

MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Oral History Office

SENATOR TROY BRAILEY
Legislator

Interviewed by Michael Louis

The Governor Theodore McKeldin-Dr. Lillie May Jackson Project
An inquiry into the Civil Rights activities
of
two Maryland leaders
during
the mid-twentieth century

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McKeldin-Jackson Project
Interviewee: Senator Troy Brailey
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I: Senator Brailey, what aroused your interest in civil rights?

A: Well, first of all, I am from South Carolina, and when I was a kid growing up in South Carolina I saw the way blacks were being treated, and I vowed to do something about it if I ever got the opportunity. So I left South Carolina at a very early age and I walked to Baltimore.

I: Walked to Baltimore?

A: Walked to Baltimore, and I got odd jobs, shining shoes, and waiting tables later on. Then in 1941 I got a job as a Pullman Porter and there I met up with A. Philip Randolph, a person I consider as being the Dean of the civil rights leaders.

I: What specific role did you play in the civil rights movement in Baltimore?

A: Well, after I came to Baltimore I became affiliated with the, you know, the various civil rights organizations such as the NAACP and, specifically the NAACP and, through A. Philip Randolph on the national level. I worked with him because he's, as I stated, the granddaddy of the civil rights movement and there were many activities that I worked with along with him. As a matter of fact, I worked with him in '41 when he had the proposed March on Washington back in the days when President Roosevelt was in office, and the March was not carried out because President Roosevelt decided to issue an Executive Order to

create the first Fair Employment Practices Commission, and we accomplished what we wanted without actually having to march.

I: In what ways were you associated with Mrs. Lillie May Jackson?

A: Well, I worked with Mrs. Jackson. I was Chairman of the Labor and Industry Committee for the Baltimore Branch of the NAACP and I worked very closely with Mrs. Jackson for many, many years.

I: What did this Committee do?

A: I beg your pardon?

I: Labor and Industry Committee, is that?

A: Oh, Labor and Industry Committee. The Labor and Industry Committee--we fought for jobs and employment for blacks and upgrading, ^{blacks} on the job, and that was specifically our job there. Going out and pressing for blacks to be hired in certain industry, and back in those days blacks had very few jobs other than being porters and maids and the like, and so we pressed for blacks to be employed in other capacities and pushed for police, and black police to be hired. And after they were hired we pushed for them to be promoted. As Chairman of the NAACP Labor Committee, I, along with Mrs. Jackson--we were responsible for getting the black firefighters in the Union. The black firefighters were hired but the Union refused to take them in, and as Chairman...

I: Local Union?

A: Local Union. Right. They had tried, before they came to us they had tried for five years to get in the Union, and

they sent in the dues and the Union sent the money back, and we got into it and was able to get the black firefighters in the Union.

I: That's around what period?

A: I guess that was about--that was in the fifties.

I: The fifties?

A: Yes. We had a pretty tough fight on ~~there~~^{that}, because, you know, I am a Union man but I am opposed to blacks specifically being discriminated against by anyone whether it's the Union or whether it's the Company, and when we find that people are being discriminated against, especially blacks and the poor, well, we fight for them.

But we were able to get the firefighters in the Union. When the Union finally decided to accept the firefighters, they wanted them to pay dues for the five years that they were kept out and, of course, we were opposed to this, and we told the Union that the firefighters would go in for the same initial entry fee that everybody else pays. And, of course, we had a long fight and the Union at that time had a real publicity campaign going on, and as they hired new firefighters, they had them to come in, you know, and they claimed the other firefighters refused to come in. So we had to make it clear that the firefighters who were going in, because we told them to go ahead on in because they were only paying the regular initiation fee. But the others wouldn't go in because they wanted them to pay this back money which amounted to about \$500 apiece.

So we finally--being a labor man and being affiliated with A. Philip Randolph, I took the case to Chicago to the AFofL-CIO Civil Rights Committee meeting in Chicago, and met this Mr. Randolph, and we got the support of the AFofL-CIO Civil Rights Department and they helped us. And we got them in the Union.

I: And the NAACP here was the leader?

A: Right. It was initiated through the NAACP. Right.

I: Earlier on you told me that--oh, you were speaking about Mr. Randolph and he was--let me change the question then. What about Mr. McKeldin, the Governor? Were you associated with him in any way?

A: Yes. I was associated with Mr. McKeldin when he was first Governor, Mayor and--I think he was first Mayor, then Governor, then Mayor again; and Mr. McKeldin was an unusual person. As a matter of fact, I think he was way ahead of his time, and he really put his neck out to bring about equal justice for all citizens of Maryland, and it was an unpopular thing back in those days. But Mr. McKeldin stuck to his guns, and he just said that he did all that everybody should have equal opportunities and he stuck to this right up until he died.

I: Do you think that a point of principle or political?

A: I think it was a point of principle. Really, it was bad strategy as a politician.

I: For him to have?

A: For him to stick his neck out that way. No, it really

wasn't political. But even though Mr. McKeldin, and I think he knew this, even though he was a Republican, whenever he ran for any office, although blacks couldn't vote for him in the primary, all blacks voted for him in the general and all elections when he ran for Mayor, and when he ran for Governor he got black support. Because they knew the kind of person he was and they knew what he did when he was in office before.

As a matter of fact, I created a Committee five/six years ago to give awards to persons who had done the most to bring about a better relationship between the races in the last decade. And the reason why I thought about the last decade, because we wanted to, in addition to giving awards to blacks, we wanted to give awards to those whites who stuck with us back in the difficult days, and Mr. McKeldin was one of the first persons that, along with Mrs. Jackson, were the first people, you know, to receive the awards. As a matter of fact, they received them the same time.

I: When did they receive this award?

A: This was in 1972. Right. As a matter of fact, when I started this idea, adopted this idea, it was just a thing that I thought up, and I got up this Committee of 150 people--and just a loosely knit Committee--and I went out to one of the large catering places and I told the owner of the place about the idea I had, and just myself, with no money, no organization and nothing else. He said, "Well, Troy, it's a good idea. I'm with you."

So with that he let me rent the room with no money and let me run up a \$6,000 bill and said nothing about it, and with

just my signature. Of course, when we had the affair we honored ten people including Mr. McKeldin and Mrs. Jackson, five awards and five posthumously, and we brought together business people, white and black. As a matter of fact, a lot of business people and their wives who had never been out with blacks socially. And the affair was such a success we have continued it, and we've had it ever since; and we've had it each year. And I've been able to get nationally prominent speakers to come. That particular night we had Senator Philip Hart of Michigan to speak at that first affair. We've been able to get nationally prominent speakers ever since.

I: What was the name of the award, did you say?

A: It's just called the Citizens Award Dinner Committee.

I: I think I've heard of it. Yes. What were some of the obstacles you had to overcome before becoming a political representative in the city? Can you think back and think of any of them?

A: Well, really, I never wanted to be an elected official because I always thought that, you know, I never--you know, I always played it fair and when I thought that I was right about something I stuck to it, and I never wanted to be an elected official because I always thought that people could, you know, come and twist your arm and make you do things that they wanted you to do. And I really didn't have any problem because I had worked in the civil rights area so long until I was really asked to run for office. As a matter of fact, well, one of the, I was affiliated with one of the Fourth District Democratic

organizations, and I was asked to run for office four years before I actually ran, and I turned them down. And when I ran I won, and I've been an independent. When I say independent I do what I think is right for the people. And one other thing, I don't let anyone, black or white, put money in, just say that, you know, give me money for a campaign. I don't take it. So I'm independent. You see, when you take money and you know when people support you financially, let's say, then they can pressure, you know, on certain bills, even if the bill is for the people. And there may be others who don't like the bill. You know, they try to pressure you.

I know the first year I was there in '66 I passed the first minimum wage bill, and I remember the Chamber of Commerce was opposed to this, and I'm told that the next time I ran they were opposing me. But I won.

I: What I was trying to get out is the nature of the Black Power Structure here in Baltimore at the time, you know? For instance, did anyone control it? Was there a Black Power Structure, a political machine that somebody controlled?

A: Well, they were...

I: How powerful were black politicians at that time?

A: Well, at the time I ran the black politicians were--I can't say how strong, you know, they were at the time. But I do know that the organization I was affiliated with at the time was--they had people from. It was a black organization, but there were people in there from different persuasions, and I do know that when I ran for office part of the people, they let somebody white come in and divide the people who were

originally on the ticket to support one candidate for Governor and some support the other. And we started out that way and I, some of the, my former good supporters going against me because I wouldn't go along with the idea of splitting the black community. But I still won.

I: Would other black organizations, say the NAACP, have opposed you if had expressed too radical an approach?

A: I don't quite understand what you mean.

I: Suppose a black politician were to be very radical, would the NAACP have opposed them?

A: Well, I think back in the days of...

I: This kind of radicalism that came later on, for instance.

A: Well, I think in Mrs. Jackson's day, I don't know anybody who was any more radical than she was. I mean she was, you know, she didn't preach the idea of hating white people, you know, if that's what you're talking about, but I don't know of anyone was any more radical than Mrs. Jackson. Because she was truly a warrior, and I know she would get on that telephone and she would call those big white people downtown and she would call everybody. And she would just stay on that telephone until she got an answer. Now, sometimes she would talk so long, and I've known people to put the telephone down on the other end and walk around in their office and let her talk, but she'd stay on the phone until they'd finally come back and give her the answer. So there was no one back in Mrs. Jackson's days any more radical than she was, because she was truly, in my opinion, a great lady.

I: O.K. Just getting back to the civil rights movement, I know that there were different organizations at that time. For instance, you had the Urban League. You had the NAACP. I think there were several others came in at some point. Which dominated? Did the NAACP dominate the civil rights throughout a period, or...?

A: Well, I think the NAACP and the ministers together dominated the civil rights movement and the labor movement-- A. Philip Randolph and labor, black labor. They dominated. You see, you had different fronts. You had people who actually got out on the firing line and who demonstrated, and sit-in, and picket and the like, and then you had other people who had to raise money to get them out of jail, you know, when they went in, etc. And so we had them all working together, and I think one was just as important as the other because even though, you know, we demonstrated and we did other things like that, you still had to have money, you know, to run the organizations. Whenever you'd put on a demonstration, you had to have signs and you had to have material and you had to have all those other things, and it cost money. And the other people-- well, we had various white groups in the city that supported us.

As a matter of fact, when we had the March on Washington, one of the white groups donated their office, office space free, and we had many, many white friends with us back in the struggle, you know, the civil rights struggle. As a matter of fact, if you remember, getting away from Maryland, down in Mississippi you had the Schwerner and Goodman^{*}, you know, two white boys

Ed. Note* Michael Schwerner
ANDREW GOODMAN

from New York and this black boy, Chaney,* and they went down on the ~~Board~~ of Registration Drive in the South and they were all murdered in the South. There were two whites and one black. So, during the late fifties and the sixties we had many, many, many good white friends working along with us in the civil rights struggle.

I: Was the Urban League very effective at any time?

A: Well, the first time the Urban League demonstrated or picketed or anything like that, it was 1963 in the March on Washington. This was the first time the Urban League participated in a demonstration. Now, maybe I could see their point, because, you know, they are part of the Community Chest and of course, they get their money from the power structure, and you know, I can maybe sympathize with them. I don't know, but...

I: But they were not as pushing as the NAACP?

A: No. They were not.

I: Because some people claim at some point they were at the forefront of the civil rights movement.

A: Who?

I: The Urban League.

A: No. That's not true. That's not true.

I: Well, I was about to ask you how great was Mrs. Jackson's influence on public affairs at the time.

A: I think I've told you about that. She was great. And she took, you know, Mrs. Jackson, I don't care how small the problem anyone would have, but she was in her office at eight thirty in the morning and she would stay right there, you know.

Ed. Note:

* James E. Chaney

I mean she was the big chief but she had other people working, but she would be right there handling the problems. I don't care whether somebody came in there with a small problem or a big problem. She would help them. She would help them, and you know, she was just a great old lady. That's all I know. She was wonderful. And I worked very closely with her and she would call me all during the night. She didn't care what time she--it didn't make any difference about time if she wanted you to do something. If it's three o'clock in the morning, five o'clock in the morning, she would call you on the telephone. If my wife would answer the phone, she'd say, "Well, excuse me, but I want to speak to Mr. Brailey." And that's the way she was.

I: Do you think if you had to select, say, one activity or one incident about Mrs. Jackson that you could consider her greatest act, would that be difficult?

A: Yes. Yes. Yes.

I: She did so much that you couldn't...?

A: Right. Yes. It really would.

I: Did you notice any changes in her attitude over the years? I mean she headed NAACP for a long time. Say, particularly in relationship to when the militants came on the scene, for example.

A: No. She didn't change. She didn't change. She just --the only thing that changed her was when she became ill, when she had a stroke and it slowed her down. That's the only thing changed her. I never remember her, you know, actually, she

would say that we need all groups. You know, I don't take maybe the same road they're taking. See what I mean? But she didn't actually criticize them. But she'd just say, "Well, we just don't go that route." But she didn't actually criticize them, and then, again, she had a knack of working with young people. She had a lot of, like, they had the Youth Groups and all like that. They all loved her and she was known throughout the nation, and she was known at the NAACP Conventions. They always spoke of the Baltimore Branch and Ma Jackson. That's what everybody called her.

I: She was known nationally?

A: That's right. Ma Jackson. And they respected her when she walked through anywhere. You see, she was a very stern person and the people, you know, the whites she would talk to or get after, they didn't actually--I don't think anyone hated her. But I think they sort of feared her, but everybody respected her. Everyone respected her.

I: And she didn't compromise either?

A: No. She did not compromise. Like I said, if she got on the phone and they would put the phone down and walk away, but she wouldn't get off that phone until she resolved whatever she went out to do.

I: Who were the black militants in Baltimore in the fifties and sixties? Can you remember? Or Maryland generally?

A: Well, we had--you know, it's sort of hard to actually say. Well, we had a group around we called CIG. They had two brothers in there, the Conway brothers in that group; and we

had another young man here from, that came into Baltimore, from Philadelphia. His name escapes me right now. I can't think of his name, you know, they started out as militants, but it seems that a little later on they got a nice little job, a city job...

I: They give up their...?

A: Or some kind of job and all of a sudden they went into seclusion, you see. And I think this is what. You know, I gave some of the local people an idea on the tenth anniversary of the March on Washington. I was talking to the papers, local black papers, and I said, "Why don't we do something on the black leaders back in the, ten years later? Where are they now?" And you'd be surprised. Of course, I know everybody has to live. You can't do it forever, but, you know, sometimes you get a job. And then the other thing is, we had a lot of people in the black community who criticized the militants when they were out there. But the militants were out there-- when I say blacks I'm talking about the so-called upper-class blacks.....

I: Yes, you were telling me about the black leaders who criticized the...

A: Well, I'm not talking about the black leaders. I'm talking about other blacks in the community, you know. I'm not necessarily talking about the black leaders. I'm talking about people who were--who got jobs after the black militants went out and they demonstrated and they pointed out the injustices, etc., and the same people who criticized these people, who said, you know, pointed their finger and said, "Oh, he's a militant. He's this and he's that, and he's the other." But at the same time when they broke down the barrier of discrimination and they started hiring people and big jobs and all, they didn't hire the militants.

They hired those blacks who were back there criticizing the militants. They weren't necessarily, the blacks I'm talking about weren't necessarily in the civil rights movement. They were, you know, they figured they were secure, etc. But, let's say, for example, some person, maybe he was a teacher or something, and then they say, "Well, we want to put a black in a high-ranking, a high job." Well, they'll come over here and pick this guy.

They're not going to hire the militant who's out there demonstrating. They're going to come over here and pick a guy who's over here doing something else, who wasn't a part of the whole movement, you see. And as I stated, a lot of the people who were standing back and criticizing really, you know, reaped the benefits of the struggle of the militants.

I: Do you think this brought about a decline of the militants?

A: Yes, I think it brought about a decline and I think at the present time, I don't know whether we're coming to a climax in this interview, but there's not much action going on now in the civil rights struggle. As a matter of fact, many black leaders such as Jessie Jackson, who's saying that we've achieved all of our civil rights, now we should strive for silver rights. Well, I agree. I think the two go together. But, in my opinion, we have not achieved our civil rights.

Consequently, it's hard to get people now to, you know, blacks to take out a NAACP Membership, and they're not talking much now about the struggle. They're saying we have it made, you know? And being in the labor movement and seeing all these people unemployed and being discriminated against in plants and the like, and looking at the school situation up in Boston, the civil rights struggle is not over. You can talk about silver rights, which we have to have, but if a man is discriminating against you down there at the plant, you see, and you don't have any pressure. You've got everything that we have. We've achieved--I think we've achieved quite a few things, but everything that we've achieved came about through pressure. We haven't been given anything. We fought for everything that we have at the present time.

I: What do you think explains the lack of push in the civil rights movement in Baltimore in the late sixties and up to now, to this period? Right here in the city.

A: What is that? The lack?

I: Yes. The lack of push that it had seen in the 1950's.
What do you think?

A: Well, we've--first of all, you know, Mrs. Jackson passed on. That's one of the things, and a lot of people have made good. Even whether they made good or not they've been able to get a big mortgage and buy a big house out in Columbia, you know. And they've come out from among them, so to speak. You see, you have a job downtown now or you're teaching, and you're living in Columbia or you're living in Baltimore County, which I don't blame anyone from bettering their conditions. But I don't think that you should forget about ^{from} whence you came, you see. I believe in good, you know, but you're in the minority. The majority of the blacks are still living down there in the ghetto, getting set out in the streets because they can't pay the rent.

But, you know, we don't see this because we're coming around the road. We're coming over the expressway coming into town, you see, and even though we have relatives back there, even some of our teachers, black teachers now are saying that they have to go to--you know they've been out of the ghetto about three years--and they have to go to special schools in order to learn how to teach ghetto kids, you see. We're so far removed, you see. So that's our problem. That's our problem. I'm glad to see these athletes, etc., from the African countries pulling out of the--what do you call it up there in Montreal? I'm glad to see them sticking together, pulling out, see.

Because, in order to accomplish anything you have to stick together, and I think at the present time the civil rights movement is at a standstill.

I: Because of fragmentation?

A: Fragmentation plus a large majority of the people feel that, blacks, you know, feel that they have it made. Plus, we have some of the black leaders saying that we don't need the civil rights movement any more. But we still need it and we still have to have it.

I: We haven't spoken about the Afro, the churches in the 1950's and 1960's. What was their attitude?

A: Afro newspapers?

I: Yes.

A: The Afro newspapers were very active. They were active in the civil rights struggle. As a matter of fact, I don't know what we would have done without the Afro-American newspapers. As I stated before, the Afro-American newspapers have been and still is the backbone of the black community. I know that Mr. Carl Murphy, former Chairman of the Board, worked right along with Mrs. Jackson all through the civil rights struggle, using the Afro and helping the NAACP and all of the movements that we've had, they've joined right in with us and just given us 100% cooperation. So we couldn't have done it with the Afro.

I: It was the whole cooperation?

A: The whole cooperation with the Afro.

I: Now, let me ask you this. We know Mrs. Jackson was doing

a lot of work *all the time* . Did anybody ⁱⁿ that ^{period} ~~you heard~~ ever criticize them? Or were dissatisfied?

A: Oh, certainly. Some people criticized her. Yes. You know, you can always be criticized. They criticized Christ, you know. And certainly some people criticized her, but...

I: Was that among black people or among white people or both?

A: Well, it was some blacks as well as whites. But, as I before stated, you know a lot of people criticize you for doing good.

I: Yes. What I'm trying to find out is, were there people of different views at the time, you see. For instance, if black persons would criticize Mrs. Jackson, well, what would they want or what would they have thought would be the right thing to do?

A: I don't know of too many cases where they, because they always looked to her, you know, for leadership, and, of course, I think you mentioned earlier about the churches?

I: Yes.

A: Mrs. Jackson depended upon the churches to help the NAACP, you know, exist, and the NAACP had very good relations with the churches during Mrs. Jackson's time. They always had a minister as the Vice President of the NAACP and they would always have the local drives and the churches would, you know, be very helpful to the membership. As a matter of fact, were it not for the churches, the NAACP could not have existed financially.

I: The churches gave financially?

A: That's right. That's where they got their financial support from, churches. And, of course, the colleges, the black colleges, they had persons in charge--like at Morgan College they were very faithful, and, of course, to a smaller degree some of the other colleges. And, of course, through the labor Unions and fraternal groups, we also received help. But the churches were the old standby.

I: What would be the sentiment of what we call the man in the street of the NAACP at the time? Would they be willing to contribute? Did the NAACP reach them the way that a church could have reached them? I mean, because I think that these are the people who will contribute to the church so the church would have the funds. Is that correct?

A: What are you talking about, the man in the street?

I: Yes.

A: Well, one thing, we have a very good person presently heading up the NAACP, but you know an organization like the NAACP, and to get people to support you, you're going to have to make some noise, you see. And you're going to have to let people know what you're doing. Now the NAACP is still doing a good job, but they don't say much, and when you're not saying anything, or you're not saying very much, then the people don't think you're doing much; and then a lot of people say, "Well, why should I give to that NAACP? They're not doing anything." That's simply because they don't hear what you're doing. Now Mrs. Jackson made it known. You see what I mean? She made it known.

I: She reached all persons.

A: She made it known what they were doing and, now you take, for example, if someone comes to the NAACP now with a problem. Well, the NAACP would go ahead and take it to the Board, and they'd say, "Well, let's take it to the Board. Let's see whether we should get into this or not." But Mrs. Jackson would just jump into it head over heels, you know, and go ahead on and do it, you know. Plus call the papers, you see. And you could get it done much easier that way.

I: She avoided the red tape, you say?

A: That's right, you see. Of course, maybe eventually now maybe we'll solve it right away, but the general public don't know this. They don't know that you've settled this problem. So you have to let people know what you're doing, and I think this is one of the reasons now, at the present time we're not getting the support that we should get.

I: Do you think it's because people don't know what's going on?

A: Right. Plus, as I stated earlier, some of our national black leaders are saying that, you know what I mean, we have all of our civil rights. We don't need the NAACP or the civil rights organizations.

I: Let me ask you a question not very related to what you have been talking about. Was there a Communist Party in Baltimore?

A: Well, I don't know of a--there were people around who they said, you know, back in the struggle they were people in the Communist Party. They would try to get into the civil rights movement, but they never got a foothold, so to speak,

and we were able to spot them out more or less.

I: What was the attitude of the NAACP to people they thought were Communists?

A: Well, if they found it out, they just wouldn't let them participate. We had one white fellow around here one time who was very active. He tried to be in the civil rights movement and it was alleged that he was a Communist. Of course, you know, we just kept him on the outside. And there were some blacks who we heard that were members of the Communist Party. I'm National Vice President of the Afro-American Labor Council and we had some people in that organization who were alleged to be Communists, and we had a section in our By-Laws where, you know, it specifically stated, you know, talked about Communists would not be admitted.

And I just simply wrote a letter and cited that Article of the--I didn't call them a Communist, you know, but I just cited the--I said, "You can no longer be a part of this organization because of Article so-and-so of the Constitution. And you can do whatever you wanted to about it.

I: Are these people around still in Baltimore?

A: Some of them are still around. Yes.

I: Would you like to name names? I mean is it the kind of thing that probably one would like to speak to them and find out their views?

A: No. I wouldn't like to name any names, but they're still around. I tell you, you get around, if there's a demonstration. If you see a demonstration like a march or demonstrating

for labor. Now we have a group here now who's very, you know, they're getting to be very active and they call themselves the Labor Workers Party. Now, people say they're on the borderline, but they don't just altogether call them Communists. But they say they're on the borderline. They're very active, and, of course, you see some of these other people if you have a demonstration. They're giving out this literature and all this kind of stuff, you know.

But I think this Workers Party, they confuse blacks in the community in two ways because they come in and the only thing they talk about is jobs and all this kind of stuff. And quite naturally the people are unemployed and they can sort of brainwash them and then do it. And just then they're white and the people say, "We'll use some good whites over there to try and, you know, help blacks and help them get jobs and all this kind of stuff." So they're serving two purposes.

I: But generally speaking, you'd say now blacks have not been too attracted by Communists?

A: No. No.

I: Just coming around to something you spoke about a minute ago, what would you describe as Governor McKeldin's contribution to black people in Baltimore?

A: Why, I think he was against--he was always opposed to the death penalty which we just passed in the Legislature. He was opposed to this, and, of course, a lot of the policemen used to get mad with him because he said he was too--well at that time, you know, most of the people they were locking up

were blacks. And they were saying that he was too soft on crime because he thought that people should get equal justice under the law.

And he was for integration, and when he was Mayor, I brought a case in against the--as a matter of fact, I asked the city and the state to stop doing business with a certain company downtown that sold office equipment to the city and the state, and they refused to hire blacks other than as porters and maids, you know, shipping clerks and things like that. And I asked the Governor and I asked McKeldin particularly to stop doing business with this company; and he asked the Community Relations Commission to take over and they went right in and they went into this company and told them that the city would not do business with them if they didn't start hiring blacks and upgrading. Of course, you go down to the place now, they have quite a few blacks in there.

As a matter of fact, I was in there the other day and I saw black people working. There were some ladies. They were up front, you know. I went down there one day and they were there, you know, and I had to go back and pick up this thing the next day. I look some correspondence that I had had way back, and when I went back to pick up my thing that I had purchased, I said, "Read this letter," you know. They read it and they came back and they were shaking their heads, "I didn't know this." They thought they had gotten the job on their merits and they thought the company had always done this, you see, but they didn't know that somebody way back had pressured.

Just like I say, we have never gotten anything until we pressured them. Well, I went to the man and told them, you know, and they said they didn't believe me and no one had said that they were discriminating. You see, they were selling to all of the black churches, to all of the black lawyers and all the black doctors and all of this was buying their office equipment from them. And, of course, when I told them they really hadn't realized that this--they just hadn't thought about it until I brought it up.

I: Is that recent? Fairly recent?

A: That was in the late fifties.

I: How did he think the racial question of advancement of black people should be achieved? I'm saying, did he look for it through employment or through education or through housing? What was his idea of how black people ought to make progress?

A: I think he wanted blacks to be in the mainstream, but, you know, he had some obstacles. You know, being Mayor or Governor, and when you come in and you have new ideas and you have all of these old people who've been in office for a long time, you know it takes you a long time to get your ideas over, and you have to cut through a lot of stuff to--it takes you more than, I guess, two terms to really implement the things that you have in mind to do. But he was able to do quite a few things. I think he really wanted blacks to be in the mainstream.

I: Was he opposed by any local white politicians because of his stand on civil rights? I mean McKeldin. Were there any clashes?

A: Oh, yes. They had clashes with him. Right. But it didn't seem to bother him. On the other hand, he was very close to the Jewish community, also. He used to go around and speak on, you know, Bonds for Israel, and he was one of the, I guess, best money raisers the Jewish community had. So, he was very close to the Jewish community as well as the black. So he had a pretty good base.

I: Well, now that you've told me that, what was the kind of relationship between the Jewish and the black communities? Can you remember?

A: Well, we had a good relationship between the Jewish community and the black community. They, the Jewish community, you know, as a whole, they supported us in the civil rights program, although we had a lot of--well, that's one of the things that during the riots we had a lot of people, you know, they destroyed a lot of the Jewish stores, saying that they were cheating people in the black community, etc.

But on the other hand, I think they helped a lot of people because, I don't care, if you live in the inner city and even though a lot of people said that they were being cheated, the blacks, you know people had the trade on the books and they had to go to the corner store. They weren't able, they didn't have cars and all of that to go way out somewhere. They didn't have supermarkets all around, and the shopping centers like we have now, and they had to go to the Jewish stores down on the corner and they would let them have things when they didn't have money. And on a whole, the people in the black community felt

that they were--they got along well with the Jewish people. And in the civil rights struggle we had the Jewish people really stuck with us. They stuck with us in the civil rights struggle.

I: I'm going to ask you just about two more questions. Can you tell me how effective, would you say, that the present black politicians in the civil rights struggle? How effective can you bring your pressure to bear? Knowing in many cases you might be in the minority in the House?

A: I think you can be very effective. We have the Congressional Black Caucus in Washington and we have the Nineteen Member Black Caucus in the Maryland Legislature. Now we have to realize that some of the blacks may be tied to, let's say, if something would be coming up that, you know, will affect the Mayor, to affect the Governor, or something like that, and you would want all of the black politicians to let's get together and take a stand. I don't know whether you'd get a solid front or not. But if the black politicians were to stick together, nineteen people have a very, very, very good--quite a bit of strength.

Now, for example, you take in the Legislature right now, most of the counties are anti-Baltimore City. Now if there's something for the city--you know most everything that comes up, all of the bond issues have to be cleared through the whole Legislature voting on by the twenty-three counties. So anything that-s coming up for Baltimore City, it seems that the majority of the county legislators are opposed to it. See what I mean? Now if the Black Caucus....