ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
JEWISH COMMUNITY OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK
1925 TO 1975

Underwritten by Jewish Community Federation
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KEY

Q. Questioner
A. Answerer

The above abbreviations were used in all cases except where two or more persons were being interviewed at once. In those cases, the initials of the interviewees were used to denote "A" (Answerer).
This is Dennis Klein talking with Mr. Wilhelm Braun from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature. We're talking in his office at the University of Rochester and today's date is January 11, 1977. After many incidences this morning, including a snow storm and a burnt hand, I thought we would begin with a biographical sketch, Professor Braun, of your life, so that we know a little bit more about who we're talking with. If you can tell us when you were born and where, some background of what your parents would be useful I think, and you know, take from there.

Well, I was born in 1921 in Vienna. And let me say that both my parents are... or were rather, citizens of the old Austrian/Hungarian monarchy of... my father was born in Vienna, too in the year 1886. And my mother was born in a small town in Galicia called Talnof in 1895.

Would you give us their names?

Yea. My father's name was Max Braun, my mother's name was Sara Braun. Now, my grandfather, whose name I carry, whose name was Wilhelm Braun, was born in a small village about two hours southeast from Vienna in a part of Austria called Wurnland in one of the small Jewish communities there called Kobaschtorsh. And when he was a young man he left there to seek his fortune in the... in the bigger city. And he did not succeed, as a matter of fact, he... he ended up being a Hebrew teacher for the rest of his life. My mother's family came to Vienna as a result of the events in 1914. They came in the summer 1914 after the outbreak of World War I. So both of... on my father's and on my mother's side, the families had been living in Austria, what used to be the old Austrian/
A. (Continued) Hungarian monarchy, for quite a period of time. There was a... a difference to some extent in my father's family German was spoken, while in my mother's family both German and Yiddish were still spoken. So, I knew a little bit of Yiddish when I first came to this country because of what I heard of my mother speaking to my grandparents. But, basically, my Yiddish is acquired, not... not native...

Q. I see. German was spoken in your family?
A. Yea.

Q. What were the religious practices, observances of your parents. Was it strict, was it inclined...
A. Well, in my... in my own immediate family, you know, that is my father's and mother's practices were still fairly strict. But, of... among their siblings, yea, the practices sort of spread from very strict observance to almost none observance. So there was quite a spectrum.

Q. I would assume that your mother was more observant than your father.
A. Well, it's... it's hard to say. I would say that that... yes, to some extent that's true. Yea.

Q. Did you have a Jewish education?
A. I had a somewhat limited Jewish education. I was sent to a Talmud Torah, that is an afternoon school, it was in no way intensive. And, I've often regretted the fact that at that time the education was so limited. But, Vienna in the twenties, when I was a kid, and the thirties, did not on the lower level have very intensive Jewish facilities. They did have Jewish high school, but it was located far from where we lived in the... we did not live in the Jewish district by... but the Jewish high school was located in the Jewish district. And I did not attend it. So, perhaps I shouldn't... I shouldn't say, yes the... there were possibilities for... for a better Jewish education, but
A. (Continued) I did not... I did not get it.

Q. Was this your... I mean was there a conflict between your parents where to send you to high school?

A. No, I think it was basically a... a... to some extent also a financial problem. We were living in what was called the Fifth District and the... the Jewish high school was in the Second District and it would have involved traveling of... on the streetcar for an hour in the morning, an hour in the afternoon. I really don't think that my parents ever considered, yea, the need for sending us because the kind of environment in which I grew up was such, yea, that even though the Jewish education was rudimentary, they did not feel that they had to go out to take any extra steps in... in this attempt of preventing even greater assimilation. They felt that they did, yea. Most of my contemporaries and so on went to the same afternoon school that I went to...

Q. Did you have anything more you wanted to say about what you were talking about earlier?

A. Well, I... I would say that all my life I've tried to make up, not in a very disciplined way, some of the gaps and the kunaiya in my Jewish education which I did not receive when I was a kid.

Q. You felt, in other words, I guess like... like most Jews probably, my guess is probably, more German than Jewish. I mean you... you felt you were a citizen of the state, of Austria...

A. Well... let me say this. The word "German" is a misnomer in this, yea... you might say I felt, and all my contemporaries, yea, felt very much at home in Austria, yea. We considered this our... our native country. There was no great conflict between being a Jew and being an Austrian. Now we knew, of course, that there was some anti-Semitism in Austria at that time. But, this was taken as a... a... as a matter of course. And, it kind of a nuisance,
A. (Continued) yea. That one had to contend with, but somehow shrugged off, yea. But, simply, I wouldn't want to use the word "German" at all.

Q. The reason, I guess, I used it was because...
A. Yea.

Q. Wasn't there, though that to some extent a German culture in... and not Austrian culture?
A. Well, let me say, I was a youngster, yea. And... and the problem of culture did not, yea. Did not enter my... did not enter my experience. But, I never felt... you see, I never had this problem of two cultures.

Q. OK.
A. Yea? I was an Austrian Jew.

Q. Right.
A. And it... it never... it never really troubled me... troubled me.

Q. OK.
A. When I was a kid.

Q. OK. When did you come to America? Could you explain a little bit of how that happened?
A. Well, I left Austria in August, 1939. Through the help of English organizations that took Jewish children and teenagers to England. The idea was to prepare them both for youth Aliyah and for later agricultural training in preparation of going to what was then Palestine. So, I arrived in England August 17, 1939, just two weeks before the war broke out. I was very, very fortunate. And I was then... I... I give you this very, very briefly. I was in England for from September, '39 to May, '40, in a huge children's and teenage camp, which was on the grounds of an old Castle in Wales called Gruncastle. I would... I was registered as an enemy alien when the war broke out because we had German
A. (Continued) passports. I was interned in England in May, 1940. And brought to the Isle of Man together with some, I think, twenty or thirty thousand other German and Austrian Jewish refugees. And I was then transferred to Canada from the Isle of Man and I was interned in Canada for two more years, so August, 1942. One of my fellow internees was Professor Emil Fakenheim who has since gone on to... well, shall we say, he's well-known in Jewish and other circles. And I was released in 1942 and had to work on a farm in... for a year in Canada. I then managed to go to the city of Toronto and worked in various factories there and then I entered the University of Toronto and I did my undergraduate, graduate work there. And I did not come to the United States till I had my first full-time job in 1953.

Q. Did you have your Canadian citizenship?
A. Yes, I received Canadian citizenship, I think, 1946. And, I've subsequently become an American citizen.

Q. Now, through these travels from Austria to England and Canada, were you alone, with family?
A. I was all alone. I... my... I had... my family was left behind in Vienna. My... I have a younger brother who preceeded me going to Sweden and, I think, February or January, 1939, and from Sweden he went to Israel, and he's still lives in Israel at the present time. But my family was left behind. My father died of natural causes in the fall of 1940, and my mother was deported in 1941 and we have never found out what exactly happened to her.

Q. Now you have one brother?
A. Yes.

Q. And that's... 
A. All, yes.

Q. The extent of it... family. Why didn't your family leave together as a...
A. Unit. Well, let's...that's...It was very difficult for people to leave unless they had either relatives in the United States or...or in other countries abroad who would furnish them with affidavits to, you know, there was such a thing as so-called Austrian quota-numbers. You had to be registered. Even if you had an affidavit and you had no quota-number, you...you had to wait until your turn was called. We did not have, at that time, any relatives in...in the United States at all. Other people managed to find friends that had...made connections abroad and...and got certain guarantees. We were a family that had hardly any connections with...in any other country in the world. And neither did we have the means, yea, because in those days it was possible to buy visas for certain South American countries. You know, it was even possible to buy a ticket to Shanghai, but this required a fairly large sum of ready money, which we did not...which we did not have. Even if we had the money, yea, and my mother still had her mother still alive...still alive at that time and she may have been reluctant to leave and leave her behind. Well, that's just a surmise, I'm not sure. Then, of course, there was the feeling that being Austria, yea, that is at least my father who had been born and brought up in Vienna, there was a very foolish on...on some people's part that Austrians were less in danger than Eastern Jews. That...that Eastern Jews might be deported, but Austrian Jews would be left alone. Now, there are all kinds of illusions that people have...you know...

Q. Up until...

A. Up until...for example, even in the fall of 1938 there was one great...a large series of arrests of Polish Jews in Vienna. For example, some members of my own fa...on the part of the family my mother...were arrested, one was even deported to...to Poland, yea. And that made...since this was
A. (Continued) people who had Polish passports or had been one time Polish citizens, since Austrian Jews were left alone, yea, that gave them some foolish feeling of security that they might escape while Polish Jews would be... would be more... would be more endangered. And there was, of course, the basically the feeling that no matter what the atrocities were at that time, people knew about the concentration camps, Dachau, Buchenwald, yea. Yet the feeling was that on the whole, that people without any particular record, yea, such as political or intellectual or well-known in the business world, that such people would be left alone. And so that I would say that people did... were not aware or fooled themselves, yea. 'Cause, otherwise, they would have made... yea?

Q. Now did you have this feeling yourself? I mean, can... can you...

A. Well I was... I was a youngster, and... and basically the community, yea? I left because of the community helping us to the various agencies that were established... But basically the feeling was that all children should leave, yea. And that then when the children were established, yea, the parents would...

Q. I see.

A. ... would follow. It was never contemplated, yea, that the parents would stay behind forever. It was understood that the whole community would, within a very, very short time, be obliterated. Nobody had any... any... any illusions about that. The only difference would be a year or two.

Q. I see.

A. A year or two at the most. You know, I think that when Goering came to Vienna in... in 1938, yea, and said Vienna would have to be Judenrhine in 1942, he gave four years. So, by... I would think that by '39, half the community had left or more. So we were... we were well ahead, yea, even of the time span the Nazis themselves had... had given the community.
Q. Right.

A. Because they had given four years.

Q. Also, there was that confusion about the intention and the how quick things would.

A. Would go. What... well, there were even rumors... I... I recall that there were rumors around in the... in the summer of 1939, yea, that the Nazis contemplated a transferring the whole Jewish community into camps.

These rumors existed, so somehow the news must have gotten around, because as a child even, I knew about them.

Q. But by camps, wasn't that part of the problem as to what they meant by camps, that they weren't... I mean, wasn't the term used resettlement camps and...

A. Something of that... something of that type, yea. They even gave locations somewhere in lower Austria where...

Q. Where this...

A. Where this... were... was supposed to happen. So it isn't that people did not... did not know, but I don't think that they could conceive of what was in store for them. Not even the... not even those who had returned from Dachau or Buchenwald, yea, could imagine the fate perhaps any worse than they had seen there, yea, and most of the people who were taken in March... there were two large groups of arrests, one in March, 1938 and one in November, 1938. And most of these people were subsequently released.

Q. I see. Mmmhmm. I know that... that Dachau was opened in '33, '33 I think it was,...

A. Yea.

Q. ... that early, and it wasn't really... it was just a work... it really was...
A. Well, it was... it was a camp in which work was done in the most inhuman conditions, but eventually, yea, prisoners were released. Mostly, with two conditions. They had to give up all their properties and they also had to leave immediately for a foreign country. So that, at least, if... when they were... if they were Jews, I don't know what they did to German political prisoners. But when these two conditions were met, yea, most prisoners were released. Now, of course, there were a number of prisoners who died because medically they couldn't take the... strain. And there was no... there was no...

Q. Yea... yea.

A. And, of course, the prisoners were strictly forbidden when they were released, yea, they were strictly forbidden to talk. So that very little was known about what the camps were like, yea.

Q. Under what... under what compulsion would somebody not speak about the camps?

A. Well, before they were released, yea, they were threatened that if they opened... if they said one word, yea, they would not...

Q. The threats were...

A. And that threat was so... it was... it was working so well that... and even if they had talked, I... I don't think that this would have made, yea... this would have made a great deal of difference.

Q. People just simply, then, wouldn't believe that...

A. They would not. They could not. It was beyond their... beyond their comprehension.

Q. So, on the one hand, there was a recognition of a serious situation and a crisis.

A. Yea.
Q. On the other hand, though, it was not considered to be what it turned out to be. . . There was not thought that it would. . .

A. Well, I. . . I would say that. . . that it . . . it required at least for Vienna, it required a certain degree of ingenuity and. . . and courage, yea, for people to leave. For example, I was being told that some of my relatives who had gone to what turned out to be Slovakia, that's the area around Presburg, and were hiding there, in 1941 sent a messenger, a Gentile Czech, to my mother with the note that he should take her across the border into what was then Slovakia. That the chances of hiding there with the farmers were better. And my mother did not go, she was afraid. She might have survived, yea, had she taken. . .

Q. What year was this?
A. That was 1941.

Q. 1941.
A. Yea. So, she might have survived had she taken the chance.

Q. Right. Now you left relatively late, it seems that most Jews. . .
A. Well, I was just very lucky.

Q. Yea.
A. Although it was possible to leave legally, yea, it was possible for Jews to leave until Pearl Harbor. Until 1941.

Q. Yea, I didn't know when that. . . I didn't know the possibility was that way.
A. The possibilities, yes. If you had. . . for example, there were still ships going from Portugal or Spain to the United States under neutral flags, yea. And Germany and the United States were not at war until Pearl Harbor. So, it was possible for the Jews, yea, to leave until 1941.

Q. I see. So the late. . . it wasn't the latest people went.
A. It was fairly late, but...

Q. Right. OK. Let's... let's come to the new country and talk about that for a moment. You came to the United States in 1953...

A. Yes.

Q. You said. Where did you first...

A. Well, I... I came already with a Ph.D., which I had obtained at the University of Toronto and I went to Morehouse College. Let me say that in 1953, the chances for a young Ph.D. to get a job in my field were just as bad...

Q. Oh, that's interesting.

A. ... as they are, yea... as they are today.

Q. Right. Right.

A. Somehow things happen in... go in cycles. Well, maybe not quite as bad because the number of, yea... the number of Ph.D.'s trying to get jobs was... there weren't quite as many.

Q. What did you get your degree in?

A. In Toronto.

Q. I mean...

A. In... in German Literature, yea.

Q. German Literature, yea.

A. And I was looking for a job. There was only one job that year going in Canada, in all of Canada there was one... one job in German Literature, which I did not get. And the only job I could get in the United States was at Morehouse College, which since that time has become somewhat famous because it's the alma mater of Martin Luther King. And I taught there for three years. From 1953 to 1956. And then I began to publish and I was very unhappy in Atlanta. When I think back of the... now it seems strange because Atlanta now is such an attractive, in many ways, an attractive city and it's cosmopolitan
A. (Continued) ... the climate is so much better than what we have here. But, I... I thought that my professional status there was very, very poor. I taught nine or twelve hours of elementary German, with very little... chance of advancement. The salary was very poor, I think I made, when I left I think I made $3,600 a year. And as I said, I was very, very foolish because I could have played a lot of tennis and...

Q. And enjoyed the climate...

A. And enjoyed the climate more. And there I was worrying about how I would get ahead in the profession, and make myself miserable. Finally, the job here in Rochester opened up and I've been here ever since.

Q. So, you've come directly from...

A. From... from Morehouse I came to Rochester.

Q. That's a pretty good appointment, then a pretty good job.

A. I came in '56, yes. Well, it is... it is a... it is a jump perhaps today, yea. But, in 1956, Rochester was a very small, local college without any great... without any... without any very great ambitions... in... as a graduate school or as a national school, it had a very good music school and medical school, but there was hardly any what was... in those days, I think, graduate work was only done in... in one or two departments, I think, physics and... and, I think, psychology had... had graduate work. But, this was just the beginning, it was... I came the year after... after the two colleges, the men's and the women's college, were merged on the... they had just built the women's residence here, which was brand new. And it was essentially a very, very local school. There were hardly any students from down state or... There was a climate totally different from what it is now. I mean, climate not in the normal sense, but...

Q. Yea, I know what you...
A. Intellectual climate, yea.

Q. Yea, I'll return to the... the... the university, because that's... that's important to this interview. Before we do that, though, let me ask when and how you decided to go into your profession of being a professor in German Literature.

A. Well, now that's very simple. I... I... when I came to Toronto from the farm, I immediately started to take courses at the university extension. And there I met a Swiss professor of German Literature, Herman Berscherstein, who had come to Toronto in the thirties, yea... had... had become professor there. He was very kind to me. And when I got my first degree, he asked me whether I would be interested in doing graduate work in German Literature. And, also teach a little bit on the side, I was a teaching fellow and got the great amount of $700 per year, which did not go very far in those days. Now, I had not... well, I had always liked it, I was also interested in history. The chance of becoming an academician, yea, in contrast to what I was doing at that time was so overwhelming, yea, that I did not hesitate for a second, yea, to do it. Even though in those days it was not easy for a Jew to get an academic appointment. And I knew about this, but somehow, it... it never... it never bothered me. For example, when I was an undergraduate in Toronto in the late forties and... and around 1950, the number of Jewish faculty members, yea, at the University of Toronto in all the colleges of... could be perhaps counted on the fingers of one hand. There just weren't any Jews who were faculty members. There was one, I remember Professor Brieger in Fine Arts who was a German Jew, whose Jewish loyalties were somewhat doubtful. And there was a lady in... in... in... in mathematics, but the number... and then, of course, there was Professor LeRoy in... in... in Chemistry, but the number of Jewish faculty in those days... it was rare for a Jew to be a faculty member. It was even rarer in Toronto in those days to be a
A. (Continued) faculty member at the medical school. The change in... in Jewish faculty participation the last 25 years in the United States, and I'm assume in Canada, too, has been nothing but fantastic. It was just the same when I... when I first came here to the University of Rochester. There... maybe there were ten Jews among the faculty, and the arts college, yea. As a matter of fact, I was told that the University of Rochester had its first Jewish faculty member in 1939. And that was Professor Leiskoph in Physics, who has since gone on to a most distinguished career, one of the top nuclear physicists. And, and he was the first Jew who ever taught here. This... this university had a tradition of anti-Semitism. It's hard to believe now.

Q. Yea. Well, I'm putting all of this down by the way under the U. of R. will... will focus on... but not until I'm satisfied with...

A. Yea well... you... you keep on asking.

Q. OK. Well, let me just ask though while we're on that subject, when about did this change do you think? Started to occur, let's say that more and more Jews were finding positions in the academe?

A. Well, I think that it had to do with the G.I. Bill. More Jews studied, went into the arts together, and into graduate work, because until that time, Jews went only into the professions. That is, accounting and medicine and law. But, after the war, yea, a lot of ex-G.I.'s returned and went into the humanities and went into graduate work. And then in the expansion of universities they were hired because they were good and they were so much better than their own contemporaries...

Q. Yea.

A. I... I think that there were a number of facts, yea, that... that went into this. Universities needed bright people, yea, and also Jews felt more
A. (Continued) encouraged to go into an academic... to an... undertake an academic career.

Q. Right.

A. It sort of went hand-in-hand.

Q. OK. I mean, that raises some questions for me. If there was this prejudice against Jews, even if Jews were good and they needed professors, it seems to me that that prejudice would... would be an important impediment to that process of accepting Jews into the... into a profession. In other words, not only was that situation, as you describe it, there must have been a change of attitude.

A. Well, let me say this, that... that it differs from department to department. Some departments were much more receptive to Jews. For example, when I came here, yea, were Jews in the Department of Physics and there were Jews in the Department of Psychology. And then, slowly, yea, did they infiltrate, I say...

Q. Just a word that...

A. Yea... of the other departments. For example, chemistry held out for a long time, but eventually, they had a Jewish Chairman. And, there were others, yea...

Q. Here at this university.

A. At this university. Chemistry held out for a long time.

Q. After you came.

A. After I came... there... there weren't any Jews. And...

Q. How many years, do you remember?

A. Well, I would say about five years, it might even... you know, this you could... you could... this could be... the facts are there that...

Q. Right, yea.

A. ... this could be looked up. This could be checked out. And I would say
A. (Continued) that English also held out for some time, yea, but eventually, I think they did... they did hire... I would consider English even today, yea, a very kind of "waspish" type of department. Of course, they do have Jews on... on the attendant staff, but I don't think that...

Q. Yea.

A. That this is the proper place... and of course, there are still... today there are a great many of my Jewish colleagues who would not like it known that they are Jews.

Q. Yea. Though that's a different problem.

A. That's a different problem, of course, it... the fact that the Jews have probably known to the Germany when he... when he hires them... I would think that altogether when I came here in 1956 there may have been about 10 Jews on the faculty.

Q. How many faculty members total, would you say?

A. In those days, there were about 150.

Q. Yea. This is well... they had 10, less than 10%. They say today there's about 20% now.

A. Oh, I would think more than that. More than that.

Q. Here probably more. I guess I was thinking of the national realm.

A. That... that's somewhere I don't know.

Q. Well, you figure there's more than that today.

A. I... I would think that there are... there are more Jews today because we have hired so much. I would think it's... nine-tenths of the faculty that was here in 1956 is gone.

Q. Right.

A. And, therefore, most of our faculty is new and has been hired since the early
A. (Continued) sixties. When you hire so much, when, you know, with the idea of hiring a... a quality faculty, that, of course, is inimical to any kind of prejudice.

Q. Well, that's a very important statement, I feel you're making there.

A. In other words, if this had not been such a period of tremendous university expansion, the prejudice against Jews in... in the academic world would have lasted much more. But everybody, yea, all universities wanted to get the bandwagon. They all thought that they had sort of roles to play and... and so they hired.

Q. Could a comparison be made between this phenomenon as you're describing it and today the desire for departments to hire blacks and women?

A. No. I... I would say that there's absolutely no comparison. The... the impetus to hire blacks and women is forced upon departments by Federal law. It comes... from the outside. The desire to... the fact that they hired Jews that was purely from the desire to become a good department and become a good university. And that was entirely generated from the inside. There was no pressure put on the universities to hire Jews of any kind.

Q. Right. One question that comes to mind when you... when you say this is that in other segments of the economy, for example in Rochester, it's... it's known that the... believed that the management level of Kodak is still, you know, there's still do not hire Jews. Despite the fact that there may be very good qualified Jews in the field. So, why doesn't that compare between Kodak and say the University of Rochester? Do you understand that question?

A. Yes... I... I understand. Well, I think it's... it's a good question. You might think that the... the profit motive for Jews... keeps Kodak going, yea? Should make them hire even more Jews, yea? I... I would think it should be comparable to... to the desire or the prestige of the president to have a
A. (Continued) great university and that's why he hires Jewish faculty. But I think that the . . . all . . . the situation is somewhat different in . . . Kodak still thinks that they can bring out the most advanced product, yea, by tapping the manpower pool and also employing a number of very bright Jews in their chemistry and physics departments, yea. And on a scientific level.

Q. Right.

A. As far as the administrative and selling level is concerned, their feeling is they're doing as good a job, yea, without hiring Jews. While university presidents and chairmen simply feel that without tapping the pool of Jewish academicians, they will not achieve that first, yea, first-rate status which they aspire to. So Kodak, Kodak does hire Jews in technical and scientific positions.

Q. Right. That's true. Yea, it's more of that. Well, it's interesting. I'm really intrigued by, you know, your explanation of this. It sounds, certainly plausible, it raises one more question in my mind, though. About . . . well, maybe we can make a comparison here between America and your experiences in Vienna. It seems to me that the attitudes in America against Jews must have been much less intensive than what we understand about anti-Semitic attitudes in the . . . in Europe because if . . . it . . . if it was the case that there were just a number of good Jews and if they needed good people in the department and they went ahead and hired them on that basis, really the . . . the attitudes against Jews could not have been very, very . . . let's say, very, very strong because . . .

A. Well, I . . . I would certainly, you can say that Americans, yea, never, never experienced the kind of brutal anti-Semitism that was prevalent in Europe. Let me say this. The . . . the anti-Semitism in America to a great extent was
A. (Continued) social, yea. And this is shown in the fact that the last batch of anti-Semitism in America today are the country clubs. And universities until, let us say, the fifties were considered, especially colleges, were considered extensions of the American power structure. Institutions where young gentlemen were being educated and it was . . . as long as nothing but this type of gentlemanly education, yea, was required there was no need to hire Jews, and there was no desire to hire Jews.

Q. Right.

A. When, however, colleges became universities and aspired to graduate work and research, yea, then the so-called, what I would call, social. . . essentially social prejudice. . .

Q. Right.

A. . . . vanished out of the desire to become an institution like Harvard or Princeton where these racial, religious prejudices didn't amount to . . . well, they were there even in those institutions, but they did not amount to very much. I would think that if we did not have. . . if we had not gone through this revolutionary work in educational system that small colleges like Rochester or, yea, and there were many like us, turned into graduate schools, there would not have been this tremendous increase in the number of Jewish academicians.

END OF TAPE I, SIDE A
Q. This is Dennis Klein. We're talking with Professor Braun on January 11, 1977. This is Tape No. 1, Side B. We were talking about the changes in the university and their attitudes towards Jews. You came to the University of Rochester in 1956, and the changes that you're describing started to take place shortly afterwards, so you really have a pretty good perspective about the transition in colleges, especially here at the university. And your explanations, I think, are... are insightful. They're very good. You mentioned that when universities started to become serious about graduate school work, some of this change then occurred. It's true, however, that smaller colleges had no aspirations towards graduate work or... or national prestige underwent the same kind of change. So, I would offer the explanation that it was just, I suppose, a social change in the higher education structure.

A. Well, of course, there was a general lessening of prejudice after World War II here in America. Not only in... in the universities, yea, and also... also in the small colleges. A... I think another factor that, especially where small colleges are concerned, is the fact that a lot of them gave up their denominational ties and as soon as they became secularized, yea, they were free to hire Jews. But, I would, for example, suggest that denominational schools, denominational colleges today still do not hire Jews, or perhaps in lesser numbers than the ones that have been completely secularized, yea? For example, we have that small political school here, Roberts Wesleyan, outside Rochester. I don't think there's a Jew on the faculty. We have the Catholic schools like Nazareth and... and St. John Fisher... And, I'm not
A. (Continued) aware that they have Jews on the faculty. Hobart, which is... used to be Episcopalean school, I think they're just beginning... and I'm not sure that they have too many, so I think that this is... this could be even looked at statistically. But, being a secular state school, of course, was... made it easier to hire Jews.

Q. Right. One... one school comes to mind that doesn't involve that pattern though, and that's, from my knowledge, Stanford University, which is a very prestigious school, and they still... they still seem to have, and maybe this is department to department, this kind of restriction, more or less deliberate...

A. What? They don't hire Jews?

Q. Yea.

A. Well, I didn't... I didn't... I didn't know that because in German a colleague of mine who is now at the University of Virginia, who is even Viennese, and well-known Jew... was... was... there for a while...

Q. As a student?

A. No, no, as a professor.

Q. Oh, as a professor.

A. Yes.

Q. Yea. Well, this may, again, be from department to department...

A. It may... it may... yea, it may be from department, but I've known a few being at Stanford...

Q. On the faculty... yea. OK. There was, according to other people who have had experiences at the university here, a quota against Jewish students... to accept students...

A. Well I've... I've heard about this, particularly while Rush Rheese was president, yea. And all the old Rochesterians will tell you about it, yea.
A. (Continued) It was very difficult for Jews... Jewish kids to enter the University of Rochester.

Q. Right.

A. That quota, of course, is not... does not exist anymore.

Q. Right. Right, for Jews at least. There may be...

A. For Jews.

Q. Right.

A. Well, it does not... if you're... I would go further and say if you're a qualified Negro, if you're a bright kid, as a matter of fact, the way things are now, your... have preferential status. At this university. They... they seek you out.

Q. On the basis of merit?

A. On the... no, no. On the basis of they're looking for black students.

Q. For black students, I see. Yea, yea. Which is the reverse, I mean the so-called reverse discrimination.

A. Yea. Yes, that's exactly... they're looking, yea. Well, I read freshman applications every spring, and if I see a... a non-white application, I have to mark it. And it gets special treatment.

Q. Right. But not for women. That... that's... in that category, as far as students go...

A. Well...

Q. ... it's... because there seems to be...

A. Non... non-white students get preferential treatment and that is not only Negroes, but Spanish-Americans, Asian-Americans, and so on.

Q. Now, you know, the so-called reverse discrimination does have that effect upon Jews because after all, one of the... one of the ethnic or cultural that are... that's hit that way are Jews.
A. I don't think so.
Q. Isn't it true that the highest proportion, at least, among good schools...
A. Well, the point is that the number of... qualified black students we take every year...
Q. Yea, I see.
A. Out of a freshman class of a thousand, we get fifty. That number is so small that it in no way militates against bright Jewish kids coming here.
Q. That's true.
A. Now, it might be elsewhere, but certainly the problem might exist in law schools and medical schools, it simply does not exist on the... on the undergraduate level here.
Q. Right.
A. And, of course, on the graduate level appointments are being made strictly on merit.
Q. Right.
A. So, I don't see it as much of a problem.
Q. But even on the undergraduate level, though the non-white applications are separated out, there's still considered very, very carefully and merit is still...
A. Yes, yes...
Q. Important.
A. I would think, and since we're taking so many Jewish kids and a lot of them, the applications are... are just average, a little better than average, everybody who's really has very... is a not, yea... so I don't... I don't feel that anybody suffers. I think Jews, with their feeling for... for justice should... should be in agreement that the... that Negroes deserve... certainly on the graduate level, a great deal of help and a
A. (Continued) great deal of preference. Now, I... I... I would say that... that employment may be another... that may be another problem but, I as... as a Jew have not felt that there's any discrimination of any kind involved in giving Negroes... qualified Negroes...

Q. Well what... what about employment? It seems that's a subject we've been talking about. That I can see a potential for... for...

A. Yes. There I would say... now, you see in... in academics where supposedly appointments are made, yea, strictly according to merit, somehow we try to... to consider people irrespective whether a man or a woman, yea, black or white or Jewish or what, now there might be some subtle psychological pressures. All we are... we must do as far as a department is concerned is we have to advertise our... our openings, if we have any...

Q. Right.

A. We have to consider all applications that come in and then decide strictly on merit. In other words, we give everybody an equal chance, but it doesn't mean that... that there's any pressure on the kind of appointment that we have to make.

Q. But isn't there in fact pressure from... from the action...

A. I think... the pressure is simply that to consider everybody alike.

Q. OK. That's the pressure.

A. Yea. You see, academic appointments are... are made in somewhat different way than you... than other appointments. You try to get the best... only the best, the most... well, let's say not the best, but the most promising person...

Q. Right.

A. On the basis of record.

Q. Right. I see. OK. It's interesting that as I thumb through some of the
Q. (Continued) bulletins, some universities advertise . . . well they make the point that they are "affirmative action."

A. Yea. . . well all the . . . they want to encourage is people to make applications.

Q. Well, they go further, they say we especially welcome applications from blacks and women.

A. Well, I don't think that Rochester has ever said that.

Q. OK. It hasn't said and that seems to border, you know, on . . . on the . . .

A. Yea, well you can go over the record of . . . of new appointments, especially on the Assistant Professor level and . . . and I would think that more women are . . . are being appointed, but it has something to do with the fact that more women are applying.

Q. Well, that's true.

A. Yea.

Q. That's true.

A. But, overall the numbers of women on the academic staff are so limited and the numbers of Negros on the academic staff are . . .

Q. Yea.

A. . . . so limited as to . . . I don't think it represents . . .

Q. An effort has to be made.

Yea. Yea, and the problem there, though we shouldn't really concentrate on this, but let me just mention it and you may wish to comment, again, it is a problem of rank because although there are more and more women on the junior level, it's . . . there is a problem of . . .

A. Well, they . . . the tenure regulations have been so tightened over the last few years, yea, and I . . . I think it'll be very, very difficult for people to to get tenure altogether, man or woman or . . .
Q. Well, that's true.
A. ... or Negros, whatever.
Q. Yea, what happens is, and we can go back now to... well, I suppose we wouldn't go back if I asked that question to the Jews... let me drop that question. When you came to... to Rochester, then, there was no quota system as far as you were aware of...
A. I... I don't think that there was. The number of Jewish students, yea, was relatively small, yea, it has increased ever since.
Q. Right.
A. But, there were... there were quite a number of Jewish kids on the campus, even then.
Q. Even then.
A. Yea.
Q. So that phase of...
A. I think that the... the so-called Rush Rheese phase, yea, active discrimination was over... I understand that the president that followed him, Allen Valentine, was much more tolerant... much more agreeable and certainly the president who was here when I came, Cornelius DeKeepit, who had been Dean at Cornell be... prior to coming to... prior to coming to Rochester was a perfectly... well, reasonable person in that respect. He even showed some interest in Jewish aspirations, even went to visit Israel at one time. I think after he left, after being president here, and so that era was... for all practical purposes, it was over when I came.
Q. Yea, yea. In fact, Rochester today has that reputation of being the Brandeis on... on the Genesee River, I mean, it really has gone the other way among undergraduate students there's a very large...
A. Well, I... I think that this had to do with the whole national situation. We have... you see, when I first came here undergraduates paid $750 a year tuition, which I thought was fantastic because in Toronto where I had gone to school, it was $250.

Q. Oh, I see, yea... .

A. Which was next to nothing. So, I thought $750 that... that's... that's an awful lot of money. In 20 years, we have gone from $750 to $3,700. Now the number of parents willing to pay such a sum is limited and Jewish parents being much more interested in their... welfare of their children and their professional aspirations, of course, are much more willing to... to make this sacrifice. Also, the... it is well-known that we compete for students with some of the... the most prestigious institutions. And, usually, what we get is the ones who can't get into the top institutions. And among those are very many Jewish kids.

Q. Right. Right. It's incredible, as you talk, about the number of changes that have gone on between '56 and the present, it really... things have changed really fast... .

A. Very, very fast and also, I think that there is a degree of intellectual and administration instability. I think it may not be apparent, we cover up very well. Well, we do not have the... you know, the historic backing as a... for being a graduate school and... and doing excellent work that has gone on for a long time. I think that it... it would be... we cannot compare Rochester, Cornell, for example, which has a much more... much... historically much stronger position of doing graduate work and doing... first-rate work... .

Q. Overall.

A. Overall. Over a long period of time, but these are changes of flux, yea and
A. (Continued) and Johns Hopkins isn't by far what it used to be and why shouldn't Rochester come up, you know?

Q. Yea.

A. But, there's a certain degree of insecurity there, too. Are we as good as we want to be and can we be as good as . . . as we want to be, I think we're in . . . we're in a kind of plateau right now.

Q. Right. I know that one attitude is very prevalent among students. . . . is this aspiration to be considered Ivy. . . . Ivy League. And that as you talk . . .

A. Aw, heck, we're not Ivy League. We're not even. . . . we're not even close to it.

Q. Well, that may be the fact, but that's not the. . . . the sense of students here.

A. Well, I think the students get as good an education here. . . . I have. . . . I have no, yea, I have no doubt about that as they would get probably in. . . . in other places, but I think Rochester lacks the kind of predicates that goes with older schools who have been doing this for long, . . . much longer period of time.

Q. Right. OK, we may jump back into the university as we go on. Let me ask you about your family now. When you got married, and to whom, the number of children you have.

A. Well, I. . . . I, yea, I married very late. And I married a young lady who comes from Amsterdam, her name is Louise Talbert, and I have two children. I have a little boy who is now going to be a seven, yea, and his name is Martin Zvi. And I have a little girl who is not four years old and her name is Sara Alisa.

Q. And when did you. . . . the year you got married?

A. In 1966.

Q. You met her in. . . . in Rochester?
A. No, I met her in Europe. And I brought her over to the... to the United States.

Q. In Am... In Amsterdam?

A. I met her, no in Switzerland.

Q. OK. OK. Let me ask you about Jewish education from this point of view. Have you encouraged the Jewish education or will you...

A. Oh yes, very much so. My boy goes to Hillel School, and... and my little girl will go to Hillel School next year. She goes to... she is in the kindergarten now. And my children will receive a much better Jewish education than I received when I was... when I was a youngster.

Q. And what synagogue do you...

A. I attend a very small synagogue called Beth Hakneses Hachодosh.

Q. Is that... which...

A. It's on Monroe Avenue and it's actually it's the oldest Orthodox synagogue here in town, it was founded in 1886 and transferred to Brighton about 1960.

Q. So, it's a small Orthodox shul?

A. Yea, a small shul, yea. Yea, that's what it is basically.

Q. Now, from what you talked about earlier, it seems as if you are fulfilling that lacuna that you have felt since... since Vienna in your own... in your own life today.

A. Well, I... I would think that I... you know... I... I realize that Jewish schools here in this country cannot perform miracles, yea. And that a lot of graduates of so-called Jewish community schools and even Jewish high schools eventually when they enter college and universities or business, yea, give up these ties. Of course, you might say that unconsciously the kids will... even the grown-ups, will continue, yea. It was there at one time
A. (Continued) and... but I've seen people who've been exposed to that type of education and... and later on have only the slightest bond with the Jewish community. Course what I... what I hope for my own children is that not only will they receive a good Jewish education, but I certainly I see Judaism in a much more humanistic setting, yea. I... I... I... I... I hope that their Jewish education will be part of their general humanistic education and... in other words, I have no intention at this point, for example, to send my children to a yeshiva.

Q. I see.

A. I don't think that the yeshiva in America is in an attempt of... of preserving a purely European kind of ghetto Judaism. And I... I find this restrictive.

Q. There was... very recently, yeshiva established in Rochester...

A. Established here, yea. I know, that's why I mean, now... for example, I... I've talked to my wife about this. And if my boy would say, well I want to go. Well, I... if he really wants to go on his own, yea, I certainly will not keep him... but I shall make no great effort, yea, to guide him along these lines.

Q. As you had about Hillel?

A. Certainly, I made every effort, yea, but he had no choice in that, and as a matter of fact, he likes it very much and I'm very, very pleased. Perhaps I should say at this point that we have been very, very fortunate in the kind of street that we live. We have not experienced, that is really rare, I live on 415 Hillside Avenue, we have not experienced in our street among the children and the parents, the playmates of our children, any kind of anti-Semitism. That is so different from what my own youth was like. The children of our
A. (Continued) neighbors come to our home anytime, any day, Jewish children, Gentile children. My children go to every home in the neighborhood, both Jewish and Gentile. And I often think about this and I can hardly believe, yea that such a situation exists, that exists, that is real. We have not experienced, on the contrary, our neighbors go out of the way to help us, be nice to us and, of course, we do the same thing for our neighbors. Now, the Catholic children in our neighborhood go to Catholic schools, yea. And so to some extent it is not considered in any extraordinary that my youngster goes to Hillel School. The kids, the Catholic kids go to the Queen of Peace School, yea.

Q. So, it makes sense that . . .

A. . . . our boy can go to Hillel . . . yea?

Q. Right.

A. He just goes on a different bus, when he comes home, he's just one . . . one of the gang. So, we have been more than fortunate in that respect.

Q. And I'm sure, in comparison again to your background, you're extra sensitive to that situation . . .

A. Very much, very much so.

Q. Is . . . and I don't know where Hillside Avenue is. . . is that. . .?

A. Well, it's . . . it runs off Temple Beth El. I'm within five minutes walk of Temple Beth El.

Q. Oh, OK. Is . . . is that a Jewish . . .

A. I would. . . it is. . . it is a district that has quite a number of Jewish families, yea. But it is. . . it is mixed. Now, for example, to my right the house on my right belongs to a Jewish faculty member of the medical school. The house to my left belongs to some Gentile who works at Kodak.
Q. So, it's pretty mixed then?
A. It is... it is mixed, yea. But there... it is... it is an area that is... that has a fairly good Jewish population.
Q. When you came to Rochester, let me map this out, when you came to Rochester, where did you first...
A. On Oxford Street.
Q. That's in the Park Avenue area?
A. That's in the Park Avenue area.
Q. OK.
A. And we even had an apartment for a year on Harvard Street before we bought that house on Hillside.
Q. So you went from the Park Avenue area to this Hillside residence?
Q. What... what is?
A. Hillside is still in the city.
Q. Oh, it's in the city of Rochester?
A. Yea.
Q. OK. Not far from Brighton, though, is it?
A. Well, about two blocks from Brighton.
Q. Yea, so you're close to... Now, the Park Avenue district or area... I'm certain had and perhaps still has a large Jewish...
A. Well, it... it... it used to have a large Jewish population, mostly older people. Their children did not normally settle there. It may be different now, but when I used to live there, a lot of older Jewish people.
Q. I see.
A. And, of course, the all, you know time takes its toll and they're slowly
A. (Continued) dying out...

Q. It's changing, yea.

A. It... it is, yea.

Q. It's changing, and in fact Brighton today is really the... the center of Jewish life...

A. Well...

Q. ... in Rochester.

A. Brighton and... and, of course, to some extent, Pittsford.

Q. Right, and Pittsford perhaps in the future even more.

A. Yea. Well, the way the JCC is situated, that is a pretty good indication of where the future center of Jewish activity is going to be.

Q. OK. When you... why did you move to the Park Avenue area when you came to Rochester? My question behind that, obviously, was it... was it... there an attraction to the Jewish...

A. Yea, oh sure, yea. I... I... Well, first of all, I looked for... for... for a room, yea. And I discarded the notion of living very close to the university that I... I looked for the Jewish district, in those days, yea. The Park Avenue area still had... still was considered a Jewish district.

Q. Right.

A. Today, I don't think it could... you would think that way. But, and of course, it was an area where you could find a room very, very easily.

Q. Well, then it was,... it was the nicest area in Rochester, I think, before Brighton really had it's...

A. Well, no... it... it... it was on the way of going out of...

Q. I see.

A. It... it wasn't... it wasn't the way it is now, but, there weren't as many young people and there was the kind of semi-hippie population, you know,
A. (Continued) on the lower Oxford Street/Goodman Street area... that... that wasn't... that wasn't there...

Q. There, yaa...

A. That... that wasn't that way at all. Monroe Avenue was a very attractive shopping street in those days.

Q. Right.

A. Very nice stores.

Q. Right.

A. And, of course, that has... that has changed totally.

Q. Yea. On Monroe, though. Park has picked up a bit.

A. Park has picked up but it's not Jewish at all.

Q. Right. Right. Did you have help... did you seek out Jewish agencies to discover what area of Rochester was or has a Jewish...

A. When I first came here, you mean?

Q. Yea.

A. Oh, yes, I did, yea. I called the Rabbi in Atlanta gave me the name of the Rabbi in Rochester...

Q. That he knew... in Rochester...

A. That he knew, yea.

Q. Who... who was that?

A. It was a man by the name of Hoschander, he has since left to... to... to Toronto. He has gone to Toronto since then. I did not know Rabbi Karp then, although later on I got to know him quite well. Because he came the same year. We came...

Q. Oh, that's right. That's right.

A. Came the same year. He came in '56.
Q. Right, that's right. OK. But you didn't know him when you first.
A. I didn't know him. I did not... it took me quite a while to... to meet him.
Q. He lived in... in that area, but, I don't know if he always lived there.
A. Well, he used to live on Westminster.
Q. Is that in that area?
A. Well, it's... it's off Monroe between Monroe and Park. I still remember...
Q. I see.
A. ... the old synagogue on... on Meigs and Park. As a matter of fact, remember the Saturday when it... when it burned.
Q. Oh, gee. That's interesting...
A. When was that... do you remember what year that was?
Q. I don't remember, I really don't.
A. I think it was 1960 or thereabouts, it might have been even earlier.
Q. Uh, huh, and you didn't know... know Karp up to... up to that point?
A. Not too well.
Q. Right, right.
A. But, I've gotten to know him since.
Q. This rabbi, in Rochester that recommended the Park Avenue area as a place to look for residence...
A. Yea.
Q. Yea... OK, and as far as the Hillside community, or the residence... or the location is concerned, did you seek that out?
A. Oh, yea... well...
Q. As a Jewish...
A. When we were... when we were living on Harvard, we used to walk a great deal. We knew that house long time before it became available for
A. (Continued) sale, and we liked that house very much. And, of course, it 
was... we knew this to be a Jewish area.

Q. I see. So this is a conscious, then...

A. Oh, yea. Yes, I think that it was... I don't think that I would have been 
very happy living in a... in a... in an area that is... let's say all 
the bullshead, yea, like some of my colleagues have, though I must say from 
what I hear, they're all moving to Brighton now.

Q. Yea, that's right...

A. As the children, as the children grow up.

Q. Yea.

A. Well...

Q. Anyway, you mean...

A. Well, I hear Professor Engelman just moved to Brighton recently, Baruch has 
moved to Brighton...

Q. Yea.

A. So they're all... they used to live around the university.

Q. I see. And so that the education, it's just not...

A. Well, it's partly education, partly the Brighton school system...

Q. Right.

A. Also, I think the question of meeting kids of their own... their own 
background, yea...

Q. Right. Right.

A. I don't think there were any Jewish professors holding out on the west side. 
Not that I know. I think they... they may go out in the country, Fairport 
that area, if they don't like to be in a... too Jewish district, but I 
think the... here on the west side... when I first came, a lot of 
professors used to live and on Arvin Heights and in... in all the... in
A. (Continued) all the side streets around West High School that used to be a very, very nice district. A lot of faculty members and some of them Jewish used to live there. But, nobody lives there now.

Q. Yea. That's one of the things we've discovered through this project that rapid... that's another change after World War II, the rapid expansion of Brighton for the Jewish community, I mean, it's just incredible how fast and how important that community has become.

A. Well, the... when I came, yea, in 1956 the old synagogue, which was still standing at the Joseph Avenue area...

Q. Right.

A. And then I think the year after, shortly after they were all razed, yea, and there's hardly anybody left down there anymore except a few old people who are too old.

Q. Right.

A. Too old to move.

Q. There are very few. There are a few, and you're right, they're very old and they refuse to move. Have you seen the Joseph Avenue area before that change, because I think you came just before...?

A. Well, when I came, for example, there was still a... a Jewish restaurant on Joseph Avenue, Cohen's...

Q. Right. The name has come up often.

A. There were still a number of bakeries, yea, there were a number of butcher shops. It was still rather an active... an active Jewish area. Though I... I think the change to Brighton was... was going on...

Q. Yea, it was beginning at that point.

A. May be not... maybe not as rapidly as... as it is now.
Q. What kind of feeling did you have about the Joseph Avenue area? I mean, was that closer to your or further away from your cultural disposition as a Jew?
A. Well, let me say that... that the average Viennese Jew, yea, did not feel himself very close to Polish Jews and Eastern Jews. And, so, I... I don't think when I first came here that I... I even for a minute thought of taking a room in the Joseph Avenue area, yea. I did not identify with the first wave of immigration...

Q. Right.
A. But, second... certainly with their... with their children, the ones that already moved to the Park Avenue...

Q. Right.
A. Park Avenue area...

Q. The beginning of the migration from that area to... yea, right.
A. I used to go down, you know, sometimes to go get some baked goods or buy some meat, but I never considered living there.

Q. Right.

It... it certainly sounds as if it were an interesting place from what people have said about it, those who have had more...

A. Well, I would think that by the time I got here, it wasn't as colorful as, yea.

Q. Right.
A. As it is... as people, you know, the older generation, as they remember it.

Q. The blacks were already becoming important.
A. Well, I... I don't think that... that blacks were there when I first came. I didn't see any. It was Jewish and it was to some extent Polish, and... and Ukranian.

Q. Right.
A. People talked about Poles and Ukranians living there. But, it was not, it
A. (Continued) certainly was not Negro.

Q. That must have happened in the later. . .

A. That came . . . it was just the beginning . . .

Q. Yea, because. . .

A. . . . of the influx.

Q. We'll talk about the. . . maybe we should at this point. Shortly afterwards, of course, there was a great deal of tension between blacks and Jews in that area. So that maybe you have something to say about that development, though again you were really not. . . you were not living in. . .

A. I really know very little about it. I did not in any participate.

Q. Right.

A. And I don't even have second-hand knowledge about it.

Q. OK. What. . . one aspect that you mentioned before that you probably have some more knowledge about is that tension also in Rochester, though again that predates your arrival, between German and . . . and I'm using German now as a broader sense. . . and Eastern European Jews in Rochester, certainly before you came and this was a national phenomenon, and international phenomenon. . .

A. Well, by the time I came that was mostly. . . that had mostly disappeared.

Q. That had disappeared.

A. Yea, that had. . . had completely disappeared.

Q. You mean, so that the children of those older families were moving already by this time to. . . to Brighton. So, as far as you were concerned, you felt none of that distinction.

A. No, I had. . . I found the unified community, yea.

Q. So, the unified community was an established . . .

A. That was an established fact.
Q. What about at the shul that you belong to now, is this, are there distinctions made about...?
A. No.
Q. Nothing?
A. No distinctions of any kind.
Q. OK. Yea. What about the... the location of the JCC? When you mentioned that it... it was wisely placed because of the future anticipated development in that area, as already there is, in Brighton. Many Jews find that a... a problem. And there was a controversy about placement of...
A. Well, I know that the people in Irondequoit and the whole northern part of the city feel cheated, yea, that it was placed there... at... at one time they had been promised a satellite, but from what I understand the financial situation of the JCC is such that they can't even think of it because they built a... a building that was much too luxurious for the resources of this community and it has now... now it has to be kept up. Now, I'm a member of the JCC, but only fairly recently, the last couple of years because we did not join until... until the children needed it...
Q. Right.
A. And, it's really for the children more than for the grown-ups because I have the... the facilities, I have the pool and the university provides me...
Q. Yea, right.
A. ... with whatever I need, so it... it really isn't for me. But, for the kids, they go and... because a number of people are moving out into this area, both older people who live in the apartments around the JCC, there's a whole colony there, Greystone and... young marrieds who move into these apartments, and then, of course, they're beginning to buy houses, yea. All these side streets there, Viennawood and they're turning into a... this is
A. (Continued) turning into a Jewish district.

Q. I see. It's... it makes sense because of the JCC.

A. Well, of course, there were some Jews to begin with there, and then when Jewish families... if... if they start moving and if they consider where shall we move, yea, let's say we need... we need a bigger house, well, they... that becomes a... a natural kind of a... of attraction... we... we're going to be close, yea, the kids can... you can chauffer them within five minutes, and that's a very, very important point. It certainly... I think in the choice of... of a home, it's far more important than the location of the synagogues. Because people, well they drive there once a week, and maybe once a year, that's not a major point at all, the Hebrew school is becoming a... a problem if you have to, yea, send your children to afternoon Hebrew school, you have to do a lot of driving, yea. But, I... I don't think that it is becoming as important a consideration as the location of where the JCC is today.

Q. It's interesting, by the way, the poetic image of the Viennawood Street, you know... bring...

A. Oh, well, that... that's... some developer put that yea... street names...

Q. Silly... nothing to do with the Vienna woods.

A. No, street names are silly in America anyway, yea, they're just supposed to be romantic, yea. It might interest you. We have some people... we have some friends who live on Viennawoods, yea, and at one time they bitterly complained about anti-Semitism in that street...

Q. That is interesting.

A. Yea.

Q. On what basis, because that's foreign to your experience.
A. I... I vouch for the... the honesty of these people...
Q. I see.
A. And, they de... they suffered a lot.
Q. Isn't that something?
A. Yea.
Q. That again, though, is something that you haven't encountered.
A. I have not... I've been very, very fortunate, yea.
Q. From what I'm hearing, it... it's... it's more than a matter of... of fortune though because Rochester has been, and I should say Rochester now... as... as... as a community, has been fairly free, its history of anti-Semitism has been very little of it.
A. Well, it's not that... it's not that, let's say, that these people from Viennawood were being beat up, yea, but there're constantly snide remarks being made by their neighbors and children hear it. So, it is not the kind of brutal and physical anti-Semitism, it's kind of a... it's kind of a social anti-Semitism that... that can be very unpleasant.
Q. Yea, really so.
A. Yea. Mind you, Rochester has had its... its certain areas where Jews had... had been deliberately kept out. One of those areas is the so-called "Virginia Colony." That is a group of streets to the... the south of Winton in the Twelve Corner area of Brighton.
Q. Yes, I've heard about that.
A. And... 
Q. Is that the Meadowbrook... 
A. Well, it's in... the general area, it's called Virginia Colony... I heard only recently, yea, a family of a Jewish professor at Geneseo who bought a
A. (Continued) house there not being told by the realtor what the history of this area is, they had to move because the... their child was being...

Q. Insulted.
A. ... called... yes, was insulted by... by the playmates. They had to move. So, now I would have never... I know about Virginia Colony, it would have never occurred to me to... to move in there, even though the houses are very nice and it's kind of a planned subdivision and it's been there probably since the... since the 1930's, I would think. Pre-dates World War... World War II.

Q. So that is an instance, then of... of anti-Semitism.
A. Oh, I... I... as I said, that's why I consider myself fortunate. I'm aware of what goes on in the rest of Rochester. And it just so happened that we have been very fortunate in the kind of street, the kind of neighbors that we have.

Q. Though, you've thought it out, I mean, you made sure that you weren't getting into a situation where there's... .
A. No...

Q. Jews in the area.
A. Yes, but on the other hand, on... on... I didn't know what kind of Gentiles, yea...

Q. Well, that's true.
A. ... would live there. The fact that other Jews live there was... was already one indication, yea...

Q. Right.
A. ... that it was a Jewish area... a Jewish area, but... Let me say this, the Jews who lived there were mostly older people. In... the Jews on Hillside, yea. It's interesting that most of my kids' playmates are not Jewish kids. We have some, but mostly when these older families leave, yea, then families with
A. (Continued) younger children come in and they. . . they. . . sometimes they're Gentile and sometimes they're Jews. But, I still consider myself fortunate.

Q. While on the subject, again you may not have much to say about this, there was some at least allegation that anti-Semitism was one of the problems in the '64 riots down on Joseph Avenue area. . .

A. Yea.

Q. . . . again, a conflict, but. . .

A. I know. . . I know nothing. . . I know nothing about it. I would. . . I would think that that's. . . that's not correct. Negros were exploited in those days in terms of housing, in terms of credit, that they couldn't or could get from stores, in terms of the merchandise that they used to buy, yea. And I think Jews participated in this just like everybody else.

Q. Right.

A. The. . . I don't think the Jews have to bear more than their normal share of responsibility in that kind of. . .

Q. OK.

A. . . . in that kind of outbreak.

Q. Yea, it seems that. . . my impression from what I've heard and read is that it was more of a black/white confrontation than. . . than anything that would be specifically Jewish. . .

A. I have. . . I have never heard the notion that it was any way directed against. . . against Jews.

Q. OK. Well, we're near the end of this tape, so let's call it. . .

END OF TAPE I, SIDE B
Q. This is Dennis Klein, we're talking with Professor Braun at the University of Rochester in his office. Today is February 8, 1977. This Tape II, Side A. OK. Professor Braun I'd like to ask you a series of questions now to clarify some of the issues we discussed last time. We concentrated, if you recall, on the situation in academia, and specifically at the University of Rochester, the attitudes toward faculty members as well as towards students, and we focused quite a bit I thought on anti-Semitism and the nature of anti-Semitism and how that's declined, especially through the sixties to the present date. I have really no further questions on that, so if there's something you want to add as we talk, feel free to do so. The first question that I think we should get into now is ... or the easiest one at any rate, is your attitude about Israel and specifically the movement of Zionism. You mentioned last time that you have a younger brother who went to Sweden in 1939, and then from there went to Israel. My question is, did he . . . was that his decision? Why did he go that route and you go the other route?

A. Well, it wasn't really his decision, yea, he was a fourteen year old, yea at that time and he went to Sweden with the children's transport. And then he . . . he was there in a children's camp for two years, and I really don't know for sure whether he had the chance to remain in Sweden in 1941. Or whether all the children were sent to Israel. I don't think there was much choice in the matter. He . . . he went in 1941, he was at that time seventeen years old, so I . . . I really don't think that there was a . . . that he had thought out
A. (Continued) his position very... very clearly.

Q. There was no indication in his background that would... I mean he wasn't any more observant or...

A. No... I... I think that... that we both at that time, yea, if given the opportunity to go to, what was then Palestine, yea, we would not have hesitated. We would have... we would have gone. Now, I didn't have that chance, yea. And when I... I would say that my first chance to... to make this decision came in 1946 or 1947 after World War II. And by that time, somehow, I did not exercise that... that possibility, that option. I stayed in... in... on this continent... I... although I knew some people that... that... friends of mine who left for Israel, I think, in either 1947 or '48 from the United States. So that there were people who made that choice consciously at... in the post-war years.

Q. One thing that puzzles me... you mentioned that if you had the chance you would have gone to Israel.

A. I would... I was speaking of certainly the time... '38, '39, '40, yea?

Q. Right.

A. Somehow there... you know, I was in England in a children's and youth camp which was Zionist in aspiration, yea. And I found this a very upsetting and unhappy experience. I had been... when I was a youngster I was... a... a... a enthusiastic Zionist. But, the reality of living in this children's camp, yea, was so upsetting to me that this really... destroyed a great deal of the... the convictions, Zionistic aspirations that I had at that time... 

Q. Time...

A. ... it had something to do... and you'll never believe that... in this children's camp contained both German Jewish children and Austrian Jewish
A. (Continued) children. The leadership was mostly German and in the... as a little aside, I was amazed at the social difference between German Jews and Austrian Jews. The German Jewish children all came from very well-to-do homes. I... I absolutely marveled at the kind of clothing that they brought out. It was not uncommon for... for... they had taken out suits and... and shirts were... I don't know, for twenty years to come, and the very best. The latest styles, in those days, it was still possible to take these things out, yea. On the other hand, the Austrian children were totally impoverished, yea. Came from the lowest levels of the ghetto society. And were... were absolutely inferior in... in social standing, in manners, and so on...

Q. Was that the... must have been a bit of surprise for you...

A. It was, yes, to me, yea. To me this was a tremendous surprise. I had not realized the... the differences in the status of... of... of Austrian, that is how impoverished Austrian Jewry was and how well-to-do German Jewry was. Now, I have to add this. On the whole, the German Jews sent... did not send their children out, yea, till after '38,'39 and they thought they could...

Q. Right.

A. ... and then in Austria the few well-to-do Jews managed to get out with their children. That is families as a whole, those that had money. And the children who depended upon the Jewish organizations to be saved were usually from the lower levels, yea, the poorer of the... poorer population to begin with. But, I was amazed. So, at the time when I was in England in this camp, I really felt I was... I was oppressed by... by these rich and... and well-to-do and superior Jews... Germans. And it was a... a... it was a very unhappy time for me.
Q. And that crushed your...
A. And I said... well, this is what... what life among the Jews is at very close range, yea...

Q. All right.
A. And then, ...

Q. That you can tell from...
A. It was really a kind of traumatic experience. Then Israel is not... is not for me. Now, even after I came to Canada in '44, '45, '46, yea, I was active in the Zionist movement, but it was really the American style, I realized that I wouldn't go there. And when I first visited Israel in 1951, it was such a shock when I saw the... when I saw the poverty and the hardship that was... 1951 was the year of the worst, really economically was one of the worst years, yea. There was no food. So there was so much hardship and... and and so much injustice in the...

Q. That's in Israel?
A. ... sense that... in Israel... in the sense that those who were wealthy could get anything on... that they wanted on... on the black market it was such a horror, and those who were poor or had convictions and refused to buy on the black market, yea, barely had the... had the necessities and that was such a shock that I really have never... I haven't recovered, yea, both from this experience in England in... in '39 and... and actually seeing Israel in... in 1951.

Q. That experience in Israel kind of confirmed your...
A. I'm afraid, yes, I... I was sort of set up to some extent... set up for it. But, I could not... I could not have foreseen... I traveled on an immigrant ship from Marseilles to Haifa, called the Artsa and that was in 1951.
A. (Continued) And on that ship there were some... it was an old tub, it must have been 50 years old and no comforts of any kind... were all... it was kind of a dormitory, 50 people together... there were some 250 Hungarian immigrants on that boat who had just left Hungary. And it was... that was... that was really... it was really rough.

Q. Let me ask you where you think you... you received these Zionistic aspirations. I mean, when did this happen? It had to be...

A. Well, I'll tell you. In... there were Zionists, very, yea... there were some very strong Zionists in my own family. I had two cousins somewhat older than I who went to Israel in the thirties, that is long before Hitler and out of... they were members of the Zionist Youth Movement of the Hashumal, and of course, you know, kids always look up to older cousins, yea, they had considerable more freedom than we had, yea. So, they were grown-ups, they could make their own choices and... and I had an aunt who now lives in Israel who is... when she was young, a very, very... even in Vienna, a very active in the Zionist movement. So there was in... within the family, there was a... there was a great deal of, yea, there was a great deal of knowledge and... and... and experience of what... what it meant to go to Aliyah, even... even this was the... the time when chalitsim went and you had to work in the swamp, people got malaria and it was by far difficult, very difficult an undertaking.

Q. I can't resist this question, but did you... did you know Ziegfried Berenfeld when... when he was in Vienna. He was... he was the head of the Austrian Youth Zionist Movement after World War I... 

A. No. No, I... I didn't know him, but I knew two people who... fellow by the name of Erud Eberai, who later on became an advisor of some sort to...
A. (Continued) . . . he called himself a I think a lia. . . now. . . and he's one of. . . was one of the Ben Gurion's advisors and became a diplomat and he was the head of the halitz movement in. . . in Vienna. . .

Q. I see.

A. And. . .

Q. That name I don't know.

A. Yea. Now, I. . . I. . . I'm sorry that basically I. . . I take a. . . I have this terrible feeling of disappointment to the realities of the Zionist experience, but I. . . I should also add immediately that World Jewry would not have any feelings of security, yea, in this post-Hitler age if Israel did not exist. And I'm. . .

Q. So you have that feeling, too?

A. Yes. . . I. . . I. . . I realize that, of course, yea. And, of course, we pride ourselves on. . . on some of the achievements of the. . . of the. . .

Q. Right.

A. . . . of Israel. But the actual living and moving there, yea. . . and that has never been a part of my life. I'm. . . I'm too aware of the. . . of the daily difficulties, yea, the bureaucracy that. . . that asks. . . what they call protects you that. . . that you need to know someone for almost anything that you. . . that you want to do. That is abhorrent to me, yea, cause I know I could not. . . I could not handle it. Some people can thrive in that environment, yea. To me Israel, especially its bureaucracy and its political party system has some of the worst features of. . . of East European life. What is worse. . . what has been worst in Austria and in Poland and in Russia, somehow has been transplanted. . .

Q. Yea, because. . . well the Mayor of Jerusalem today in Israel is an Austrian.
A. Yes, he's an Austrian but, I... he has a... basically I think he has very, very good reports, yea. But, I'm talking about... about the daily life, yea. Paying taxes, getting permission, yea, for this, for that. The chicanery that is involved, yea, that... the trembling before the slightest official, yea, who lets you stand and wait for... he's a little king, he has a... the worst aspect of that central European officialdom... and that is what... what I went away from and I don't want to ever encounter it... encounter it again. Now I realize that there are some people to whom the feeling of living in a Jewish state is so exciting and is so exhilarating to them, yea, they can put up with it. Somehow...

Q. Right.

A. ...I... I know I couldn't.

Q. It's interesting, I...I have some reaction to that because, but I was only there for a very short time, two years ago or three years ago, my reaction was that it was very informal, it was a very informal kind of setting for me. But, you had a different response.

A. Well, the point is that... I've never lived in Israel in a hotel, except maybe on a trip. I see Israel through the life of my relatives, yea. As they go about doing their daily work and solving their daily...

Q. Right.

A. ... problems, yea. And it happens, of course, our two... my brother and a cousin of mine is in... in the kibbutz, yea. Another cousin is in the moshave and some others are in the... let's say in the peace sector of the economy. All of them somehow have... have had it very, very hard financially, and economically and even now. They've had miserable lives, yea. Now you might say that I come from a family that just doesn't have, perhaps, the push
A. (Continued) that it takes to get somewhere in this kind of economy, but from what I have observed, yea,...

Q. Right.

A. . . . at close range is how other people live, especially the poor, and it has been. . . it has. . . it has been a very disappointing experience. Now I realize that there are other people who go and live with their relatives and let's say your relatives who came after 1948, yea, survivors of the camps, and they have been able to make for themselves a much better economic. . . much better economic life. So, it. . .it is possible that. . . that my view is colored, yea, by the fact that it is somewhat narrow because of what I see, yea. In. . . in. . . in my own family, but and it should not be said that I am not aware of. . . of the tremendous achievements of what people in Israel have done. I know for example the kibbutz where my brother lives, that place was a. . . was a . . . a swamp and he, for years, he suffered from malaria, yea. It was a swamp and a desert. To see what they have done, that is. . . it is. . . I don't think that anyone in the world, yea. . .

Q. I agree.

A. . . . has. . . there has been the achievements can. . . can match that. . .

Q. Yea.

A. . . . in. . . particularly what has been done in agriculture and reforestation, yea, by people who were not by. . . by nature and by habit farmers or street-builders or. . . or. . .

Q. Good point.

A. . . . or. . . or. . . or even mechanics, yea. This was done against the most tremendous, the most tremendous odds.

Q. Impressive. I. . . I agree with you. What they've done there has been impressive.
A. That... that... that should not... that cannot be denied, but I'm too reluctant to... to risk all the... disappointments, yea, that... that are involved. Of course, today, I'm too old even to... to consider it, but even if you say, well... do you... do you want to go there to retire, yea, and I... I sometimes toyed with the idea, but it... it hasn't...

Q. Not a big impact...

A. No, it hasn't made a big impact.

Q. When you went over in '51, did you go over there possibly to live, to move?

A. No, no, no, no. I went to see my brother, whom I hadn't... but at that time I hadn't seen for twelve years...

Q. Right. You had no...

A. Now, I had not...

Q. ... no intention...

A. I had not intended, though, I must say my relatives really tried to persuade me to come. And, then but I was... the experiences were such... Now you might say perhaps if I had come as a traveler with friends and lived in hotels, yea, and met other segments of society, I might have taken, possibly, I might have taken a different view. But, I'm not sure.

Q. Right.

A. I'm not sure.

Q. Well, let... let me talk about... raise the question about your Zionist activities in Canada, you said '46, was that the first year...

A. Yea.

Q. ... that you became involved?

A. Well, no, it's... you see, when I came to Canada in 1942, yea, I was... no I came in 1940. From 1940 till the... August, 1942, I was interned. From '42
A. (Continued) \( \ldots \) roughly from August, '42 till November, '43 I was on a farm. And I was cut off. So, actually I entered the community again in the fall of 1943, yea. And at that time, right away, I joined a \( \ldots \) a Zionist movement in \( \ldots \) in Toronto, yea. And I'm still very active, they have still summer camps and \( \ldots \) and I know the \( \ldots \) the people who \( \ldots \) if I were to go to Toronto today, I would still meet a great many of these people who were active then, yea. Though not too many \( \ldots \) I don't think more than two have actually left for \( \ldots \) for Israel.

Q. Well, that's an interesting \( \ldots \)

A. Yes \( \ldots \)

Q. \( \ldots \) phenomenon in itself.

A. Yea, yea.

Q. The number of active people who have gone to Aliyah is small \( \ldots \)

A. Small.

Q. Very, very minute, eh? Some went and came back, but some \( \ldots \) some did go, I think that \( \ldots \) that should be said.

Q. Is the \( \ldots \) I know that when we're talking about Zionists and \( \ldots \) has many, many gradations. When it breaks down, it seems to me, in political, social, religious terms. Do you \( \ldots \) do you feel \( \ldots \) I mean where do you fall into your \( \ldots \) which category do you \( \ldots \) did you fall into as far as supporting Zionism?

A. Well, you know, that it's such an amalgam of \( \ldots \) of feelings and \( \ldots \) and \( \ldots \) and traditions, yea. Well, I simply feel that after Hitler Jews need a political entity \( \ldots \) to which they can go in case that they are being threatened in any part of the world. For example, I think the \( \ldots \) just to take an example today the fate of \( \ldots \) of the \( \ldots \) of Jews in Argentine,
A. (Continued) yea, would be absolutely drastic if they didn't...

Q. Yea...

A. ... I consider that a very exposed part of the Jewish population, yea. Who knows what's going to happen in South Africa? So, I think my formal consideration is ... is a ... is a political consideration. We've gotta have a place to go where ... where we're ... where we can be ... where we can be safe. We don't have to go there, but it is ... is essential, yea, a question of ... of safety.

Q. Does that include a religious destiny, though?

A. I would think that to bring this about, yea, the state of Palestine or the area of ... of Palestine which has so many traditional and religious connotations, yea, is probably best suited, yea. I ... I do not conceive of a ... of a Jewish state in either South America or Africa as being the ... the ... the solution, yea. On the other hand, I ... I ... for example, to talk about the problem which is very much on the ... people's mind today. That is the religious parties in Israel, yea. ... claim that the country in its entirety has been promised to them by God and it's ... they're willing to risk another war to fight for the West Bank and I strongly want to disassociate myself from ... from this, yea. I ... I think it is ... Israel makes emotional claims on us, but that is the land of Israel, the city of Jerusalem, that this makes very, very strong emotional claims on us because of what we've been taught and what we've heard and ... and seen, yea. But, I ... I don't believe that ... that we have religious rights to any particular ... to any particular area. Now, for example, I know ... I would be ... I go on the limb here and say I ... I'd give up, yea, if not sovereignty, but certainly a great many rights in Jerusalem, the city of Jerusalem, no matter how much it means to the Jews, if this can bring about peace. I'm willing to make almost any sacrifice for peace in Israel. So, and ... and to me, to hold onto, for example, the area around
A. (Continued) the city of Sa... Samaria because this happens to be an historic shrine... it... it makes... makes little sense if we can have peace with the Arabs without Samaria, then... then by all means... So, I would put the... the political considerations first and then, let us say, historical and religious considerations in the sense that they make it possible for us to make all these... all for the people who live there to make all these sacrifices. But, ... but, I would... I would limit that, yea, the religious claim cannot be un... infinite.

Q. OK. When you came to Rochester in '56, did you join...

A. Well, very mildly only, only... was meaningless. There weren't any strong Zionist groups that I felt attracted to and I had really a... I think I was also getting too old and... you know, being a member of the Zionist group for most people is a useful experience, but I think I was... I was growing out.

Q. Does that mean that you don't support a... a group?

A. Well, I... I do support, you know, I make my contributions to... but I do not... not in an organizational matter...

Q. As a...

A. ... in terms of going to meetings, listening... listening to speakers or... no, I didn't, not since I came to...

Q. I think the Zionist activity in Rochester, maybe nationwide is certainly not as, you know, active this way than it was years before in this country... especially the twenties and thirties...

A. Well, it... I'm... I'm very much afraid that the... a lot of the European Zionists are getting so old in years, yea...

Q. Right.

A. ... and even the American Zionists, so-called Zionists, are all in their
A. (Continued) sixties and... and seventies and while they were... today the only community activity is the United Jewish Appeal, which is nothing but a... a money-raising operation, yea... it... with occasional trips for the big-givers... and, and there is no... there is no attempt of Hebrew in... in the sense that it is taught as... as the foremost instrument, yea. Zionism was... was a strong cultural movement and to my mind it has... had to do with the re-birth of the Hebrew language. And, for example in... in Europe the first thing a Zionist would do was try to... to re-acquaint himself with Hebrew as a language. And he would... For example, Kafka, that was his... his attempt... his first attempt at being a Zionist was learning Hebrew. That... that was a normal response, yea. Nobody here learns Hebrew. For example, in Europe, there were a number of... of Jewish scholars, let's say, who... who lived by giving Hebrew lessons to rich Jews. Grown-up people, not children, but actually teaching them Hebrew. And it was... it was a very... it was a respected kind of activity. Now, I don't know anyone here in this city who has learned Hebrew in their middle-age or after.

Q. But, certainly, as a child they...

A. Well, now the efforts, here, yea, is totally concentrated at the... the younger generation, yea...

Q. Right.

A. And, of course, they're... Hillel School is very important, because, it... it teaches Hebrew to... to children. But even, you know, to be quite honest, even the graduates of Hillel, yea, that join the mainstream, yea, have not impressed me as being Zionists in the sense that they believe in Hebrew as a language, in Hebrew literature, in Hebrew culture, yea. That... this is the kind of intense commitment to cultural values... that they're looking at Zionism as
A. (Continued) as... as culture, yea...

Q. Right.

A. I don't see that here in the city at all, yea.

Q. There is more of support of Israel type of thing, but not a cultural Zionism

A. There is no... little cultural... they may not be... there is little cultural Zionism. Now, I may not be so very well-informed, but for example, most of the... they do have a... degree in the city, there a few people who speak Hebrew well enough. A lot of them ex... ex-Israelis who get together, but there might be a few Americans who... who's Hebrew is as good, but it... the general adult education activities, yea... First of all, they were much better, oh about five years ago. They have... they have... they were always centered at Temple Beth El, but they have taken a tremendous drop over the last... over the last few years, yea. And even then they were on the very, very simple and kind of... well, informational, no more than purely, what I would call, informational level.

Q. Is that... disappointing for you, something you miss, what. ...what's your response?

A. Well, I've always... no, I... I... I don't say that... that I really miss it. I've always tried to find information and... and... and learning myself. I cannot rely on... I cannot rely on teachers or on the availability of... or nonavailability, yea. But, I think it... it's... it's a loss for the city as a whole, yea. And even you... you look at the... the activities of... of the JCC, they're all so trite, yea. Perhaps some cultural activities, yea. It is, you might call it, minor league informational or propagandistic, yea, there's nothing really serious being done. Can't...

Q. Level of commitment seems to be...

A. Well... the level... well, there's some... some interest they do have,
A, (Continued) for example, my colleague, Bill Green, he was called "Scholar-in-Residence," yea. Some of these big givers to the UJA give... get together and feel that they have to top it off, yea, by talking about Jewish topics, but on the whole...

Q. For example...

A. ... it... it's a... to me, it is not a very serious undertaking, yea. I'm familiar with the financial plight of the Hillel School, and that, to me is such a clear sign, yea. Now, I... I might add, it was much worse ten years ago. The school is much... is in much better shape, yea. But, for the sake of history, yea, let it be known that the Hillel School lives on "bingo." It derives a great part of its income from "bingo."

Q. OK.

A. Now, the "bingo" is played downtown, yea. It is a way of really taking away money from the poorest population, Negros, old people with nothing else to do and who are, you know, who feel the need for company so strongly that they're willing to part with the few cents, yea. And that is what Jewish education lives on. I think that's a scandal.

Q. I've heard that before. I've heard that... I've heard that before.

A. Yea... and... and they... of course, there was some... I'm sure there's some very decent people, yea, who have protested, yea. But, this goes absolutely unheard. We have... the community should be said, the Welfare Fund, yea, the Community Fund, they give Hillel, I think, to the tune of some $36,000 a year, or perhaps even... even more.

Q. What percentage of that total does Hillel see?

A. Well, I think it's perhaps... perhaps than one-third, yea. And, but this is... this by far, by far the... the... there's no... Jewish education, I think
A. (Continued) in... in this city, and that is true of the whole American continent, yea, is in a mess and there's no... there're no... the teachers aren't... are not welltrained, yea, are not committed. We're flooded with ex-Israelis who come here because they want to make a buck. And, and... and also the real... there's no real commitment... serious commitment on the part of those for whom this education is... could be... could be... if we didn't have the institution of Bar Mitzvah we would not have any Jewish education to speak of.

Q. That's something... that's a thought. If that wasn't... that might be...

A. It... it... Bar Mitzvah saves... saves us as a... as a...

Q. And it's still around because groups still...

A. Yea, yea. And you know, it's interesting. It's... it's not even a Biblical observance...

Q. It's a...

A. ... not even a Talmudic observance. It's something that somehow grew up in the ghetto and... and in the...

Q. ... that... that they're losing support, they started to...

A. Well, somewhere in the middle-ages, and... and we don't know exactly when. And today, all the educational efforts, especially in Conservative congregations, yea, is centered on... on this one day and the preparation for it. What if we didn't have it?

Q. Maybe they should go the other way around and declare the age of 20, instead of thirteen and then can hold onto people for seven more years... 

A. Well, this... Well, you know, this has been... this suggestion has been made...

Q. Oh, really?

A. Oh, yea... to... to up the age of Bar Mitavah from thirteen to sixteen...
Q. Oh, really?
A. Yes, yes.
Q. I know that they have confirmation.
A. Yea... no, but it has been made and it was discarded simply because the force of tradition is so strong, yea, that no act of will, no matter how well-intended, will change.
Q. The motive, though.
A. The motive was precisely that, to extend, yea, the school for three more years at the most critical time, at the teenage time, when, you know, the pool of the American culture is most. is the most serious. family has very little. have very little influence. And I admire the people for trying, yea, but, it's not going to work.
Q. It's interesting that it seems to me they can use the arguments and get on this too much, but the argument is really that of puberty, I mean, that's when, you know.
A. Yea.
Q. and so, I suppose they can bring in a few geneticists or something and claim that it's now at a later age or some such thing and make it as sacred as it ever was and.
A. You can't change. you can't change people's habits, yea, particularly in. in.
Q. Regard to the pre.
A. in. in the.
Q. commitment.
A. where the. that is. in those occasions like births, puberty.
Q. marriage.
A. and burial, these are still the most important things. occasions and
A. (Continued) there, very, very little. . . yea. . .

Q. That you can do with that.

A. . . . can be. . . can be done.

Q. My own. . . in my own education, though, I did have confirmation, which took me up to age sixteen. . . .

A. Yea. . . that was Reform. . .

Q. Reform, correct.

A. They. . . have gotten. . . I don't know how. . . they've always held confirmation has been probably superior to. . . or more important than Bar Mitzvah, but they do have Bar Mitzvah now, too.

Q. You know, I was interviewing one rabbi at Temple. . . it has slipped my mind now. . . Abraham Solomon. . .

A. The old man Solomon?

Q. Yes, yea. . .

A. Who's 85?

Q. Yea.

A. Well, he's an interesting person.

Q. Very interesting person.

A. Yea.

Q. You know him?

A. Yes, very, very practical. He has. . . it's amazing how he has made the kind of transformation between the East European ghetto and American well-to-do community. Because he. . . he's one of the few people that I know that operates still in. . . in. . . in both. And. . . and does not find it exclusive, does not find these two life forms, yea, exclusive. . .

Q. Is this the same. . . is this the same person. . . I thought he was from
Q. (Continued) Jerusalem... 
A. Well,...
Q. And, you know he comes from there...
A. Is... Is Abraham the one in Temple Beth El who's now 85 years old and he was the... he's a widower and... 
Q. We may have two different... there are two...
A. There are two Solomons, which one did... is... is he the one in Irondequoit?
Q. The Irondequoit...
A. Oh, that's the other one...
Q. Yea... the other one, OK.
A. Yes, that's the other one.
Q. Well, I talked to the one in Irondequoit, I guess. The reason I brought him up was because when I walked in there to interview him there was... in the... in the hall immediately opposite from his office, the whole hall was taken up by this large "bingo" game. And struck me and... it... it was painful for him, it really was. Because, there it was, I mean, it's you know...I... men who worship in the...
A. Well, you've got to realize, yea, he has a special problem. Irondequoit... the Jews of Irondequoit, which is small enclaves sort of part of the total Jewish population 'cause most of them live now in Brighton and Pittsford, yea... are Jews who are financially less well-equipped, yea, to... to finance a synagogue, yea. And so they really have to...
Q. Do you think there... do you think... that they really do have to?
A. Well...
Q. Because...
A. ... look the point is this, if they wanted to... if they wanted to worship
A. (Continued) on the level of a... at the level of an Evangelistic sect, let's say, yea, with a little tabernacle, yea, without any luxuries and a... a minister... a part-time minister, yea. As so many Evangelistic churches do, part-time minister who has a full-time job elsewhere, yea. And, perhaps a Sunday school staff of volunteers, yea. They could do that without "bingo." They could. But, they want to operate as a... a suburban Conservative temple, yea, without sufficient financial base and that's what they have to do.

Q. I... I just simply have a different feeling about this because if I wanted to assert my commitment to Judaism I think that is, as you're saying, an important thing to do if one is going to follow this. I mean, even a smaller setting would be more conducive to that kind of feeling... .

A. To you. But not to the average parishioner in Irondequoit.

Q. OK.

A. To you, yea.

Q. I see. Well, that's... that's clear because they're willing to put up with this, apparently, to... .

A. Not only are they willing, they do it with gusto, yea, they volunteer, yea, they volunteer for it and they do it with a great deal of relish and... . and pleasure.

Q. I've seen it... .

A. And a total absence of any kind of moral feelings of either compassion for the people whose money they take or... or feelings of regret. Nothing of the kind. Somehow they... they're closer, I think, to Roman Catholics in that respect and to, let us say, the Protestants.

Q. Yea, maybe you're right. I mean, but it just seems... .

A. The Roman Catholics engage in "bingo" and feel nothing about it.

Q. I mean, after all, it seems to me one of the distinctive features about Judaism as opposed to Catholicism or Christianity is... . I mean the sharpest contrast
Q. (Continued) for me is the... during the Christmas time. When the Jews celebrate the Chanukkah with eight small candles...

A. Yea.

Q. And everybody else is out in the street having a great time. I mean, that really is when I begin to enjoy the dignity of Judaism. So that, this kind of adoption of "bingo" into... I mean that really, to me, is a... a large step and I think it's absolutely in the wrong direction. That's my own feeling, I mean.

A. Well, I... I know that there are some people, you know, who feel the way you do, but they're a decisive minority, a decisive... very, very small...

Q. The reality is money.

A. Yea, yea.

Q. OK. I... I'm sure Rochester generally is not unique this way, this is happening...

A. No, that's all... it's happening all over the United States and there are some... I would think there... I've heard that some rabbis, yea, again a very, very small number of rabbis, both Orthodox and Conservative, have come out and have condemned, yea...

Q. Right.

A. ... the use of "bingo" even in the... the Orthodox form of a response, and the same kind of judgment that was rendered in... in the middle ages for... on the basis of... of Jewish laws it... it's... it is not permissible, but it's... it's... goes on.

Q. Yea.

A. It just goes on. No way... There's no way of stopping it.

Q. Yea. I know that... I mean, Beth El is in a good situation financially compared to...
A. Well, they don't have to do that...
Q. But, I don't really think that somebody like Abe Karp would do it anyway.
A. Well, now he wouldn't. Of course, of course, he doesn't have to, yea, he was very fortunate, yea. He has been shielded from these...
Q. That's right... that's right...
A. ... hard decisions all his life. But, what's a poor man like Solomon supposed to do?
Q. Yea... it is a dilemma. I don't know what... what step I would take, though I think... I think I would be inclined not to take that step. I have a few questions concerning our discussion last time. One was that I was... I heard the tape over again a few days ago. It came up several times in the course of our discussions that you were aware of who were the Jews on the faculty at the University of Rochester. I mean it came out you knew there was a couple in the English Department and by in large, you know, it's "waspish" and... you know...
A. Yea...
Q. ... it's, yea...
A. You might say that... that... when you grow up in... In Europe, yea and especially in Austria, when a child learns to recognize most Jews by appearance, something that, for example, cannot happen in France or Italy, but in Vienna when you were a kid, and you weren't say you sat on a streetcar... or in the theatre or in the movies or on the beach, yea... you immediately recognized the Jew. There's something that's in the face or the gestures or...
Q. Not Eastern European, now?
A. Not Eastern...
Q. They're obvious, that's obvious...

A. I don't see... maybe dressed like everybody else, yea? It is... this is a kind of sixth sense that you have, you sense a Jew. That's interesting. I was in London many years ago and I... I was in the, I think it was the Kensington Park area and I was walking by a very, very expensive hotel. And there were a group of people outside, yea, all dressed up, it was a wedding, yea. And I looked at them for one second and I immediately recognized it as a Jewish wedding, I mean... un... it is unmistakable, yea, the Jewish appearance is... is unmistakable. Now, somebody else, yea, who might not have the feeling, says well, these people don't look Jewish, they look Southern European, yea. But, it may well be, but to me, they're Jewish. You spot it, you see it all over them, yea. And that is... when you are trained, I suppose you... you look out for it. And, and that is how I know who is in the, yea...

Q. I see. So, you... you have that sixth sense from the experiences and...

A. Yes... yes, I would think so and that is why, you know, some... to some extent, the great tragedy of... of European Jewry during Hitler was that they had no place to hide. Simply because, I think, even the Christians could tell a Jew. You couldn't hide.

Q. Right.

A. Unless you... you... your face would give you away, or your behavior would give you away.

Q. Just one second, I have...

END OF TAPE II, SIDE A
Q. Especially assimilated Jews, Western European Jews seem to have had more or less the same features, but not from what you're saying. They really did have the same. . .

A. Well, I would say that sometimes I make mistakes, too, yea, and I find out that someone whom I had not considered Jewish, yea, turns out to be and then, oh, after all, he... he's a Jew. But, that has happened very, very seldom.

Q. Is that...?

A. Yea, but, very, very seldom. I... I... I know one case when I first came here they had a Dean of Students here, I forgot his name, his first name was Morrie, Morrie something or other. I forgot his second name. I could look it up. And, well, he, it turned out, we didn't know at that time, but it turned out later on I was told this, he was Jewish. I didn't know at that time. . . at that time.

Q. When you first came here?

A. When I... when I... when I... 

Q. There weren't many Jews . . .

A. There weren't many Jews, yea. I didn't know it at... at the time, but when he left here, I was... I was told that that he was Jewish.

Q. So you were stumped?

A. Well, I... I was... I was... I was suprised, but, that's the only... that's the only case, yea. For example, at the present time, I think that Bob Freeman who's the... the present... the rector of the school the Eastman School of Music. . . I think that he comes, I think he comes from a
A. (Continued) Jewish family, though, he himself is probably not a practicing Jew. But, I think, but I'm not sure.

Q. Right. Right.

A. I don't know what his background is, but... now then here again is a case where not... I... where I'm not certain.

Q. Does this... do you have with these people, this, especially at the university now, a feeling of some solidarity or some kind of something in common with them, the fact that you are...

A. Well, yea, I used to collect for UJA here at the university. And I used to see them once, yea. I used to see them once a year, but I don't... not really, I don't have any particular feelings of solidarity if anything...

Q. The Jews in humanities?

A. Well, no. No, I mean general...

Q. Just in generally, I see.

A. And, of course, then there are some that I know because I've come and solicited money and from them and in this way we are sort of... struck up a small friendship and I know them by first name...

Q. Right.

A. But, yea, I don't think this is in any way closer than some of my Gentile colleagues whom I've known and...

Q. You know, it may be in... in light of what we discussed before that the feeling about Israel or even Jewish life, cultural Zionism in Rochester is
Q. (Continued) declining significantly because much of that was carried by... by immigrants. Much of that feeling for the concern about Israel as you expressed, but is not being expressed by younger people as much, or the sense of a cultural Zionism which again was more of a European kind of phenomenon. Everybody knows that political Zionism certainly is a Central European, at least in origin. Maybe much of the explanation for decline of this activity can be seen as, you know, just assimilation or amalgamation into American society.

A. Well, you know, we have gone through a... a number of... of influences over the last fifty years which have all contributed to the decline of American Jewry in so many ways, yea. There's little anti-Semitism, the ghetto has disappeared. Jews are moving into... into the mainstream. They're not suffering from any kind of restriction, yea. Modern American society is essentially a... a permissive society. It is essentially a... not a... it's not a very religious society, and so... I would think that there... if you watch what's going on in the Catholic church, yea, the way it has fallen on bad times intellectually and otherwise falling apart in the sense that the old authoritarian structure is totally crumbling away. What... what you see there, we've been, among Jews is very... it's... it's... it's parallel of a free, really free and... and a society in which everybody can move upward and sideways, yea. Has... has little room for a very cohesive religious groups. On the other hand, you might then argue that maybe we have reached the point when people are beginning to cling together again, yea...

Q. Within these separate groups...

A. ... within, and that there's a, perhaps some... there's the beginning of
A. (Continued) some small Jewish groups clinging together. . . this. . . this feeling is. . . is. . . is. . . is coming again. I haven't . . . I haven't really seen very much of it, although there are, I know Beth El is experimenting with discussion groups and so-called havriot, small groups of families talk together and eat together at times, yea, in order to. . . to work against this huge mass of. . . of non-committed members. But, I really . . . I haven't seen re. . . reactions, yet, yea? And, of course, intermarriage. It's. . . it's a constant problem. People are. . . are. . . are marrying out and. . . and then the question is are they going to bring their children up as Jews? There's a. . . constant loss, yea. Jewish birthrate is very small, it does not. . . it does not replace the. . . the people, Jewish families restrict themselves to two maximum three children.

Q. Right.
A. Now, of course, marriage coming so late and so much inter-marriage, I think we. . . we're bound to suffer great losses in the United States.

Q. In the . . .
A. Yea. Purely in. . . in numbers. Let alone in. . . in commitment.

Q. Yea. So there's a definite threat within the Jewish community at the. . .
A. Well, I think that we're. . . we're going to lose, yea, in. . . in numbers and the smaller communities are going to suffer first, as they always have. And there was a time when there Jews living in all small towns. And these communities are, for all practical purposes, disappearing. Children are going away. The old people are dying off. So Jews Amer. . . in America will be a phenomenon within ten or twenty years, restricted to the major cities.

Q. Yes, and prominently would be New York.
A. Well, not only New York, but also Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Boston, Cleveland,
A. (Continued) Chicago... But, you look at the small towns here in this area that used to have Jewish communities.

Q. Your. . . your explanation then for the decline would be really one of American culture and not something happening within . . .

A. Well, I think it. . . it. . . it. . . there's so many factors, yea. There's so many factors working, yea, but they all move in the same . . . in the same direction. And if it were not for the constant worry about what's going to happen to Israel. . .

Q. That's it. . . that's the irony of it. . .

A. The. . . the. . . I suppose the decline of the community, yea, would be much faster. If it weren't for the UJA and the Council, yea, and the constant appeal and the constant crises, yea. . .

Q. Yea, in fact it's a little irritating for many of us that it's so. . . that it's sometimes so transparent that a crisis is important to keep a community together and much is made of that, you know. It's. . .

A. It is sad, but it's a fact and it's always been a. . .

Q. Yea.

A. Yea. Can't. . . nothing you can. . . you can do about it. But. . .

Q. I mean on the one hand, let's get rid of all this anti-Semitism already and let's have peace in Israel, but on the other hand, if we're gonna make that goal, we're gonna have to talk about crises and talk about problems and. . . yea. . . that. . . that to me is. . .

A. You. . . you also have to realize that I don't think there has ever been in the whole history of mankind a society like that of the United States in which large number of Jews, yea, have been completely absorbed in the mainstream. This has not happened anywhere in the world. Maybe in China.
A. (Continued) Although, I never knew whether there were large number of Jews, but just to take the example of Russia, yea. A large number of Jews in Russia today are... they are outcasts, yea. They... they're known as Jews... they're... they have no place in the society. And the same is... to some extent, true in England or France, that... that Jews there still are far more outside than general society, yea, than they are in the United States. And so maybe just to keep the Jews in the United States aware of their being Jewish, we need these crises, yea...

Q. Right, right, right.

A. Sad. I don't know, it would be nice to speculate peace comes to Israel. What would happen here? It's just too good to... to...

Q. Well, what would probably happen is that... it would be that we can't... we have to always remain vigilant, you know, that peace may not be long-lasting, we have to continue to support... I mean, it seems to me, a number of responses that they would...

A. That I could anticipate, yea.

Q. I mean, we all do hope for peace in that part of the world generally, but, as you're saying, it's important for activity here in this country. I think Professor Karp gave a couple stories in his course... this, a... maybe you know the person, he got so worried about Israel that he had to finally go there and live there because he... he just couldn't deal with the...

A. With the worries.

Q. Yea, with the worries, they're so far away from Israel. OK. My final questions deal with the Jewish community specifically and your activity in that as well as observations about it. This is an important part, obviously, of this project, is to get some feelings about some change at any rate that's occurred over the last two decades. Besides the UJA, do you belong or support any other
Interview with Wilhelm Braun

Q. (Continued) institutions or groups...?

A. Well, yea, I... I'm a member of the Orthodox synagogue, yea, and I attend it, support it. I don't want to make any... any statements regarding the present sense of theology, state of faith. I think it is... it is impossible to do this. I admire people who can, yea, who have developed a theology of the Holocaust. I've never been able to do that. A former colleague of mine has been very prominent, Emil Faulkenheim, he's one of the people who can... can make sense of all this horror. Well, I cannot, yea. And, I belong to the synagogue essentially because I... well, I was brought up in it. It gives me a feeling of belonging, yea. But these, to me synagogue attendance, yea, and... and a sense of theological conviction are... are not necessarily parallel.

Q. Right.

A. Need not be necessarily parallel. You might say that I... I... I attend the synagogue at the level of other parishioners. It shows in the kind of... the kind of small talk I make, yea. Goes down to the level of questions after their children, after their business, after their other successes or... the simplest small talk is indicative, yea. We do not ever... broach any... any... any... any very serious problems, yea. The synagogue doesn't have a rabbi, which is good for me because when they had one I... I chafed under the simplicity and... and of his explanations, yea, which to me are, of course, unacceptable, yea. No one's ever gone through what we have gone through or can ever believe in this black and white world again, yea. So you might say that intellectually that I'm outside, yea. Physically and for the sake of comfort, be... sense of belonging, giving... giving time a certain shape as it is... as it is shaped by the holidays and calendar.

Q. Right.
A. It... It... It structures, yea, it structures life. But it lacks, certainly for me, a... it does not lack a... it does not have a theological, yea, commitment that it may have had, yea, to... to previous generations.

Q. Could you have gotten this same feeling from Reform or Conservative?
A. No. That is my... I have the Conservative, yea,... I have the Conservative temple five minutes walking distance, yea, from where I live. I've known Professor Karp very well over the years. I do not feel comfortable among these well-to-do Jews. A lot of them are well-to-do. And, of course, even those who are poor try to appear as if, yea... They had also...

Q. Occasion, yea...
A. Yea?
Q. Are the occasions.
A. As if they, yea... you know, the excessive luxuries of Jewish weddings and Bar Mitzvahs, yea.

Q. Right.
A. I have never been... only very occasionally been to the Reform, yea, which leaves me cold, but even in... in Beth El I've never felt... I've never felt at home in the sense that, until my social, let us say that my present social status is not so much different than, let us say the majority of... of people at Beth El, but I have not cottoned to it. Maybe it's too big, yea... it... it's... if it were smaller, yea.

Q. Right.
A. More familiar, although I know quite a number of...
Q. More personal, more personal kind of...
A. Yea. For example, in... in the synagogue that I attend, I know everybody, everybody.
Q. How big is it?
A. Oh, it's a hundred families, maybe. I know everybody, everybody knows me, everybody knows my children.

Q. Right. It's kind of nice.
A. It's like. . . it's an extended, yea.
Q. Right.
A. It's an extended family, that's what it all. . .
Q. Basically, it counters so much of the other parts of your life where everything is big and impersonal. . .
A. Impersonal. Now, I also realize that, it's strange, but I think it should be said, I don't think I could bring an outsider in because the. . . the kind of manner, behaviorism, that you see in an Orthodox synagogue cannot be explained to an outsider. I. . . It must be shocking, yea. To see the kind of worldly, I say worldly behavior, this . . . oh the talking, the. . . it is totally different from what one would expect a . . . it is totally different from what one would expect a church, either Catholic or. . . or Protestant, and so it is kind of experience that you grow up with. I don't think it can be. . . I don't think it can be gained or. . . or. . . or acquired. It. . . it's too outlandish. . .
Q. Yea, yea.
A. I saw the other day in the New York Review, someone has. . . sociologist has done a study on gossip in a synagogue, an important instrument of social communication. Well, I've known this all along, but I never thought that this could be the subject of an, you know, subject of an academic study. But, in. . . in. . . let's say in Beth El, yea, gossip is frowned upon, yea, although it. . . it does . . . yea, it still does. . . it still does happen. And. . .
Q. But, it's far more stilted that.

A. For example, in Beth El, you... you come in, you have to sit down, you're supposed to sit, yea. I... in my synagogue if I want to get up, I can get up. I can walk out, if I want to walk out. If I want to see my children playing in... in the basement nobody will give me one dirty look for... I can walk out and...

Q. Yea...

A. ... and look after... and look after my children that is considered perfectly, perfectly normal, yea. And I don't, excuse me, if I go to the synagogue I don't want to behave any more rigid than I would behave at home.

Q. Right... that's an interesting point, it's become very large, therefore, people lose their informality and their comfort. I don't feel very comfortable inside of a large synagogue. I do try twice a year and sometimes.

A. So... so... I say it's... it's... it is a... to me, the synagogue is... has to do with feelings of belonging, yea. Rather than being... being sociological truth.

Q. Right. Your... your Hebrew... you've learned... did you learn Hebrew in... in Austria?

A. Well... my... I had some very limited education. I went to an afternoon school, I think I mentioned once. I have since learned a great deal more, yea. In... in terms of understanding Hebrew and being able to translate it, yea. Though some, but not enough, not enough. But I know enough to... to really understand what goes on in the synagogue, including the reading of the Torah and the reading of the... Torah to the readings of the Prophets, I can understand that. And of course the total translation of the prayers of the... I... I could easily handle... I could easily handle, yea...

Q. But, it's not written down, I mean, the translations?
A. Oh, yea, but they're there. . . yea, they use them. . .
Q. Oh, they do?
A. They use the prayer book with translations.
Q. Which means that. . .
A. Yes, of course, they use the Pentateuch with the English translation, yea, and I think that is. . . that is common practice now. There's. . . I don't think there. . . you know, it's. . . it's interesting, with the exception of Israel, yea, I don't think that a prayer book is being printed today in the United States without translations.
Q. I didn't know that. I really thought that one of the distinctions of the Orthodox service was entirely Hebrew, you know. . .
A. Yea, well the service is in Hebrew but parallel with the text, yea, it runs the. . . the translation. . .
Q. That's really the Reform practice or was initiated by Reforms. . .
A. Well, it was initiated, as you know the first translation of the Pentateuch came in Germany in the 1770's, Moses Mendelshon did that, yea. And before that, of course they had translations into Yiddish, that was the first translation into. . .
Q. Right.
A. . . into formal high German. But, today everything that is being printed here in the United States comes with translations. . . I. . . I'm referring to prayer books and to Pentateuch and portions of the Prophets. Now, of course, among the Orthodox, very, very Orthodox groups in New York or Cleveland, they reprint some of the prayer books from Europe without translations. So there are, I should correct this, there are still reprints being done without translations, but the average standard American Orthodox synagogue uses a running translation, side by side as a text.
Q. Is this a fairly recent thing that's been... that's been happening?
A. Well, I would say that this has come about the last thirty years... has something to do with the fact that, you know, when... when the... when they had to reprint prayer books, yea, when the European texts became not available anymore, they reprinted them with side by side with... with translations. Some of them are quite good, and... and try to be... they try to be as close to the text as... as possible.
Q. Now are... are women and men separated...
A. Yes. Yes.
Q. Does that bother you?
A. Well, it doesn't bother me, it may have bothered my wife. I understand that women resent the separation far more than men.
Q. I wonder why that's true.
A. Well...
Q. ... the women look forward to the male figure...
A. I don't know... I don't... I think that they feel it is a sign of superiority...
Q. It is...
A. And it is, and it is. Yea. On the other hand, you see, the man being together, yea, without women that is... that has a kind of... of clubiness, yea, at least for part of the day and you know how important... you know how domineering Jewish women are on the whole, and so there must be at least some part of...
Q. This may be the actual origin of all the...
A. ... some part of life in which their being...
Q. ... together...
A. ... together and without that... man can be together without...
Q. Right.
A. . . . without women. But . . .
Q. So you do feel that way.
A. Well, I don't. . . I don't know. . . it's . . . it's . . . it's. . . it's hard to say. Yea, so much of this depends on feelings that one has acquired over many years and is not, yea, amenable twenty rational arguments, yea. . . Rationally, of course, I said, well, now why shouldn't women sit next to man? Well, I know all the reasons, yea that. . . that. . . that exist scripturally and otherwise, yea, that make for the distinction. But, after all, we're a modern society.
Q. Right.
A. Why shouldn't we. . . yes, but then there's this force of tradition, yea, which is just. . . cannot be. . .
Q. In other words, that's really kind of. . . I mean it. . . it. . . enhances the atmosphere for you. I mean it gives you, again, that feeling that's important, being with other men and, it's just the setting of separation and it may be something that's important as well. . . and again attracted to the Orthodox as opposed to the Conservative or Reform.
A. Well, so much of it, yea, depends upon habit and the ability to change, yea. A great . . . you see a great many people became. . . who started out Orthodox and then became Conservative, yea, wanted to work themselves up within the American. . . in the eyes of the American public. After all, this is the basis of all reform movements, and certainly also the basis of Reform late. . . early in the mid-nineteenth century, and they wanted to be like everybody else. And somehow that feeling, yea, I. . . I never had that.
Q. Right.
A. So, it is not . . .

Q. Well, again, that's that immigrant phenomenon though. I mean, it's . . . it's a new culture coming into an American culture which is really, if you can . . . separate those things out because America is an immigrant culture, America does have a tendency to become, you know, unified and the melting pot type of tendency. But, you know, the . . . the immigrant groupings, ethnic groupings in this country counters that trend at certain points. This is one point, I think where a group especially blacks today are asserting their own autonomy and their own distinctiveness. So, for whatever that's worth. Let me ask you a couple more questions because I don't know about you, but I'm . . . I'm getting a bit tired. I always seem to get more tired in these things than the one I'm interviewing. So, what you have been saying about the . . . the reason for belonging to an Orthodox, which is that sense of belonging and structure, continuity in your life, and less of a theological emphasis is consistent with what you said, I think, before in the first tape that you encourage, at least in the education of your children, a Jewish . . . a Jewish education, but humanistic, and that's your term.

A. Yes, I . . . I think that there's a . . . there's a parallel . . . there's a parallel there, yea. I . . . I would . . . I would like to see Judaism as a force towards better mankind, yea. Not in any way superior or a law-giver or light-bringer or anything of the kind, far from it, yea. It's interesting, I've . . . I've . . . I've re-read the Ernst Rosenzweig, yea, lately, I had to give two talks to a small group at Temple Beth El, and that's not so long ago, oh about 40 years ago, early 19 . . . late twenties, yea, fifty years ago, it's not long. He operates purely in . . . in a world where there exists only the Jews and Christians. He's never heard of Chinese or Indians or Hindus . . .
Q. Who is it you're referring to?
A. Ernst Rosenzweig, yea? Or even Arabs for that matter. The whole, now he is a theologian, yea? His whole theological scheme depends or it rests in the world that exists for Jews and Christians. Nobody else. Now no person can today think that way anymore. We just... we're just one small nation among a great many others, a great many others...

Q. And the Jews?
A. And... yea, the... the idea of... of... of being elect which we have held for so many years, yea, that has been enhanced and... and aided through the existence of Christianity, yea. If there were no Christianity, we couldn't have felt so very much elect. And so as Christianity decreases in... in... in significance as it undoubtedly has over the last twenty or twenty-five years, so will the notion of the electedness of the Jewish people.

Q. I think that's one of the most problematic aspects of Judaism is what you're referring to now, the sense of chosen... chosen...
A. The sense of choseness, well, why don't the... the Chinese can claim the same thing or the Hindus can...

Q. Right. And I'm sure they do.
A. And, very, very few Jews... our... our... whatever thinking has... has been so centered, yea, in... the relationship between Jews and Christians. Somewhat less than... in... in... between Jews and Moslems, but I must say that it never has been the tremendous tension... there has, theologically speaking, there hasn't been this tremendous tension between Jews and Moslems because after all, it was a... a religion with one God and monotheistic religion of the book so very much. There hasn't been that type of... type of contrast. We... I think the Jews will... over the lo... next twenty or
A, (Continued) thirty years, the Jews will have to make some very, very serious choices. If we survive, what is going to be our place in this world, yea?

Q. I see.

A. With Chinese and Japanese and... and Indians, Negroes, who claim as much significance as... as Europeans, as much, every bit.

Q. It's interesting because that sense of a mission, which is, you know, the... the doctrine of electedness... I mean, it can... this kind of gets off actually, but I mean every culture seems to have it built into their, you know, politics or culture any way that... I mean Austria had it, and Germany certainly had it, you know, America has it, France has it, yea...

A. And Spain? Well, I'll tell you the Norwegians can be very happy with less of it, yea? And the Swedes and the Finns, yea?

Q. They're always happier...

A. And they have... I'd say they have learned, yea... ah, Switzerland has its... its own hang-ups, yea, the live there... the elects of democratic life...

Q. Yea.

A. They have a... they have their...

Q. But Scandanavia seems to be truly...

A. But Scandanavia has learned, yea, they have learned that lesson... that lesson first, yea, to some extent also Holland. It's something that the world has to learn.

Q. It is, and I think it'll...

A. It's... It's...

Q. It seems like an immaturity on the whole...

A. It's... It's wonderful that they have been able to show us that it can be done.
Q. Yea.

A. That... that it can be done.

Q. And, I'll tell you... you mentioned Holland, and they have one of the more model societies, even if they don't... even if they don't have the intention, it is nevertheless...

A. Well, I know Holland fairly well because my wife is Dutch.

Q. That's true.

A. And, I know what's behind the facade, too, yea? It is a... autocratic society, yea. I think it is as authoritarian almost as... as the Germans.

Q. Really?

A. Except that, and certainly in the family...

Q. To compare...

A. But, somehow on the... in the political box, yea, they have been able to work out their differences. And that is, and don't forget the Dutch have a... a long history of colonial oppression...

Q. But there were...

A. Don't ever forget that. They were as mean to the... to their... to the Indonesians and the other subject races as the English and French, yea. They have a special, like the Swiss, they have a special kind of domestic partial democracy, but I... I think we ought to be a... in our admiration we should be tempered by the...

Q. OK.

A. ... by the... by the facts, yea?

Q. I'll watch that.

A. But, there's a great deal to be said, yea, for the... for the Scandanavians and...
Q. I mean, I look at it.

A. ... be the model for ... for the world to come, I ... I ... in which Jews can play a part.

Q. Yea.

A. I'd be very ... I'd be very happy.

Q. Yea.

A. Yea. And I think that is also that was one of the early visions of Zionism, to build a peaceful state in ... in what was then Palestine.

Q. Right.

A. I think that some of the early Zionists, if they saw what Israel has become, had to become as a result of aggressions of ... of the Arabs, yea? A highly militaristic society, all right militaristic maybe, still under civilian command, they'd ... I don't know what they would do, they'd roll the dead, turn over in their graves to see what's happened, yea?

Q. Airports right there in the.

A. And Herbpor, Acha Aham or any of these early leaders, yea.

Q. Yea.

A. Even Weissman himself.

Q. Right.

A. Don't forget the Hagannah and the early defense army was ... it was ... it was an army that ... that of civilians, naturally, there was no such thing as an establishment. When I think of Israel selling arms for export to South American dictatorships in the south of Africa, I'm tearing my hair. But, it's a fact of life, and if you come and tell them, they say we have to do it, we have to live.

Q. Right.
A. Hard to, it's very, very hard to argue.

Q. Yea, that money argument's a tough one, but you know, it comes up time and again and it's just one of the most frustrating aspects of any endeavor, yea.

A. But, in... in essence, we've... we have, ... we have got problems... we have got problems here and we've got... we've got problems in Israel. The old spirit of Zionism, of the... of the Reformist society that... that... that's gone out. Sad too.

Q. Yea. Let's, for the remainder of this tape, one thing I wanted to clarify was the transitions from, very briefly from your parents to yourself to your children as far as Jewish observance is concerned. There seems to be some remarkable changes.

A. Well, It's... it's difficult to say this. I... I find that... this is a very difficult question. You're asking me after the... after the extent of observance, intensity of observance, after the degree of... after the degree of commitment, yea? Let's say my Jew... my son is a happier Jew than I was or my parents were. I think I can say that. My son does not mind walking with a keypo on Saturday morning with me. And I would... let's say, growing up in Vienna, I would have... would have been an impossibility, yea, to walk with my keypo in the street. And he does it as a matter of course. He does not seem to have any... any feelings of inferiority or regret or shame or humiliation of any kind, yea? Now, he's... he's still very young, he might encounter... he uses his... his... his Jewish name, yea, in the street where there are a lot of Gentile kids. He doesn't give it a second thought, Zvi, and he feels no regrets, although I must say that's a street where they know him, though when we go away and he plays with kids on the beach and... and they say what's your name, and
A. (Continued) His name is Zvi, well, we've never heard that name, so he say, call me Marty, he. . . he does. . . he does know he has two names, yea, but in his street, everybody knows him as Zvi. They do. So, I. . . I think he lives in. . . in a much more. . . his life is much more secure. Now, he sees all these German war films, the. . . you know, the. . . on T.V. He's very proud that the Americans beat the hell out of the Germans every time, yea. He takes. . . he takes great pride in that. Of course, he's not aware of what the Germans really did, but, Americans are the. . .

Q. Right.

A. . . . are the winners, he. . . he. . . So, I would say all along, yea, his life is less-complicated, more, he's only a kid, but, less-complicated, more unified. His Judaism is a. . . is a part of his general American, yea, . . . part of his general American experience. He never had. . . had the feeling that I have. I knew from day one when I went to school, or even a child in pre-school child in playground, I know I was a Jewish kid, I was an outsider. I knew that from the day one. He does not. He does not have this feeling. So I would. . . I would think that. . . I would think that this is a positive aspect, yea. And a really wonderful. . . On the other hand, he does not experience the intensity of, let us say holidays, the way we children did, yea. Now, I grew up in a very, let us say financially harsh environment. And, when I was a kid, the difference in food between weekdays and Saturdays and holidays, yea, it meant, yea. . . it meant so much. And the. . . the difference between the things you wore on weekdays, you wore, yea, your only good suit, the only one that you had was preserved, yea, which was only worn once a week. And it. . . God forbid if a spot got into it. Now if a kid has six different outfits, you know, that's. . . would never occur to him, . . . he still likes to dress
A. (Continued) up on... on Saturday, he's very... but it can't mean, it can't mean as much, yea? Neither does he experience... I would that these were some of the happy sides of... of intense Jewish life, yea. This great dichotomy between the drabness of weekdays and the frugality of... of the weekday and the feelings of slight luxury and enjoyment on... on Saturday. Nor does the... for example, does he have the feelings of an extended family that I had when I was a child. There were so many cousins of similar age around, yea. As I said, my father had eight brothers and sisters, and my mother had five. So I grew up with lots and lots of cousins and extended families, uncles, grandparents. I... He... he lacks... he lacks that. So, on the... 

Q. That's not a particularly Jewish thing, that's a European kind of... 

A. Well, that's European, but to some extent, it's Jewish because I have no relatives here to speak of, yea? So he... he does, yea. There are certain experiences which he does not... which he does not have, but on the whole I think he's a hell of a lot happier... and... and less ridden with... with all kinds of... of problems than I was when I was... when I was his age.

Q. You observe holidays at your... 

A. Well, we do observe holidays, but somehow, you know, the difference between weekday and holiday, yea, is by far not so pronounced, yea? Because that so much in the Jewish holiday observance of the old country was the difference in food habits. The food was so much better and so much richer. And... and now, of course, our week... our diet during the year is so pleasant here in America, yea, the food is relatively cheap. So the difference between weekday and Saturday... its... is... is not as pronounced. Neither does he have the feeling of Saturdays and holidays were essentially terms when you... when
A. (Continued) ... when you met the family because everybody... almost everybody lived within walking distance or a little further away, but still...

Q. They all observed the same days?
A. ... and he lacks that, too. Because he doesn't have a... he doesn't have a family, so he doesn't... for him, holidays do not have the connotation of the extended family that they... that they had for me. So, my own holiday is just another day, or... or a little different, but it isn't the radical, the radical experience that I had. But, fortunately, I think on the whole...

Q. It's the way you...
A. It... it's... it's a much more, a much more positive... much positive experience. One thing, he loves school, yea. And I'm... I'm very pleased about that.

Q. The Hillel School?
A. Yea, he loves it. Both the English and the Hebrew part. When I recall how I hated school. Some of this, of course, was... it wasn't... it wasn't that I was a poor student, I was a very good student, but some of this, of course, had to do with being discriminated against by both teachers and... and fellow students. And I... I hated it. And I was happy I could stay home and he's unhappy if he has to stay home, a day home. So there is really a total...

Q. Well, to watch him grow up is absolutely rejuvenating for you, I'm sure... It's a...
A. Well, I... I guess, it has kept us much younger than I'm... than I am in actual... in actual years. So this is really a very, very great experience. I... I... I think there are pluses and there are minuses. But, on the whole, the pluses... the pluses have it. Now, there's an interesting point. When I was a kid, it might fit in here, I was not permitted to play with tin
A. (Continued) soldiers. My parents frowned upon this because they were very much in the shade of World War I, yea.

Q. Right.

A. I was even . . . it was even frowned upon if you played war, you know, the kids. Now, my son, even though he is the son of a pacifist and he loves, yea, to look at . . . at war pictures on T.V., yea?

Q. Right.

A. He selects books even when . . . he goes to the library, he selects books about the U.S. Army, and I . . . I shudder, I cannot instill, he's still very young, yea? But, I cannot instill the notions of pacifism in this . . . this child. Maybe later on when he . . . really when war becomes more of a reality, yea, to him. Because as I say at that age, you cannot imagine what war is really like.

Q. Yea. There is a generational type of distance.

A. Maybe he'll, later on, he will try, but I think that my generation was by . . .

END OF TAPE II, SIDE B