught in Anshe Emeth in the religious school for awhile. It was a beautiful building, beautiful structure. [It was old though,] and it was primarily, from what I've been told from the people in town, it was primarily Hungarian Jews who were involved there.

Then, there was one on Fifth and Fairgreen, which is now an old people's or an old person's community center, there was Temple Emmanuel, at Fifth and Fairgreen. [It was] a newer building. Originally, there congregation was out here on East Graham. There's a church near the library on East Graham. I think it's an AME Zion church which was apparently the original Emmanuel. Of course, they have moved out of town. . . . They both were Conservative synagogues. They merged and went out to Logan, and then, they tagged on The Children of Israel as just simply an ell or building addition to that structure.

Then there was, of course, Rodef Sholem, which was a large Reform congregation on Wick Park. Then, on the South Side, across the viaduct and everything, over the course of the years, two congregations had merged in the 1950s, if I'm not mistaken about 1957, out in Boardman and formed another Conservative congregation, which was Ohev Tzedek. When I came to town, there were five congregations. Three of them were Conservative. One was Reform and one Orthodox.

But, as far as numbers are concerned, there are six million Jews in the United States. Generally speaking, they give figures of this kind to account for the Jews: one third of those Jews are not affiliated with any synagogues whatsoever. In other words, about one third

of them are called agnostic, which puts them in as agnostic or atheist, which is an anomaly. In other words, you couldn't call somebody atheist a Christian, but you do call people who are atheist, Jews; and they identify as Jews, which gets you into this cultural thing. Of the remaining two thirds, or four million, they're split equally among the three congregations or three groups: Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform. In Youngstown, that isn't the case. The predominant number have been Reform Jews in Youngstown. That may be because, again, the longest roots in this community are German Jews who generated Modernist Reform, and that's why Rodef Sholem is the largest congregation. I can't give you specific facts, but again, the smallest congregation is without a question, The Children of Israel, the Orthodox.

B: Okay. When you arrived was there still the ethnic neighborhoods present in Youngstown?

F: I really can't account for that. You'd have to talk with one of the old timers. Remember, I wasn't familiar with the town when we got here. I know that the East Side was black and the near North Side was black, and the Jews were on the North Side, from Goleta and places of that sort, by the park. They were also in Liberty. They had already started--they grew there in Liberty in larger numbers, in Liberty and the near North Side. But, we didn't move in any of those neighborhoods. There were some in Boardman, for example, but as far as ethnic groups of Italians and so forth, I wasn't really aware as much of that as I would be able to tell you, say about Cleveland, for example. But, we wound up, as I told you, the first place that we wound up--and I as a joke, sent out Christmas cards that first year, from the Friedmans in Poland.

B: (Laughter).

F: And there weren't too many Jews in Poland.

B: Do you recall when you first got the chance to meet Rabbi Berkowitz?

F: Oh God!. I honestly don't know. I can't remember any kind of incident as such. It's interesting. I really can't say because I'm positive that what must have happened, because in that early period when I was here, you have to understand that the Vietnam War was going on. The Jewish Community Center, whenever any new Jewish "intellectual" came to the community, the adult activities people made an effort to bring these people in to give lectures.

Now, I don't even remember the first lecture I might have given. It may have been on the Middle East, but I don't think so. I think one of the first lectures that I gave, or talks that I gave dealt with Vietnam, and I think it was a debate with Professor Slavin and myself, up at the Jewish Center. It was in the fall of 1969. Obviously, knowing me, I was hawkish and had been unrepentant. [I] think that, as a matter of fact, the history of Vietnam has been taught incorrectly for the last twenty years anyway. I happen to believe that our involvement was right, proper and that people, who don't agree with that, basically don't know what the hell they're talking about. That was what I said back in 1969. This is 1992 and I still maintain it. Slavin's position was it was a civil war, [et cetera]. We packed the place. It may have been after that affair that I met Berkowitz, but I think it was even before that. That's the first real memory I have of giving a lecture in the community, although I did give a series of lectures on the Middle East that same year, 1969, 1970.

But, there was another thing that happened, and that is Larry Erlich was a cantor at Rodef Sholem. He contacted me very early on also. Again, there is a desperate need in any Jewish Community for religious school teachers. Erlich wanted to know if I would teach at Rodef Sholem Sunday School. I had been teaching at a Reform Sunday School in Columbus while I was teaching down there for a couple of years, so I said, "Yes." [I agreed] also because I was looking ahead at the fact that I had two young children who were going to be going to Sunday School anyway, and the fact was that over the years I had understood that there were a lot of bad Sunday School teachers and I figured, "Alright. If I ever sent them to Sunday School, I would not punish them by dropping them off like so many of the parents. I would be there also, teaching, so they would see me and they'd have a positive reaction to Sunday School."

It's through Erlich, I think, that I was first really brought into contact with Berkowitz. Berkowitz was very kind to me and very decent and so forth, in that first year or so. But, very soon, I decided that Reform Judaism was not what I wanted for my kids. I gravitated to Ohav Tzedek, because that was out closer to where we lived. First of all, we were in Austintown. Secondly, because I personally was more comfortable with the Conservative traditions and that sort of thing. As a result, originally, Rabbi Markowitz was out there. Subsequently, Rabbi Herb Schwartz, who has been one of my closest friends ever since 1971 or 1972.

B: Professor Earnhart likes to hear something about what Rodef Sholem looks like. Could you describe it for me?

F: Rodef Sholem is the best example of Byzantine Architecture in Youngstown. By that, I mean, when I talk in my Middle East class about what the contributions of the Byzantines were, one of the contributions is the architectural style of churches. In the case of Rodef, which Rabbi Berkowitz referred to as the Basilica in Youngstown and you don't move a Basilica.

You have basically a building that has a huge dome dominating the structure. Just imagine a square base with a rounded dome, with all kinds of half domes and so forth, a massive central dome; and that basically, is what you have in Rodef, better than in any of the other churches in this community. It is a structure which inside has a main hall which probably seats, I would imagine, close to five hundred people. There is a small balcony that would seat, I would imagine, a hundred or so, and I have seen it filled only rarely on major events. It is a beautiful structure. The main sanctuary has been redecorated several times. It opens from the west, on Wick Park, and the actual Torah scrolls are contained on the east wall. There is an ell, which contains the school rooms in the back. There is a business office, the offices of the rabbi and cantor and so forth. Downstairs there is a very nice gallery for social affairs with a stage and things of that sort. Beyond that, as far as decorations, if I'm not mistaken, there is a Hebrew inscription above the ark which contains the Torah scrolls that reads, "Know before whom you stand," which is basically a reference to God, when people come and pray. I don't know if you want anything else.

B: Is there anything else that strikes you about it?

F: There are stained glass windows. That's also not common in an non-Orthodox synagogue. There are stained glass windows that have biblical scenes along the side. They're not what I would call exquisite. They're rather subdued tones, in other words, of biblical scenes or something of that sort. There's no mechitza, as it's called. The mechitza is the separation between men and women, the purpose of which was to keep [the] people's attention focused solely on prayer. That was the reason you separated the two. In Rodef Sholem you don't have that screen or balcony. You do have a balcony, but you don't have it screened off or anything of that sort. I'm trying to think of anything which strikes me. It has exquisite wood panelling in the interior of the main hall itself, great lighting, and it is a very warm sanctuary. Sound carries very well there, and that was always one of Rabbi Berkowitz's key

attributes. Berkowitz never had to really shout at people or anything of that sort, because he could talk in normal tones in that congregation in that building. He had a microphone, but he could talk in normal tones and it would carry. It had tremendous acoustics. Whoever constructed it, built a very sound structure.

B: Okay. What was Rabbi Berkowitz like, describing his kindness or something like that? Could you give some his personality attributes?

F: First of all, the first time that--you know, size makes a difference in an individual. It really does. In other words, your perceptions of people. You've met Cantor Erlich, and Cantor Erlich is a huge individual. Normally, you associate with people who are that big, rotund, you associate jolly. He really feeds off that image of being somebody who jocular and so forth. You associate fat people as happy people. Tall people are supposed to be more sinister. Lean people are more sinister.

Berkowitz was a short man. I don't imagine he was much more than 5 feet, 6 inches or 5 feet, 7 inches. I don't know if anybody's ever told you that or not. I don't know how that affected his personality. Again, shorter individuals sometimes are people who are more aggressive or something of that sort. That's not to say that he was Napoleonic or anything, but the fact is that he was somebody who was a go-getter. I think that size does have something to do with that. He was an extremely intelligent guy. His credentials speak for that. Yet, at the same time, he was not pretentious. I told you before, I would never have guessed that he would have been a graduate of Cambridge or of a British institution. He never flaunted it. There are people who wear their Phi Beta Kappa achievements practically on their noses. There are people who go around flaunting their Harvard degrees, and I know one at Kent State, for example, who does that. So what? It's what you do afterwards, and Berkowitz was that kind of an individual. I think that's a major attribute, the fact that he could be and that he was very straight forward with everybody. In other words, he was an individual who did not put on airs whether he was dealing with people who were tailors in the Jewish Community or whether he was dealing with the bishop in Youngstown or dealing with any of his congregation or people of the black community or whatever. He could talk to people on a common level, but at the same time, he could be an intellectual; but he didn't flaunt it. I think that's very important too.

As far as his capacities, qualities, and so forth, intelligence was one. His ability to deal with people on their own levels was another. His leadership capacity was unquestioned. He was an individual--again you take a look at his vita and you know that he was able to achieve all kinds of presidencies. That's a major achievement too, the ability to get along with other people. I don't have it. I could work at this department for the next forty years and would never have four votes for any position, anywhere, basically because if I don't like somebody, I'm not going to waste my time with the individual. Berkowitz had the skills to work with people he didn't like, and I just can't. To me it's a major achievement for people who can do that sort of thing. He was a man who had an ability to feel out and sense when there were limits on what he could do. That also is something that I don't have. In other words, I know one of my failings is that I am self righteous, and if I feel I am right, god damn it, I will go and fight you until the end. Berkowitz knew that there were ways of achieving things even if they took a longer period time. I'll give you the best example I can.

Remember, Rodef Sholem was initially a hotbed of anti-Zionism. In other words, the Moyer family--I don't know which one it was, but he was one of the founders of the American Council for Judaism, which was anti-Zionist in the 1940s. Berkowitz came in 1946. Even though the war was over and so forth, there was a hedging there. In other words, he didn't come right out and flaunt zionism and his pro-Zionism. What he did was--Joe Hill will tell you the same thing--he brought his congregation in that direction. He recognized what he could do, and had he come in and said, "I'm a Zionist. This is right, and we're going to do only Zionist programs," and so forth, they probably would have thrown him out within a year. But, what he was able to do was very subtly, he was able to do exactly that, but not flaunt it, again, in front of them. He was able, ultimately, to become president of the Zionist organization, chairman of the board of the ZOA, and so on and so forth. He achieved things, ultimately, that I would have wanted to do in terms of, if I had been in that position, but he did--I would have gotten fired. He was able to do it, and that's a skill also. So, he was a great negotiator. He was an individual who was very much trusted by all sorts of people. I don't want you to come away with the idea that Rabbi Berkowitz and I agreed on everything. I told you that, up until the very last year, basically, we did. I had great rapport with Rabbi Berkowitz, but we had a falling out at the very end over what I consider to be a power situation within the ZOA. I don't want to go into it, but the fact is that he and I were

cool towards one another at the very end. But, that doesn't minimize my respect for the man and all of his positive contributions to the community.

B: Was he always very active? As far as ecumenical developments, was he one of the key catalysts?

F: Yes. He had a unique relationship with the Gentile community. No Jewish leader, other than maybe Clarence Strouss in his own way from a financial standpoint, had that kind of rapport. Toward the end in the 1970s, there were three individuals who were like three brothers, basically. That was Bishop Malone, Berkowitz, and also Reverend Spiker who formed the Mahoning Valley Association of Churches. They were very tightly knit, very supportive of one another. If something happened in one community, it affected the others.

The example that I gave you a couple of weeks ago was, when there was an earthquake in Italy and somebody committed arson against St. Columbus, Berkowitz, as the representative of the Jewish community presented two \$1,000 checks to Bishop Malone: a) for the earthquake relief in Italy, and b) the second check was to help repair the one baptistery I think it was torched over at St. Columbus. I remember when it happened too, because I was on my way over to teach Sunday School at Rodef.

I ought to tell you that I had a hand in all that, because the money came from the Schermer trust, which Jim Pozol and I serve as trustees. I read in the Sunday morning Vindicator that the St. Columbus had been hit by arson, and my two kids, my older two, Molly and Jonathan, were going to Sunday School with me. We made a special detour past St. Columbus. We stopped there, and I said, "I want you kids to see this." They were eleven and eight, and there was their crazy father. I was trying to make a point. I said, "I wanted you to see this, because I want you to know that this is exactly what they did to synagogues in Europe and I want you to know that this is wrong. This is something that shouldn't happen to any house of worship."

As a result of that, Berkowitz got involved and delivered the check to Bishop Malone. That's the kind of thing that he was very good at doing. In other words, he was tremendous in public relations, and he had a unique relationship that no one will ever have with any of these communities. A lot of things have changed, obviously, too, since that time.

B: There's just a few more things. There's a number of things I came across, things I've done research on, with the outside community. Are you familiar with his position on Vietnam, as far as the anti-War Movement?

F: No. I'm not [familiar]. I would assume that he was against the war, but he never talked about it. I don't know what his position was.

B: Was he well respected within the labor community in Youngstown?

F: I really can't speak for that either. I'm not familiar with that. Berkowitz and I worked together in, as I say, Zionist affairs primarily, religious education, and also he was very much involved in the pushing for the memorial up at the Jewish Center, the Holocaust Memorial. He was one of the six or seven people on that Holocaust Memorial Committee that tried to get the money for it, put together the survivors and the different people, reviewed the different applications, proposals and pushed for the creation of that memorial after all these years.

That's, again, something when we're talking about the affairs I was involved in: ecumenical, Israel, Zionism, Holocaust, and Jewish education. Those are the things that I can talk about. Anti-Semitism, things of that sort.

B: Who else was involved with the Holocaust Memorial?

F: Irving Ozer was involved. Esther Shudmack was a survivor who was involved. So was, more than anybody else, Eva Jacobs, who was a great lady who passed away recently, was a person who was very much involved, pushing for the memorial, and Stanley Engel. You're talking, there was Berkowitz, me, Engel, and the survivors and Irv Ozer. It was about six people. Oh, and one other person, Milt Handler, [you've] got to give him credit. Milt Handler was president of Rodef Sholem at the time, a lay member of the committee, and a businessman who owned a General Home Improvement here in town, and he was very close to Berkowitz.

B: Is there anything that we haven't touched on?

F: No. If you think about anything, you can come back and let me know. I'll be here, Matt, during the second session. I'll be teaching between 8 [a.m.] and 10 [a.m.], which means that after 10 o'clock in the morning, I'll be in the office, at least for a little bit if you want me and there won't be a problem of whether I'm coming in or not. But generally speaking, I think you've got a number of ideas that work well.

B: Yes. I'm really happy with them.

F: Okay.

B: Thank you.

F: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW