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Tape 10-Side 1

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- I. Today, would you tell me a little bit about your activities with the Jewish Labor Committee?
- R. In 1951, which was my last semester of teaching before I would retire in the following June, representatives of the Jewish Labor Committee came and offered me a position in their organization, to begin after my retirement in June, 1951. But they were eager to get me started, so I worked for them part-time in the second semester of 1951, which would be from about February to June, as part-time, and then after that as full time.
- I. What was this committee, exactly? What did they do?
- R. The Jewish Labor committee was really, in a way, an ad hoc committee, which is always understood as a committee that's organized for a certain purpose. Then when that purpose is achieved, it goes out of business. Well, many ad hoc committees continue, as the Jewish Labor Committee has. Its original purpose was the rescuing of labor leaders in Europe who were the particular targets of Hitler. He feared, of course, any democratic organizations like the really democratic unions of Europe. The labor leaders of Europe used to meet, during the war even, with labor

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leaders from America, and tell them what was happening. Finally, they got a list of one thousand labor leaders that Hitler was determined to have executed in some way. That list was brought to David Dubinsky, who at that time was the head of the International Ladies Garment Workers, and he took it to Mr. Green, who was at that time president of the American Federation of Labor. He took it to the state department, and he was very firm. He said, "These are the liberty loving people of Europe, and they are marked for destruction. I want visas to bring them to America, and I don't want you to put me off by anything about the quota from Romania or Czechoslovakia or what have you, because they have had to escape from their country to whatever country they could get to. So don't talk national quotas to me, I want these visas." And he got them, he got a thousand. And incidentally, on the list was Blum.

- I. Leon Blum?
- R. Leon Blum, but he elected not to come. Many of them came, and among them was the man who was in charge of the Jewish Labor Committee in Chicago. His name was Jersey Glicksman and he belonged to a very distinguished, cultivated Jewish family in Warsaw. His half-brother, an older brother by the name of Adler was a noted engineer:, but as in many European countries,

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many of the intellectuals were Socialists. He was a member of the Socialist Party, very active in the labor movement. And their home was like a rendezvous, like a salon, for distinguished people to come to. He was very well known. When Stalin made the pact with the Nazis, much to the shock of everybody in the world, in spite of this pact, they didn't trust each other. The Nazis invaded Poland from the west, and the Russians came in from the east. That was a very sad period for everybody. During that period, this Mr. Adler and another prominent trade unionist by the name of Ehrlich disappeared, and everybody wondered where they were. They were much too prominent to disappear unnoticed. They had been at many international meetings of trade unions, and they were very well known. The trade union world became very disturbed and kept sending cables to Stalin demanding to know where they were. Stalin never answered. Then Russia was invaded. The double-crossers double-crossed each other. Russia needed the support of the west and a telegram was sent to Stalin signed by Mrs. Roosevelt, Albert Einstein, and someone else who was prominent, demanding that Stalin tell where these men were. And he answered by saying that he had had them executed as traitors, that when the Nazi army invaded Poland, they were

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urging the Poles to join the Nazi Army, which was manifestly absurd, because both of them were Jews. That sent a shock through the world, and every trade union center in America and Europe were holding memorial services for these men. Row, as I said, the half brother, was in charge of the Chicago office, (his wife had been killed by the Nazis) and also taught part-time at Roosevelt University.

I. What did he teach?

R. I don't remember, but he taught part-time.

I. This is Glicksman?

R. That's right, Glicksman.

I. I should be able to find some record from Roosevelt.

R. That's right. He taught there part-time. In the meantime, he'd married again. He was not very well; he had a heart condition from all the things he'd gone through. The Jewish Labor Committee continued its work of trying to help out the widows and orphans of labor leaders who'd been executed and destroyed in Europe, and they were in every country. There were French orphans, there were Italian, Polish. I was trying to think of a famous woman who was in charge of a group,

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a famous European woman. I don't remember if that was Litvinov's widow. Litvinov was the Commisar of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union and was the man who got the United States to recognize the Soviet Union at last. She, herself, was a member of a distinguished British family. I think she was (doing some work in this area. Incidentally, her son, the grandson of Litvinov, who had been Commisar of Foreign Afaairs, and who had come to America and got the Soviet Union recognized, that grandson has now been banished to Siberia because he was one of the young people who protested the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet army. That's very interesting. But at any rate they would find out the needs of these people. It was a lot of work, I remember we'd go to a meeting of a local of the International Ladies Garment Workers, and the business agent, a man by the name of Classman, would tell the women about the plight of these children -- just like you see now, "Do you want to adopt a child?" Well, they'd adopt an Italian child and they'd adopt a Jewish child, and that was their child, They would send them money and food and even dresses, because they could sew. That was one of the things, one of the activities.

Now, at that time, the Jewish Labor Committee became very much interested in race relations in this country. There was a lot of movement. The B'nai B'rith, which is part of the Anti-Defamation

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League, the Catholic Interracial Council, many organizations got interested in the problem of race relations. And one of the projects they worked on was to try to get an FEPC law in the state of Illinois. The FEPC law that we had, had been a federal law, which endured only for the duration of the war and went out when the war was over. New York, however, under the governorship of Dewey, then established a state FEPC. Dewey forgot to mention that when he was running, he was so sure he'd be elected. That was a very good point in his favor. Well, we had a big Fair Employment Practices committee. Somewhere I have the organizations on the committee -- various social settlements, the Catholic Interracial Council, particularly under the leadership of Father Cantwell, a saintly person. Various organizations formed a big committee to try to get an FEPC law passed in Illinois, and we worked very hard on it.

I. Were there any other groups working on it, too?

R. Well, this was a big group, you see, and the labor people were working on it.

I. Were they working on it through this?

R. Independently. Everybody was sort of in the picture, not as strong as they are now, of course. And we had a very tough time.

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One time there was a particularly important meeting called, and as I worked for the Jewish Labor Committee at that time, I went to that meeting. We were all geared for a big fight on it. And then, there was a lull. Nothing seemed to happen. So I called some of the representatives of different organizations that were on the committee. "What has happened?" Well, here 'was the strange thing that happened -- prejudice on top of prejudice. It had to do with the McCarren Act. We worked on the McCarren Act to get more immigrants into the country. McCarren was that awful creature from Nevada, I think, He was a Democrat but, as often happens in American politics, he did not follow the program of his own party. He had that awful immigration law, which took away from immigrants the right they'd always had to become full-fledged American citizens and also greatly limited the immigration quotas to this country. It was very bad. We had been pointing out all along that the country could absorb more immigrants. We didn't ask them to increase the number but to use the unused portions of Great Britain and Germany. All they'd have to do, they wouldn't increase the number of immigrants, they would simply use the unused quotas of those countries and we couldn't get that through. Well, we had this big meeting, and we were all stirred up, and then for a while, nothing happened. So I began calling these organizations to

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find out what happened, and privately they said to me that a certain group had come to the conclusion that if this immigration act was changed, as we wanted it, most of the immigrants would come from southern Europe, and they'd mostly be Catholics. That was some Protestant prejudice within the group.

- I. The group that was working for it? They talked themselves out of it.
- R. Just one element, you know. Through the Jewish Labor Committee, I became involved in many movements to fight race prejudice. And at that time, we had what we now have, the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, which was an outgrowth of what was called the Mayor's Committee which was organized immediately after the awful race riots in 1919.
- I. In 1919?
- R. Yes. Maybe it was organized later, but that was the impetus of it. Wow, I was a member of the advisory committee of the Commission, of.. the Education committee, Chicago Commission. And every year, they would give awards -- one to a firm, which had done a significant job in the area of improving race relations, and one to an individual who had made a significant contribution to improving race relations. They always kept the names of the awardees secret until the awards

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luncheon was held, which was very unfortunate for me, because when I got it, I didn't know I was going to get it, and none of my friends knew and therefore were not there. This awards luncheon is held every year, but now the awardees are announced before the luncheon. Now, in 1953 the Commonwealth Edison Company got an award for some particular work they did in the area of race relations, and I got the award given to an individual. You can read what it says. Get that in the record.

I. Let me read it right now. It says, "The Thomas H. Wright Memorial 1953 Achievement Citation to Lillian Herstein, for outstanding professional leadership in bettering human relations within organized labor in Chicago, the Commission on Human Relations, the City of Chicago." That's a beautiful award!

R. Is the date on it?

I. Just 1953, the year.

R. That's right.

I. That's really beautiful. Do they all look the same?

R. No, they have different ones. Mow, I nearly didn't go to the meeting!

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I didn't know I was to have it. Why, Bill Lee, of, the Chicago Federation of Labor wasn't there. It was a stupid thing to do, they don't do it that way any more.

I. They learned better.

R. Oh, no, it's in the papers; it's a very big affair.

I. I've read about it.

R. The awards luncheon -- given every year. So I was given the award, and a couple of years afterwards when I was there, a very lovely Negro boy, whom I had taught at Wilson Junior College, (he was a Catholic) got the award. And, of course, they always asked the people present to rise. Mary Herrick got it one year. This young man, Floyd Davis, received it another time.

I. What did he do?

R. He was working in the Catholic? Interracial Council doing a lot of work. And when he got the award, he said, "My work in this area was greatly influenced by two of my teachers, one a Father so-and-so, from Loyola, and one, Lillian Herstein, who herself received the award." And there was a lot of applause.

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- I. That's very gratifying, whelm your students do you honor!
- R. Oh yes, every year now, the award-s luncheon gets biggger and bigger. Thomas Wright had been the head of the Commission and he died, and this was the memorial is his honor. His wife was still living; she'd died also since then. So, through the work of the Commission, I became involved in all sorts of movements to remove prejudice. The settlements worked with us, the social settlements, the Catholic Interrcial Council, and various groups. I think the Jewish Federation contributed to the work of the Jewish Labor Committee 100,000 dollars a year. The head of the Jewish Committee in Chicago, not the paid head, he was with the socialist paper. The Yiddish socialist paper, is the Daily Forward. The Freiheit is the Yiddish communist paper. But a Forward is the famous paper that was headed by the writer. The immigrant who wrote The Rise of David Levinsky was the head of the Daily Forward, which was a very fine paper for many years.

- I. Was it a kind of center for the Jewish Labor Committee?
- R. Well, the Jewish Labor Committee was under it, formed it, but the Daily Forward had been established years ago by the Jewish people who were Socialists. It was stronger in Hew York than in Chicago.

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We had many foreign language papers. We had the Daily Zvorahost which was the Czech paper, and we had the Abendpost, the famous German paper. Now these foreign language papers rendered a real service because they had columns giving information to their readers about political affairs, the important events happening in the country. But as these immigrants got children, and the children could read and write, the necessity for the foreign language papers grew less and less until finally they only had an English column in them. Of course, I think the Abendpost is still going. That was the famous German paper. In Chicago, the biggest foreign group were the Germans. That's why we had so many schools named for them. In fact, some of the leading German Jews, who established Sinai Temple, were very prominent in the German movement. One of them was on the School Board. One of these German Jews was the one who advocated the teaching of German in the elementary schools of Chicago. It's very interesting. That's a study by itself. I came in contact with a lot of these groups. Another thing is, Mr. Siegel who was the editor -- the Forward was published in New York, and then it came to Chicago. It was a daily paper. Siegel and his staff added the Chicago news. And Siegel was very anxious to stand in with labor, so one of the things he'd do would be to have a banquet

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in honor of some great labor leader, and I used to run the banquet. It cost a lot of money.

I. Did the newspaper pay for it all?

R. Well, no, this Jewish Labor Committee Fund, which was a hundred thousand dollars. In fact, we used to send part of that money to New York. Well, as time went on, I got the feeling that the Jewish Labor Committee, which had been an ad hoc committee, had performed it's function, and ought to go out of business. So I resigned; I gave up a good job.

I. What did they do after that? I suppose it took maybe ten or twelve years for the survivors of those people that they were supporting to reach maturity. What did they do after that?

R. Well, they would participate in any local movement. It was under them that I worked on the FEPC.

I. So they really lost their European focus after a while.

R. It lingered on, and it still lingers on. Somebody once said that any ad hoc committee persists as long as there's a paid secretary.

I. That's probably true. Bureaucracies never commit suicide.

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- R. 127 South Dearborn, that's where our office used to be. And now, the Jewish Labor Committee has a Civil Rights Conference every year.
- I. I've heard of that.
- R. And they give awards, By the way, this year one of the awardees was Frank MaCallister. His award was granted posthumously to his wife. The Jewish Labor Committee is still operating with a full time stenographer and a man who works part time. One of the important things he does is this Civil Rights Awards luncheon every year. Awards are given to organizations for their fight in the area of Civil Rights and also to individuals. They're very much involved in fighting discrimination. One time one of the men that got the award was Charles Hayes, a Negro gentleman, a vice-president of the Amalgamated Butcher Workmen, which now includes the Packing House Workers. He'd become a vice-president of the Amalgamated Meat-Cutters and Butcher-Workmen, who are now together and that's why I thought his speech at the recent Stockyards Dinner was sort of sad. He was the one that spoke about the displaced workers.
- I. Yes. I suppose he was seeing the end of his life's work, in a certain sense.

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R. Well, no, he'll stay.

I. But his people aren't staying.

R. They were making various arrangements. A lot of them had retired anyhow. They saw this coming, of course. This has been coming for several years. It was a pathetic affair. There was a dinner at the Stock Yards, commemorating the closing of this great industry. Each guest was given a beautiful brochure, telling the history of the union. That made me think, when it was dedicated to Upton Sinclair, that right after the first of October, 1945, (the Japanese surrender was August 6, 1945), my work on the west coast was ended, and I came back to my job. At that time, the education committee of the Auto Workers was having a series of lectures at the YMCA, 19 S. LaSalle.

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They were having a series of lectures on books of social protest, or novels of social protest. The meetings were at the YMCA. The first lecture was given by Walter Johnson.

I. From the University of Chicago?

R. History department. He gave a lecture on Demarest Lloyd. Demarest Lloyd was one of the famous early Socialists. The second one was

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a review that I gave of *The Jungle*, by Upton Sinclair. I just happened to remember that. Well, I severed my connection with the Jewish Labor Committee because I felt that they'd accomplished their purpose.

I. One question I wanted to ask you, and I thought I'd wait until you came to a breaking point. In the period when they were really very actively involved in trying to rescue Jewish Trade unionists --

B. And others, too.

I. Oh, I see, just trade unionists. This is one of the things I wanted to get clear. The whole trade union movement was threatened. Now, here is a Jewish group trying to rescue European trade unionists. How much support, aside from the top -- you mentioned that Green gave them whole-hearted support -- how much support did they get from non-Jewish workers in the unions, or from unions that were predominantly non-Jewish?

R. It was more the socially-minded ones that would help. They'd come to our banquets and buy a whole table.

I. If you compared the response of labor, say, to the general community, would you say that they showed more concern, or less, or just about the same?

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- R. Well, not quite as much as the Jewish people did. They felt it very deeply.
- I. I'm sure that they would be way ahead of everybody else.
- R. Yes, they were. And year after year that appropriation of the Jewish Federation was lowered and lowered. After all, that was a lot of money to be given when maybe the work was over, and you were doing local things that other organizations could do. So that was an interesting period. That lasted for a few years, for me, at any rate. I told you, they still have this skeleton office.
- I. When you talked about the things that they did once they left the European focus and concentrated mainly on domestic problems, they were very concerned about the racial situation, and ethnic prejudice in general.
- R. Well, they were fine trade unionists. You take Dubinsky who came from Poland. Sidney Hillman came from Lithuania, and his wife Bessie. Bessie just died, by the way. I meant to save the clipping. She was 82; she just died. She started the famous Hart, Schaffner and Marx strike.
- I. I remember.
- R. When she jumped on the table.

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- I. I think that's in your first interview.
- R. And she was the one woman on their national board.
- I. The only one?
- R. The only one -- Bessie Hillman. Her name was Abramowitz. She and Sidney Hillman met during the strike and were married. They had two daughters. Sidney died very young -- he was about 57 or something like that -- of a heart attack. And she was very active and very loyal to women. She kept a constant correspondence with Rose Levin. Rose Levin and her husband Sam Levin were in that original group out of which the Amalgamated grew.
- I. How do you account for the fact that there weren't more women in leadership in a union that had so many women workers?
- R. Well, that's the way it is in every organization. Women -- they didn't even want leadership. All the reasons that operate for discrimination against women in universities and professions operated among unions. Union men used to say, "Well, they're only temporary in industry." They often didn't even try to organize an industry which was predominantly women. We used to say in those days that the two weak points in the American Federation of Labor movement were

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the two pools of labor that they left untouched, which was organizing women and organizing Negroes. They created two groups which were natural scabs.

- I. In order to survive, almost.
- R. Yes. They thought they were temporary in industry and in the International Ladies Garment Workers, which made a lot of people think that the workers were ladies; well, they weren't, they worked on ladies garments -- coats and suits and all. In the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, which made men's suits, the membership was largely women.
- I. I know, I've got that straightened out. In both-the leaders were almost all men, weren't they?
- R. All men, sure, like the office is here, right now. Of course, those unions went down in membership, I'll tell you about that. Now, Bessie -- they always had one woman on the National Board of Amalgamated. Before that, it was a very lovely Italian, Angelica Bianca, who was a very intelligent woman; she died of cancer. Then, Bessie, went on, In the International Ladies Garment Workers, the one woman they had on the National Board was Jenny Matyas Charters, who subsequently

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was organizing for them in San Francisco. She's still there, and she married a union man, not a Jew, John Charters of the typographical union. He died and Jenny is still living there, but she is retired now.

I. Did they want one woman for window dressing?

R. Oh, sure, sure.

I. Did you feel like you were token representation?

R. That's right, token representation. Bessie Hillman, whenever she went to Washington -- one time there was some big meeting, I forgot. Walter Reuther was still living, they were all there. Some committee was being organized, and Bessie got right up there. She said, "What's the matter with you, Walter, and the rest of you! You have no women on that committee!" This was rather recent, you know. But she always went to visit Elisabeth Christman, who was the very capable and wonderful secretary of the Rational Women's Trades Union League. She is still living. Five weeks before Bessie Hillman died, she visited Elisabeth Christman in Washington.

I. It would have been nice to have a record of their reminiscences.

R. Elisabeth talked to me on the phone after Bessie died. Bessie said

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something then about not feeling, well. And it was right after that she must have gone to the hospital. It may have been cancer. She was a very fine woman. The whole Levin family went to the funeral. They all went. Elisabeth is still living. Elisabeth is 87, and she's blind from diabetes. I never knew until I knew about her case that one can get blind from diabetes. Once in a while she calls me. She called me one day and she said, "You know, Lillian, I tell my friends that I travel by telephone, and today my travel is to Chicago." She talked at great length to me, and she talked about this last visit of Bessie's. Of course, Elisabeth's friends in Washington always worry. I guess they got through worrying about her living alone. She insists on living alone. She's blind, but she can see light, you know. She was the most wonderful manager. You know, she could raise money for the League, and use it so wisely. And herself! She never had a big salary; she always looked exquisite. She loved pretty clothes, and every time I came, she said, "Oh, Lillian, I love to look at you, you're so lovely." The last few times she'd say, "Lillian, I can't see your face." She's one of the pioneers.

- I. Did she ever tell you in recent phone conversations how she felt about the current women's movement?
- B. Well, they were against them that was a big fight.

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I. What did she say?

R. Oh, they were fighting -- this happened when women got the suffrage that was 1920.

I. That's when the equal rights amendment was first proposed.

R. That when the fight started. This National Women's Party; they got the suffrage. We all worked for it. They wanted to let something, so they introduced the equal rights amendment. The Women's Trade Union League, Mrs. Kelley, all of them were opposed to the amendment. because these were the women who fought and for for special legislation for women that they had to have because they were not protected by their unions. They didn't belong to many units and the most bitter fight developed Every now and then some friend of the trade union pavement innocently -- Henry Wallace, once came out for the equal rights amendment. Frances Perkins said, "Henry, what in the world are you doing?" If a said, "Frances, I thought that was wonderful, equal rights for them." She said, "Don't you see what it does? It takes all the protective legislation of women away." It was defeated, and it's still defeated, and it's going to be defeated again, It's one of the mistakes that these lib women make, and I like them. I think that things have changed since that time -- a lot of the protective legislations for women we don't need any more. But,

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they don't address themselves to workers. Did you notice that working women are opposed to it? And the Negro women are also opposed to it.

- I. A number of union women have come out in opposition.
- R. You know who came out, lobbied against it, the National Council of Jewish Women. You see, those are the women that fought for these working girls not to have to work twelve hours a day, and to have chairs behind the counter so they could sit down once in a while. My sister, my oldest sister, who's dead now, I'm sure she got arthritis from standing behind the counter as a saleswoman. They couldn't sit down! And even when they finally got the chairs, they were told, "Don't sit, you can't sell to people when you are sitting down." Well, you see, having fought and bled for these things, they don't want to endanger them. And that's the reason. I think there's a lot of good people in the lib movement. I was very much interested in talking to Len Dupres about it. He said there is terrible discrimination still against women.
- I. I was wondering if they couldn't have produced some kind of amendment which wasn't quite so vague, which would end discrimination without also ending protection.

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R. It's hard to do that.

I. I know it is. And the assumption was that if there were no discrimination, then somehow things would be all right, and yet, a great many women felt otherwise.

R. Psychologically, too. You have to work on women, themselves, their attitude. I've had women say to me, "Oh, I wouldn't think of going to a woman doctor." And their own psychology needs work.

I. They put themselves down.

R. They're brought up to believe in the superiority of the male. Why, it was just last week or two weeks ago that the women in Switzerland got the right to vote. Two weeks ago! It needs the education of the women themselves. And I think you need a whole discussion of children in the home.

I. I think this is something that's been more or less left out or belittled in the current women's movement.

R. And they shouldn't! I say that from all the youngsters that I've taught, and I always have them write their autobiography, and very often it was the best thing that they'd write. Always with working mothers there would come a time when the little boy had some happy

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thing that happened to him in school, and all the way home, he was rushing to tell his mother, and when he got there, she wasn't there. I maintain that there ought to be some adult in the home that cares a lot about children. Let it be the man! Let the father stay home instead of the mother.

- I. It is a priority. The child has to come first, and can't be way down low on the list of things to be considered.
- R. No. It has to be a priority, and we have to work that out. With all they learn about psychology and a child that feels rejected -- now, Bettelheim thinks the best approach is in the Kibbutzim of Israel.
- I. Some of the women's groups use this as a kind of justification for their relying on child care centers, solely, or very heavily.
- R. That's right. The first child care centers were not established for sound educational principles but for women who had to work away from the home of an economic necessity. If the husbands had gotten decent wages, the mothers could stay at home. I think that's an area that has to have a great deal of exploration -- what we are going to do with the home. Of course, I'm very strong for the smaller unit in everything. I've got some of the speeches of Brandeis. He thought

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that the American curse was its worship of bigness. And I don't think that big institutions can ever do the job, not big schools.

- I. This is one of the questions that many women raise. If you have problems in public schools with too many children in a class room, and not enough adult supervision, and the tendency is somehow for things to keep outgrowing themselves -- wouldn't you face the same problem if you tried to put everybody's kid in a nursery school? Very likely to have too many children and not enough supervision. It would be a tremendous switchover, something not to be entered into casually.
- R. Well, even so, even if you had these smaller nurseries, it's a question of a whole re-organisation of the family and children relationships -- the relationships between adults and children. It needs a lot of exploring, I think. We may switch back to the smaller units. I don't see why a woman who enjoys living at home with her children and being active in some of the community organizations, shouldn't feel free to do it, and not feel as though she's betraying her sex. There was an article in the New Republic, It's called "Albertism", in deference to Prince Albert, the husband of Queen Victoria. This article tells about a man that worked for this woman who was a writer. And he was so competent -- he loved housework! And he could do it

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so well, but he had to go out and do something else to justify being a male. It was a very good article. What is a woman's work and what is a man's work -- that is the question.

I. Where the lines should be drawn.

R. That's right, psychologically as well as economically, and the priority, it seems to me, should be the children.

I. One other thing -- to get back to this Jewish Labor Committee, did they find cases of anti-Semitism within industry which troubled them in this period? You didn't mention that.

R. They didn't lend themselves to that. They left the larger labor movement to fight that.

I. I see.

R. They had a concentration of Jews in certain industries -- the textiles.

I. I was thinking about industries where they weren't concentrated. Did they ever feel that they were discriminated against in the same way that Blacks did?

R. Well, net to that extent, I don't think. You see, their skills were different. They never were steel workers.

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I. There were some steel workers, only a few.

R. Very few. Even in the industry, it was largely a WASP industry.

I don't know any big steel company except Inland Steel, in which the ownership is Jewish. And Catholics also,-- not many Catholics are in the steel industry in the higher echelons.

I. The Catholics seem to be omitted from a great many things.

R. Oh, yes. This was the WASP, White Anglo-Saxon Protestants, and steel was a WASP industry. It had neither Jews and of course, no Negroes and no Catholics. The big Jewish money was not there. That's why when they were afraid the Jews would get control of the country -- they're not in control of any basic industry. You can't get a revolution by wrecking the pants factories.

I. Before you left the Jewish Labor Committee, had the Illinois FEPC law been passed?

R. No, no. It was quite a while after that. I can remember the time when Caples, who was with Inland Steel, and I were on a committee about FEPC, and he was rabidly against it.

I. Oh, really?

R. And then, a couple of years afterwards, he came out for it.

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I. What changed his mind?

R. Well, the different things people do. I can remember, we had a big conference once, and I was so mad at him, because he implied that I was a Red. And instead of blustering apologies, I lit right into him about it. But you see, things change. People think things that they used to think were terrible are not bad. I think some American heads of corporations have changed. They think more and more -- the workers will be added to stockholders. We're drifting, I think, in this country, toward a welfare state. Now, this writer that I told, you about is from Yale. It's in one of these reviews. This man is reviewing Greening of America. This man's a Yale man, and he says you'll get more workers involved in an industry, more of them stockholders, and you have to lay aside a certain amount of capital. I remember an economics teacher explaining the difference between capital and Capitalism. Capital is what you save, that is, you produce so much and you sell so much, but you have this left over to use for future development of the industry, and you could do that in a socialist state. Capitalism is the owners owning the means of production. He was saying, if these things become more cooperative, and more workers are on the boards, he said they would be inclined to use the capital that's saved to improve the wages and conditions of the workers. So he said, you might get less productivity -- not so much affluence. Maybe, he said, that's good.

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- I. Do you think that worker participation at the stockholder level would ever equal that of management?
- R. I think this would be interesting.

Oral History Project

I Lillian Herstein hereby direct that the interview
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Lillian Herstein
Signature of interviewee

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Tape 11, Side 1

- I. Well, Miss Herstein, we have talked before about workers education, but I know you have a lot more experience in the field of educating workers than you've had time to tell me about, so could you begin today by giving me a little more information on this?
- R. Workers have always had a yearning for education. Their working hours, however, were so long, that it was almost impossible for them to do any studying or attend classes. As a matter of fact, the night school classes offered to adults in most public school systems of big cities were very inadequate. It was a case of tired workers being taught by tired teachers who were doing the job partly to eke out an inadequate salary. This was brought forcibly to my attention when I taught working girls at the Bryn Mawr School for Women Workers in Industry. There were assigned to me what was called the "Language Handicaps," which meant the working girls who were immigrants and therefore had a language handicap.

In the cigar-maker's union there was a tradition that the cigar-makers appointed one of their number to read to them while they did their work. And then they made up to the reader what he had missed in his earnings in the piece work. One of these readers was Samuel Gompers, who eventually became the president of the American Federation of Labor. Many socially-minded groups were sensitive to the needs of workers for education, and more particularly their yearning for it.

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In the days of Jane Addams workers came to Hull Rouse for classes in English. One of them was Sidney Hillman, who subsequently became the head of one of the finest unions in America, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America.

Then, the National Women's Trade Union League made something of an approach to worker's education. They would recruit working women and have them come to Chicago. They enrolled them in classes in the area of trade unionism with Professor Millis or Professor Paul Douglas of the University of Chicago. Roth of these men were very willing to admit these students, who had none of the prerequisites and who created something of a problem for them.

- I. Those were college classes?
- R. They were regular college classes, and the League would engage somebody to tutor the working women after the classes. Mrs. Raymond Robins, who at that time was the president of the Rational League, was a very wealthy woman, and very devoted. If she believed in a project, she always supplied the money, She financed the payment for the tutors. Then, they also took courses in English. I suggested to the League that they be enrolled in my classes at Crane Junior College.

I had some very interesting experiences with these women, and I always recall one young woman who came from the coal fields of

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southern Illinois. Her name was Agnes Burns. She symbolized the exploitation of the miners. Her people were miners way back, and she went through the experience, as a child of a miner's family, with all the work and the lack of opportunity. I remember in those days one of the problems of the miner's family was a matter of washing, bathing. When a miner came out of a mine, he was completely covered with coal dust and dirt. When he came home, it was a project to fill a bathtub for him to get a bath, so one of their early fights was for wash houses. In fact, they picketed.

I. The union did this?

R. That's right. The miner's union picketed for wash houses. As a result wash houses were established at the top of the mine and when the miner came out, he took his bath there. That meant a great deal to the miner's family. I think that's why I now get so impatient with these young radicals that go along not only with long hair, but dirty. And I think here they think that they're putting themselves close to the proletariat, when as a matter of fact, they are violating a deep desire of the working person to be clean. In fact, in my early days in social work, when we would move people from the ghettos out

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to Lawndale, which was a very nice community then, we would be scoffed at, and told, "These people don't want bathrooms. They put coal in the bathtubs." And that myth persisted for many years. Agnes was one of these miner's daughters, she was very bright.

I recall at that time and maybe it's still true, because it was true until quite recently, that the law of Illinois allowed boys sixteen years old to work in the coal mines. Agnes had a sister who was married to a coal miner, and he was killed. Her oldest child was a boy about fifteen years old, and they didn't have anything to live on, so the mother swore that he was sixteen and he worked in the mines. Subsequently he was killed, and the anguish of that family and of that mother was something that Agnes used to talk about a great deal. Agnes was one of our best students. She married a man from the area by the name of Weeks and subsequently returned to the mining community. Her husband was very eager for education.

I. Was he a miner?

R. I think he was. He had been, but he was always improving himself and studying, they both were. They were a very fine pair. They got thrust in the midst of the fight between the Progressive Miners and John L. Lewis at the time. They both wrote and some of their things

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were published in the New Republic and The Nation. I think an article by her husband, called "Bloody Williamson County" was published in The Nation, the lead article. There had been a very violent affair there about 1921. Well, Agnes and her husband settled in this community, and lived the life of the people of the country.

- I. How did they stand on that struggle between the Progressive Miners and N.M.U.?
- R. I don't remember. I think they were inclined, at least Edward was inclined, to be sympathetic with John L. Lewis, and there was quite a dispute between him and me on the subject. I always kept in correspondence with Agnes and one day she wrote me a letter. She said, "You know, Lillian, people are always writing to me, and using your name as an introduction. They are writers. They want to come down to this area to do research work in the mining industry. One day she said a man by the name of Robert Morse Lovett said he wanted to come, Robert Morse Lovett was at that time professor of English at the University of Chicago, but spent half the year in New York as one of the editors of the New Republic. He was typical New England stock, had become very much interested in labor. She wrote me that he was coming, and what should she do. And I wrote back,

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"Once upon a the, Agnes, a high school teacher of mine said to us that hospitality consists in giving your guest the best you have, but not borrowing the neighbor's silver. So you don't have to be bothering borrowing anything. Mr. Lovett is a very fine person, and genuinely interested in the plight of the miner." She wrote to me after a while how he had adjusted himself to their family life. They had no inside plumbing; you know what that meant. And she said he used to pick up the towel after supper and help her with the dishes. Another person that asked to come was Evelyn Preston. Have I told you about her?

I. No.

R. I had met Evelyn Preston in about 1922 or '23 when, for the first time, I visited the Bryn Mawr School for Women Workers in Industry. Evelyn Preston was one of the tutors. The girls from the eastern colleges were most eager to be tutors for the working girls. They would do everything, carry their baggage and everything. And Evelyn was one of these girls. She was very tall, very striking looking. If you were a judge of women's clothes you knew that they were elegant, but it was elegant simplicity. And she was very mu& interested in worker's

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problems. At that time, there had occurred that awful riot in 1921 in the coal fields, and the only labor reporter that came there was Tom Tippet, a former miner. He gave an account of the whole affair. Then I told the girls at Bryn Mawr, the students, at a tea in the afternoon. Miss Preston came to me and said, "I was very much interested in what you said. I'm interested in the problem of miners." She said, "I'm planning to go to the University of Wisconsin and I will be passing through Chicago. Would you mind if I looked you up and would you be helpful to me in meeting labor people? 'And I said, "Oh my yes, be sure and tell me when you come." I had no idea who she was. I didn't know even at that time she had given fifteen thousand dollars to the other experiment in education at Brookwood. When she came to Chicago, I met her. I brought her to the Chicago Federation of Labor offices and introduced her to John Fitzpatrick, President of the Chicago Federation of Labor. Then I took her to my home. We had a four room apartment with one bedroom and a big sun parlor where my sister, who was a widow, and her little girl and I lived. I brought her there, and we decided that we had a bedroom, a sun parlor where one of us slept, and an In-a-Dor bed. The In-a-Dor bed was the most comfortable, so we let Evelyn sleep in the In-a-Dor. The next morning we had bacon and eggs for breakfast. My little niece explained to her that we're not supposed to have it, so we call them

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"strips."

Hiss Preston went to Madison, and said, "Be sure and look me up when you come." I used to come to Madison very frequently. My very dear friend there, Jenny McMillan Turner, was one of the live spirits of the legislative library of Wisconsin, one of the first created in the country. We were very great friends, I couldn't tell you the number of times I've been to Madison. I got a letter from Miss Preston and she told me that she was hoping I'd come soon, that she was negotiating with some real estate men, and she'd be settled pretty soon. And I assumed she was trying to get an apartment, which even then was rather unusual, for students to have their own apartment. Then I came to Madison, and I called her up, And she said, "Oh, I'm so glad, come to dinner." And she told me her address.

When I got there, it was a house, it was not an apartment. The door was opened by a Japanese servant. We had dinner, and the other guest was a man from the labor movement, a liberal from England. And I thought, what in the world does all this mean? When I got back I got in touch with Tom Tippett, and Tom said, "Didn't you know who she was?" I said, "No, they called her Evelyn Preston." Well, Evelyn Preston was the daughter of a president of Standard Oil. She was very tall, almost six feet tall. She told Tom about her coming out party as a debutante. And she said she heard her father and his

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friends in one part of their home drinking to the social success that they planned for her. She felt that she had not been educated properly, although her father had engaged one of the leading actresses of the French stage to teach her French. But she said that education didn't fit her for life, she was going to do other things. She became 'interested in the labor movement. That was Evelyn Preston. And so Agnes Burns writes me that Evelyn Preston wants to come. And I said to her the same thing that I said about Robert Morse Lovett. By then I knew who she was, but I didn't try to frighten Agnes nor underestimate the situation. And of course, being a well-bred person and very devoted, she adjusted herself very well to the situation. Her master's thesis was some aspect of the miner's union.

Subsequently, Evelyn Preston retained her interest in labor, and was very generous in contributing to workers schools, She married Stephen Rauschenbusch. Stephen Rauschenbusch was the son of the minister, Walter Rauschenbusch, one of the first of that group, like John Haynes Holmes of New York, Rabbi Weiss of New York who stood up to their congregations and insisted on applying their religious principles to the social problems of the day.

I. The social gospel group.

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- R. That's right, the social gospel group; that's the man she married, Stephen Rauschenbusch. They had two children, and subsequently they were divorced, and she married Roger Baldwin, who has always been the head of the Civil Liberties Union.
- I. That's quite a story.
- R. Yes. She died, not so many years ago, I was in the offices of the American Civil Liberties Union, when I saw a copy of a New York paper that said, "Evelyn Preston Baldwin Dies." And I said, "Oh, I wonder how that happened, that's terrible!"* And the rest of the office group, these young things that don't know any history, looked at me and they said, "What's the matter?" I said, "Don't you know who she is? She's the wife of the founder of the ACLU!" I think it was cancer, but she was not very old when she died.
- I. What were her relations with her parents? Did she stay on good terms with them or was there a break?
- R. I don't know. I visited her once in New York. She had a very beautiful apartment. Another time I met her was at Martha's Vineyard. She had a home there. By that time she was married to Roger Baldwin, she had a home, and she had guest cottages for her friends. But her interest in labor and civil rights was always very prominent and she contributed both money and energy to the movement.

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Well, to get back to Agnes Burns, Agnes Burns had to entertain her. The National Women's Trade Union League, as I said in the beginning, pioneered in this area of worker's education. Every year for several years, they recruited working girls, they brought them to Chicago, they supported them, you know, and even paid what wages they might have earned to their parents. That was another thing that people never understood when we were recruiting for workers schools -- what was provided for the worker-student. People would say, "Oh, aren't they lucky, you give them everything." They didn't realize how many couldn't even accept thee, because their wages were needed to help the family at home. Well, this went on for several years, and then the resident schools began to be established -- Bryn Mawr, Wisconsin, and the one at Brookwood. The one at Brookwood was at Kotonah, New York. The Brookwood plan was very ambitious. They were going to keep people there for two years.

- I. How long did you keep them, when the Women's Trade Union League brought them to Chicago?
- R. Oh, several months. They were here for several months. After several years, the above-mentioned resident schools were organized. Many of us interested in workers education helped to recruit workers for the resident schools. Then we all began recruiting for these other schools.

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Various unions established their own programs of education -- the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, the International Ladies Garment Workers, many of them. And they would send their students to the Wisconsin school, the Bryn Mawr school, and the one at Brookwood.

- I. The Wisconsin and the Bryn Mawr schools were summer schools?
- R. They were. Wisconsin was the first summer school for workers -- six weeks. Bryn Mawr was eight weeks. But Brookwood was all year around. Immediately the schools were charged with being Communist.

- I. Was there any truth to that?
- R. Not at all! The word communist was not the important word. One of the things we have to realize is that when any social activity is attacked, the attackers use the word that's offensive at the time. During World War I, the offensive word was "pro-German." I recall that I myself was accused of being pro-German.

- I. During World War I?
- R. Oh, yes. I don't know whether I've told you this incident.

Tape 11 - Side 2

I was conducting a class for the YMCA, and incidentally, the YWCA was always more progressive than the YMCA.

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- I. How do you account for that?
- R. Well, I don't know. I know that for instance, when we established a workers school in the south, the employers would try to take charge of it. I'll never forget how shocked I was when I went down there and found that the mill owners controlled the public schools. If you wanted to give workers classes, you had to give it on their property. They could use their property rights to keep from admitting workers that **were** what my friend Elizabeth Brandeis said the boss called 'troublemakers." The YWCA never would establish classes on the property of the millowners. They were very courageous in that. Here in Chicago, I was teaching a class for the YWCA. They got a letter which they sent on to me, from a man by the name of Harry Jung, who was a manufacturer of bricks, and had an office in the Tribune Building. There had been a strike of brick-workers in which I helped. He wrote to the officers of the reminding them of his contributions to the YWCA but insisting that he had no desire to dictate their policies, but nevertheless, he was very much surprised that they would allow Miss Lillian Herstein to teach their classes -- Miss Lillian Herstein who was born in Germany, and educated in the universities of Europe.
- I. Oh, my word! He gave you a fictitious background!

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R. Well, that's the usual procedure of those who are opposed to progress in any area. At that same time, a youngster made a charge against a teacher in the Harrison High School, that she was pro-German. You see, that would be the name -- that was the offensive name, pro-German. After that, when Russia fell out of the war, and the communist revolution occurred, then the dirty word was Communist. So, they'd call you Communist. There were people who objected to these worker's schools. I remember at Bryn Mawr, which is very close to Philadelphia, they had a charge in one of the Philadelphia papers that Bryn Mawr, this exclusive women's college, was having a revolutionary communist group on the campus. Did I tell you about the time when M. Carry Thomas established the Bryn Mawr school?

I. Just a little -- tell me more about it.

R. That's a very interesting story. M. Carry Thomas belongs to a distinguished Quaker family, and she wanted to go to college as a young girl, but girls were not admitted to colleges. She and a friend of hers attended some college in Baltimore, but a curtain was put between them and the men students. Subsequently, M. Carry Thomas went to Germany, got her doctor's degree in English, and then came back and was one of the original group that established Bryn Mawr College. She was the head for many years. She had an international point of view, and also a pacifist point of view, because she was a Quaker. Bryn Mawr became one of the very fine women's colleges, and subsequently she retired. She had this passion for peace and the rights of women.

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She was quite a feminist. She had a sister who married, and she warned her sister not to let marriage interfere with her community activities. As a matter of fact, this sister had six children, and one of those girls became my tutor at the Bryn Mawr school. But Miss Carry Thomas was a pacifist and a feminist, so when she retired, I think the other girl that went to college with her had a great deal of money, and had left almost a million dollars to M. Carry Thomas to be used in the "causes in which we believed." M. Carry Thomas had retired and there was a war. She was very much interested in peace and in women. And she decided, although she had majored in literature and not in the social sciences, that the causes of war were economic, and we've got to educate people to see that. And the people we ought to educate are the working people. Because she was a feminist, she thought she'd begin with working women, and she conceived this idea of a summer school for workers at Bryn Mawr. She enlisted the aid of Rose Schneiderman, President of the New York Women's Trade Union League, and then she came to Chicago. We arranged a meeting at Hull House. She had written to us that she was coming, so we got a good group of working girls there -- the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, and the International Ladies Garment Workers. They were always passionate for education, but we got women from other unions too. They all came there.

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Paul Douglas was one of the lecturers that first summer. Everybody said that if you missed that first summer at Bryn Mawr, you missed a lot. That was 1921, I didn't come 'til '24. These girls arrived, and they met all hours of the night in bull sessions in their dormitories. They may not have learned too much, but they established certain principles. The first thing they did was to offer to do part of the house-work so the maids could have an eight hour day.

Paul Douglas often tells this story -- he was giving a lecture in economics and discussing the risks of industry. He began with the risks of the employers, and after he'd been going for a little while, up stands Hilda Shapiro and says, "What do you mean, the risks of industry? What about the risks of the workers?" And Douglas said, "Why yes, of course, they are very great, and I'm going to discuss that next." As it often happens, when you lecture and plan that you'll give twenty minutes to this and twenty minutes to that, he ran overtime and had just gotten to the risks of the workers when the bell rang and the class was over. Hilda Shapiro met him on the campus and said, "Professor Douglas, you are intellectually dishonest:" He often told the story on himself. As you know he was

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a most liberal person. And in later years Hilda herself laughed at it. I don't know anybody who was more instrumental in getting me appointed as a teacher at Bryn Mawr than Hilda Shapiro. They had a wonderful time that year. They would meet till all hours of the night. Well, when I came to teach at Bryn Mawr in 1924, Polly Colby and I were the two union teachers that came and that was a shock.

- I. Why?
- R. To have union teachers teach! That was a shock! Everything was done to make the teaching fruitful and creative. As I said, we had these tutors, who were most eager participants in the project. Every day we got applications from students in the Women's Colleges. Work in Labor was the movement that attracted students just as the peace movement is the great attraction for the young people now. And I can remember that one of the teachers that year was a Miss Lockwood, who was a professor of English at Vassar and very liberal. She would recommend some of the tutors who should come. My tutor was Millicent Carey, who was the niece of M. Carry Thomas. These tutors helped the students, they just would do anything. Well, as I said before, I was given the language handicaps, and I would say I never did such creative work in my life. I realized what it means if you can give individual attention. I suppose I had about 45 pupils. In my

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work in Chicago High Schools, I had 150 - 5 classes, 30 in each class. I would meet each one of them individually, and I'd get them to talking about their lives. This girl would tell about her first day at Ellis Island. Then another girl about a strike when some of the girls didn't go out on the picket line and she rebuked them. Very interesting experiences! There was a girl in the group who worked in New Bedford, Massachusetts. They had many shoe factories there and she worked in one of those. At that time they didn't have protective machinery, as they should have had. As it was closing time, the workers were getting ready to leave and she brushed the lint from her apron and her fingertips were caught in the machinery and were on her lap, bleeding. The girl behind her saw it, and the foreman came right over and held her for fear she'd scream and that might cause a panic. That, to her, was a "risk of industry." I remember that she said that when the foreman was bringing her home, she said, "I have such a guilty feeling. I feel so guilty. Here's my poor widowed mother, working hard for us children. And now I bring her this sorrow." How different from the irresponsibility of kids today.

- I. Did you say that you still have the themes that they wrote?
- R. Yes, I've got them. At the end, when the committee of the faculty sat around to decide what should go in the school paper -- the Script it was called -- most of them came from my "handicaps." Yes, I have

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them. We also published a paper in Wisconsin.

The affairs at the Bryn Mawr Summer School for Workers were administered by what was called the Joint Administrative Committee, which had on it representatives of the college, representatives of industry, and representatives of labor. I was a labor representative on the Joint Administrative Committee. And the Joint Administrative Committee met once a year at Bryn Mawr. One of the women on the committee was Mrs. Learned Rand, who was a Bryn Mawr alumna and whose husband was the celebrated Learned Rand, the great jurist. We would take up all the problems of the school at the Joint Administrative Committee. This is where we had all the big hassles first about admitting the waitresses and then Negroes. Then with World War II came the WPA program.

I. Before you start on the WPA, can you tell me any more about Brookwood?

R. Well, Brookwood was condemned much more than the other schools. I told you how angry John Fitzpatrick got when Matt Wohl denounced Brookwood.

I. Yes.

R. Brookwood had a very tumultuous history. The trouble was the Russian

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Revolution had just occurred, and people were split on it as were the workers. This would enter every meeting. Take the Russian Jews, who had longed for the destruction of the Czar and Czarism, they looked to the Revolution with great hope. And then came the disillusionment. It took them long to be disillusioned, but some of them were. Some of them were very fine Socialists who had looked to the Russian Revolution as the great emancipation of the working people of the world, and then it turns out that it was a dictatorship. You see, questions about Russia would come up at every meeting, and I know some of the workers used to get worn out with the wrangling -- the long discussions.

- I. Going over that issue?
- R. Yes, over that issue. And those discussions were more prevalent at Brookwood. They lived there on the campus and Polly Colby, who had been one of the two teachers that came to Bryn Mawr, was living there then. She was a teacher. It tore the faculty apart, it tore the students. The head of it was A.J. Muste, who became the great pacifist.
- I. There really is a strong connection between pacifism and the labor

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movement, isn't there?

R. There was! Then with the Depression came the effort to give work to all kinds of people. The writer's project and all the projects of the WPA were attacked. There was a section on what they called adult education. We were asked that all the time. And we said, "Well, we place emphasis on the needs of workers."

I. Adult education could just cover all kinds of things.

R. Sure. Also, about that time, the bitterness between the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O. was simply terrible.

I. Oh yes, this was in the early period of the C.I.O.

R. Then Mrs. Roosevelt, who was very much interested in the workers education movement said, "Couldn't we get them together? Not top guys, but in every one of these unions there are liberal A.F. of L. people and liberal C.I.O. people that we could talk to."

Somebody said, "The only person that I know that both sides trust is Lillian Herstein." She said, "All right. Organize a meeting for me." Her secretary, Lavina Thompson, called me and told me about it. A young man and I forgot his name, he was married to a former pupil of mine -- we were to organize the meeting. Mrs. Roosevelt requested that we have no publicity at first. As soon as you have publicity

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you create opposition. Hiss Thompson said, you could have the meeting in your apartment. I lived then on Cornell Avenue. Charlotte Carr had just come to Hull House. After the death of Jane Addams there were one or two others, others, and then came Charlotte Carr.

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So we came up, and Mrs. Roosevelt sat in a big seat, and she said, "Sit close to me, because I w&t you to tip me off," I sat on a hassock next to her, and these people were there, and she spoke about the plan.

I. Can you tell me who the people were?

R. Oh, yes. I introduced each parson, what union they were from, and she trusted me. She discussed the plan of how to have worker's education under the WPA. She knew the damagers -- federal money to teach revolution or something. Very good discussion. About 12:30, Hiss Carr said, "Oh, Mrs. Roosevelt, we have a restaurant downstairs, and I can send some lunch up." Well, she said, "Don't bother with the lunch, I'd rather talk. And she, who thought she was going to give us one hour, was there three hours, and we went through quite an interesting discussion. So we began having worker's education under the WPA. We had two sessions, two summers, in Chicago. We were at the Burton Court at the University of Chicago. These people were on relief.

I. The people who were to teach?

R. Yes, the people who were teaching were workers on relief. They were

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given a certain amount of money from the relief, and they paid from that money the University at Burton Court for their board and room. And I stayed there too. We had the girls on one floor and the men on the other. Now, one of those people, Hal Gibbons of the Missouri Teamsters, a vice-president of the teamsters, who developed the most wonderful worker's education is St. Louis.

- I. He was one of your students?
- R. Yes, he was one of my boys. He was local 688 of the Teamsters Union of St. Louis. This is 1935. And in the group we had a variety of people, people that were out of jobs, and broke. None of them cared about worker's education; they just wanted to get in on the program.
5. It was really very different, then, from the way you had selected people before.
- B. Oh, yes. And the rest of the people at Burton Court looked askance at US, you know. I remember there was one fellow that was a Persian and had taught history at some small college. He was down and out. It's hard to recreate.
- I. It sounds like a very odd mixture of people.
- R. Oh, yes. As I said, we were looked at askance. And then I had that little thing when the Tribune came out and said we were communist.
- I. Yes, tell that will you? what was the charge made against you?

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R. Oh, that we were a red school,

I. Who was making the charge this time against you?

R. The one who complained was -- here, I'll read the Article: "The Chicago Training Center for Teachers in Worker's Education, which was supported by this government, constituted in reality A school of radicalism According to A description vouched for yesterday by one of the students who WAS A businessman And former educator." He wasn't much of a businessman, nor a former educator.

I. How was he as a student in your school?

R. Oh, nothing much. "The school recently completed A six-weeks course. It was attended by teachers And ex-teachers who drew federal pay for studying. One of them was Charles Smith, 550 Lincoln Avenue, Calumet City. He was 43 years old and a former principal of the Calumet City High School for the past ten years he has been in the real estate and insurance business." And so on. You see, he was out of a job.

I. So he was being paid --

R. He was down and out, like a whole lot of other people. And so you got kind of an odd group. They weren't all that way. That was the time About the real estate letter and the girl--Did I tell you about that?

I. No.

R. When we opened the school, we thought that the students ought to have access to the papers. We chose a paper from the middle west.

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We did not choose the Chicago Tribune, we chose the Kansas City Star, or something like that, a regular paper, you know. And every day, at the end of the day, before we knew it, somebody put a copy of the dommie paper, I forgot what it was called, out too.

- I. Was that the Daily Worker?
- R. The Daily Worker. We didn't subscribe for it. We subscribed for some labor papers, ad regular papers, and some of them even had friends that brought in the New York Times. But it was a pretty strenuous thing, and we ate there. I remember one time I had enlisted the aid of Robert Morse Lovett to speak to the group.

We always visited a typical industry in Chicago, the whole group, and one tire, we visited the packing industry, and they took us all the way through. That was the time they really slaughtered the cattle. If you couldn't stand it, you looked away. After a while, we were brought in the assembly hall at Swift's or whatever it wear, and this foreman was telling us this is the place where the workers meet. So Harold Gibbons spoke up; he said, "The workers. We don't have any union here except a teamster's union." And of course, at that time, Harold wasn't a teamster or anything else, you know. "We were under some obligation to them so we've kept them." Well, the obligation was that they scabbed, when people tried to organize the workers. But it was just like Hal to ask that. And we went to the industry. Then we bad tried to get into a typical-steel industry, which is

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difficult here, and on our faculty was a man who taught in the Economics department at Northwestern University. He said, "You know, we've tried and tried to get into a steel industry, but it's very difficult." So I talked to Paul Douglas, and he said, "You get hold of Joseph Block, of Inland Steel, and he'll let you get in." So, I got hold of Joseph Block, and I really got hold of him. I told him about this group of working people who were interested in the industries of the area, and that we'd gone to the packing industry, and since the steel industry was typical of the community, they would want to come. He said, "That's just fine." And I said, "We're only here for six weeks." He said, "I'll tell you, the furnaces are not running now." For some reason they were braked. "But, we're going to unbank them in a few days, and you call me, and we'll make a date when the steel mill is really working." So, in a few days I called. Oh, how they got Joe Block insulated. I didn't know till years afterwards, he never knew about this.

- I. He never got your call?
- R. Whenever I'd call, see, tipped everybody off, every stenographer, everybody else. He was not available. He wasn't even told.

- I. Who do you think did this?
- R. Oh, the people around him, his foreman and the rest of them. I explained that in each industry, we weren't discussing organization, we were

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discussing the industry, how it operates. But years afterwards, I met Joe Block, and his brother is Leigh Block, who's president of the Art Institute now. So we didn't set to visit that industry.

Well, at the same time there was meeting at Burton Court, a group of real estate men. Even the university was hard up and renting places to people. One of my teachers was a Miss Moulton from California and she had taught in worker's education before. She was a regular professor at Rutgers College. Her father died when she was very young, so she always traveled with her mother. Her mother went with her, and her mother was wonderful, a very bright woman. She had some position, too. So Miss Moulton of Rutgers was of my faculty, and her mother was with her. One day, the mother said to me --see, I was not at all versed in sex things, I just wasn't. I was like a tomboy, I didn't know what they were talking about; they didn't talk about it so much then. She said to me, "Listen, Midst Herstein, you know that little girl from South Chicago." She was Swedish, and she was very unhappy. Her mother had died; nobody in the family was working; she was very upset. She said, "She'll bear a lot of watching and care on your part." So one day she got sick. We had an infirmary there, and she was up in her room. Miss Moulton had tipped me off, and I went up to see her, and who do I see there but a great big man. I looked at him and he said to me, "I came to see Miss Ericson. She's sick, and I wanted to see what I could do for her." And I said, "That's

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not at all necessary. We have the facilities of the university and we'll take care of her. You are not needed at all," He looked at me, and I looked at him and stared until he walked out. Subsequently, that real estate crowd wrote a letter.

I. Was he from that real estate group?

R. Yea, he was one of them. I don't blame the whole group, he was just one of them, but because I miffed him, and she was a very attractive girl, he wrote this letter to President Roosevelt, and President Roosevelt got hold of Hilda Smith, who was head of the whole project. I answered him at great length. Well, that was one incident.

I. What did he say to President Roosevelt?

R. Oh, it was a long letter, I've got it here somewhere -- that they were revolutionists and all that stuff. So I wrote to Hilda, and I wrote to the president. He just wanted a girl, that's what's the matter. I hope I didn't burn it, I don't know whether you'd want it or not.

I. I would. I hope you can find it.

R.. Oh, I was just furious. And then, about that time, our group was very sensitive to other people. See, after all, we weren't the only ones in Burton Court. It's Burton Judson court. With all these groups in there, a lot of them, it was a big dormitory. We felt kind of ostracised

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by the others.

- I. Even before this incident?
- R. Oh, yes, we were kind of sensitive. Well, then, this incident occurred, and I forgot there was something about another group coming in, and they needed the room, so we agreed to eat in the basement. That hurt some of the feelings, I said, "Now don't worry, it's all right." And that's the time I invited Robert Morse Lovett. That just gave the lift. Here was the distinguished professor of English, who cue to our group. That meant a lot to us, that night. It was a interesting group.

I've got the list of people who taught. But you me every project of the government was attacked during the depression. There was a writer's project, some very good writers. They did a lot of good things, but it was always condemned. "Federal money wasted," Everything was attacked, everything that the government did, because people were, after all, conservative and reactionary.

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- I. I think you have some more information to give me about your experiences in education for the Labor Movement.
- R. Well, I think I'll tell you about the political philosophy of labor. The American Federation of Labor has always accepted capitalism. It was one of the few labor movements of the world that didn't have a party of its own, or was not in any way, except in the case of some individual members, connected with the Socialist Party. Mr. Samuel Gompers, who had been president of the A.F. of L. for some 40 years, enunciated the political philosophy of labor as follows: "We do not need a separate party. We should watch the records of the men in office, both in the United States Congress and the State legislatures, and keep track of their records as far as labor or labor interests are concerned. Our strategy should be to elect our friends and defeat our enemies in the old parties.
- I. Now, you gave some lectures.
- R. Wait, I want to tell you about that later. Personally, I myself was interested in political activity. In the 1930's I came under the influence of Senator Paul Douglas and Robert Morse Lovett, who was a distinguished liberal. Paul Douglas, at that time a professor of Economics at the University of Chicago, decided that there was no hope in the two old parties, the Republican and the Democrat, and he

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wrote a book called The Need For A Third Party in which he asserted that the Republican and the Democratic parties were both "'wings of the same bird of prey." He influenced me to run for Congress from the second congressional district on the newly formed Farmer-Labor Party. My campaign was launched in the studio of Laredo Taft, who was at that time father-in-law of Paul Douglas. It was a very interesting experience. My mouth had always watered to be in politics, but apparently my timing was wrong. We had an interesting campaign. Mr. James Mullenbach, who was the arbitrator of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and a distinguished member of the Chicago Board of Education, endorsed me and spoke at several of my meetings. Several of my meetings were almost broken up by Communists who came in just to cause trouble. They knew they couldn't do anything, but they thought it would hurt me politically if the newspapers would say, "Meeting for Lillian Herstein running for congress was broken up in a riot." One of the men who came to speak in my behalf was Dan Hoan, who for 25 years had been elected mayor of Milwaukee on the Socialist ticket. Mr. Hoan always said he did not bring Socialism to Milwaukee, but he did bring better government. Subsequently an article appeared in either the Atlantic or Harper's written by Elmer Davis, who was a great liberal, commenting on the cleanness of politics in the state of Wisconsin, which he attributed to the influence of Dan Hoan and his Socialist Party in Milwaukee and of

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the LaFollettes. To come back to my campaign, we put on a lively campaign. As I said, Dan Hoan came down from Milwaukee and campaigned for me, and he was particularly good at the meetings where the Communists came to heckle. It always revealed their ignorance of American history, particularly political history, their ignorance of economic history, and he would demolish them with his answers. He was very good.

I. What kind of issues were raised?

R. Well, I'll give you my campaign card.

I. That has your program on it?

R. You wouldn't say I knew very much about farms, but that was our campaign platform.

I. How much support did you get from the labor movement in Chicago?

R. Well, not much.

I. Not much?

R. They were still voting according to the Gompers formula to elect their friends and defeat their enemies in the Republican and Democratic parties. John Fitzpatrick however, President of the Chicago Federation

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of Labor, and Victor Olander, who was secretary of the State Federation of Labor, and Soderstrom, who was president of the state Federation of Labor, although elected on the Republican ticket to the state legislature -- all wrote letters recommending my election. Before that, in 1924, progressive groups in America organized behind the candidacy for President of the United States of the elder Robert M. LaFollette. I was very active in that campaign.

At the first big meeting in Chicago for LaFollette, (the vice-presidential candidate was Burton Wheeler, of Montana), the unions, in the main, were not for this campaign. The unions that supported it were the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the International Ladies Garment Workers, the Railroad Brotherhoods, and the Streetcanaan's Union.

The agreement was that no matter how the campaign went, after the election we would meet in Chicago, and form a third party. As a matter of fact, it was the Socialist Party that got our Progressive party on the ballot in several states, because many of them had laws that a new party couldn't get on the ballot unless in the preceding election year they had polled a certain number of votes. Well, we didn't have them, but the Socialist Party did. And they got off for our sake. They were instrumental in getting us on the ballot. At that time, the Railroad Brotherhoods were very much annoyed at some

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governmental regulation made against them, and that's why they were hot for our third party called the Progressive Party. I had one embarrassing experience in that campaign. It proved the old adage in reverse: there is nothing like giving a dog a bad name. I learned that there is nothing like giving a dog a good name.

At the first fund-raising meeting of the campaign, I was asked to make the appeal for funds. Burton Wheeler, who was the Progressive Candidate for Vice-President and who was chairman of the meeting lifted me to stand on a table so I could be seen. How, as a matter of fact, anybody could have raised the money at that meeting because it was packed with people there ready to give. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers were there with a check for \$500 and the International Ladies' Garment Workers and so on. I made the appeal and I got a lot of money, but it wasn't due to my skill. It was due to the fact that it was a meeting packed with people determined to contribute. Well, I couldn't live my reputation as an effective fund raiser down. And every meeting for LaFollette and Wheeler in or around Chicago, even in Wisconsin, insisted on my coming and making the appeal for funds. It took me a long time to live down that reputation.

After the election, the delegates did meet in Chicago, as had been agreed to before, but their enthusiasm for a third party had

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evaporated. I can remember that at that meeting we discussed our agreement to form a third party. Morris Hillquit, the famous Socialist and famous labor lawyer, made the most moving speech for a third party. But it fell on deaf ears. The enthusiasm of some of the Labor people, as I said above, had evaporated. It so happened that the Socialists had their misgivings and had arranged also for their Socialist meeting that night, the regular Socialist meeting, and Eugene Debs was there. I was asked to speak. I was never a member of the Socialist party. It just happened I never had joined the Socialists, but they all liked me. As a matter of fact, right after the Communist revolution in Russia, the American Socialist Party was split, because one part supported the Russian Revolution and the others opposed it as a betrayal of a real working man's party. Therefore the Socialist party at that time wasn't very militant, People like John Fitzpatrick and the rest of us who were militants in the Labor movement were more militant than the Socialists. But the Socialists liked me and they invited me to this meeting. It was the birthday of Debs, and the International Ladies' Garment Workers, who were largely Socialist, brought him a bouquet of red roses, one for every year. I think he was 70 years old. Then I was asked to speak, and I made a very short speech, about 5 or 8 minutes. After

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I got through, Debs came over to me and put his arms around me and kissed me, and said, "My dear girl, you have great powers; you must use them in the cause of humanity." I was so thrilled for being kissed by Eugene Debs that I didn't want to wash my face.

In 1932, I was not elected. Some of my students went to polling places to be watchers and they were in one precinct where the Republicans and Democrats were watching each other and counting the votes very carefully, and finally, they came upon 10 or 12 that were not easily classified and they were arguing about their allocation and finally one of them said, "Oh, all right, let's give those to the skirt." My students heard that, and I got those votes.

In 1932 I did not support Roosevelt. I supported Norman Thomas for president, and he supported me for Congress. I can recall that at that time we were in the depths of the depression. And there was a convention of the Democratic National Party at the stadium on 1800 West Madison. I went over to the convention, and as I was coming out a man with a very fine face but in very delapidated clothes said to me, (we could hear t&e cheering of the convention) "What are they cheering about?" "Why, for the resolution to recall the Volstead Act, to put an end to prohibition." He said, "So, they're cheering for whiskey. Do you suppose they'll ever come to bread?" That incident

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made a very deep impression on me.

I couldn't see in Franklin D. Roosevelt, although he had been quite a good governor of the state of New York, any promise for fundamental changes in the economic system that had thrown us into that depression. And so, I wholeheartedly supported Norman Thomas, as he did me. But when Roosevelt went in, he introduced a great deal of his welfare program, and all the third party people were converted to Roosevelt, even Paul Douglas. In fact, many years later, when Paul Douglas ran for the Senate on the Democratic ticket the Republicans used to face him with the book that he wrote on the need for a third party and his declaration that the Democratic and Republican Parties were, both "wings of the same bird of prey" In 1936, Labor formed Labor's Non-Partisan League for Roosevelt. Now, that sounds inconsistent but it isn't with their philosophy. Their philosophy was to support in the old parties anyone who was favorable to labor, and they were for Franklin D. Roosevelt, not as a Democrat, but because of his good labor record. In fact, they didn't endorse many other Democrats who ran for office. We formed Labor's Non-Partisan League for Roosevelt and the people that contributed, as I said, were the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the International Ladies' Garment Workers.

We opened an office on Dearborn Street where Inland Steel is now. It was an old building then. I was asked to be Director of the

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Speakers Bureau for Labor's Non-Partisan League. It so happened at that time that I was Director of Lectures at the Junior Colleges so that I had no classroom responsibilities. I came to the office after school hours every day. My school was at 6800 Stuart, and I'd take a taxi, which I paid for myself, and come to the headquarters. Hr. Marimpietri, an official of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, who was very enthusiastic about this campaign, was very annoyed at me for not accepting a salary. I said, "Well, I'm getting a salary as a teacher." The other people who worked in the office were all paid. But I didn't accept payment and they said to me finally, "Lillian, won't you please accept money for your taxis and for your dinners?" From 2:30 in the afternoon, when I got there, till 10 o'clock at night, I was working at this job. I was supposed to be the Director of the Speakers Bureau for Labor's Non-Partisan League for Roosevelt for the State of Illinois. But labor people from Indiana called me. All sorts of people called and wanted me to send them speakers, and at that time I must have done *as much* work in the state of Indiana as I did in Illinois.

- I. They're really so close; the northern parts are so close it almost should be one state.
- R. I learned some valuable lessons in that campaign. The unions would call and tell me whom they wanted and one of the big demands was for

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William Rodriquez. William Rodriquez was a Socialist, incidentally, a very handsome man and a very fine speaker. He had been elected to the City Council of Chicago once on the Socialist ticket, and he was very pro-labor, and very articulate. There was a demand for him everywhere. He filled these demands as much as he could on a volunteer basis, accepted no pay.

I. What was his national background?

R. He was probably of Portugese descent. Rodriquez was his name.

I. I was wondering,

R. He was very fine, very handsome, very articulate. And then, as the campaign went on and it became obvious to people that "know their political onions," that Roosevelt was going to make it, there was pressure brought upon me to send certain people as speakers for whom nobody made a demand. These people wanted to be speakers, and even Mr. Olander called me up one day and said that a friend of his, a distinguished man who was offering his services to me to speak for Roosevelt had been rejected by me. And I said, "But Mr. Olander, nobody's asked for him." It never occurred to me that they saw that Roosevelt was a winner and they wanted to get in on the band-wagon so that when he was elected, they'd have some claims. Innocent me!

I. Can you tell me who the people were?

R. No, I don't remember that.

I. You weren't really anticipating what they were doing anyway, were you?

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R. It didn't seem clear to me. A job like that subjected me to a lot of people that made requests. They were unions that would request certain speakers; they were speakers that wanted to speak. Our office was a beehive of activity. I was not aware of the fact that Roosevelt was winning. One time we organized a march because Roosevelt was to come to Chicago to speak at the Stadium on West Madison Street. We actually marched from Michigan and Congress all the way down Michigan to Madison, all the way to the Stadium, 1800 Madison Street. John Fitzpatrick led the parade. It was quite a strenuous march. Roosevelt was to speak, and everybody tried to get into the Stadium. We got in, we sat on the platform. That was the first time I had ever seen Roosevelt. And I was impressed by his technique. How did this crippled man manage? Well, when he came on the platform, everybody rose. And he stood at the podium, He never sat down, so that the audience never had the spectacle of his having to rise with those braces on his legs and leaning on some person. He stood there, and he looked at the audience, and his first remark was, "I seem to have been here before." That was a reference to his nomination in the Stadium in 1932. And let it be remembered that many of the local Illinois Democratic politicians were opposed to his nomination in '32.

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I. They were?

R. Oh, yes. That was the Kelly - Nash machine, who were for anyone but Roosevelt. They were proposing Ray Stannard Baker.

Roosevelt knew about their tactics. He was a consummate politician in the best sense of the word. He stood there and laughingly said to them, "I seem to have been here before." That's when he was nominated there in the Democratic Convention of 1932. He made his speech. He stood in front of the podium, and of course the podium has a board in front so that the audience couldn't see his legs. He had one hand on the podium, that's all. And there was the manuscript of his speech, apparently typed in very large letters. He would turn the pages, and there would be wild applause for quite a while. He looked at his wristwatch, to see how much time the applause had taken and then planned his speech accordingly. It was marvelous. Of course, at the end, there was this thunderous applause. Then he left the podium with his son James. But you know, never once in that evening did he sit down or rise, so the only picture that the audience had had was this tall, handsome, strong-looking man, and never were they reminded of his infirmity. Well, that was '36, and that was part of my labor political activity. I remember that I was so busy at the job, I didn't realize how the tide was turning. We didn't have many pollsters then. The Literary Digest which prophesied

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a great victory for Landon went out of business as a result of their silly prediction. There weren't many polls then, but there must have been some.

- I. I know of some polls from the middle thirties, very amateurish I suppose, compared to what we have now.
- R. During the campaign Sidney Hillman, who was one of the leaders in the fight for Roosevelt, had come down to our Chicago office and said to us, "Now, remember, we have to work hard here in Illinois. Illinois is a doubtful state." And that was always in my mind. As the campaign went on, my associates in the office would say, "We've got it in the bag." "Well," I said, "I don't think we've got it in the bag. I was walking down LaSalle Street on an errand, and everybody there was wearing a sunflower." That was Landon's symbol. My associates in the League would say, "You know where you're going? You're going down LaSalle Street, and all those lower echelon fellows are forced to wear the sunflower." And that was true. I was just walking on Sunflower Avenue. When the polls came in and Roosevelt won in all but two states. It was a great surprise **to** me. Another difficulty for me was that although I was engaged to be the Director of the Speaker's Bureau, to send

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out speakers, many of the unions wanted me to speak. Sometimes I did double duty.

- I. I was going to ask you if you weren't one of the more popular speakers requested.
- R. Oh, yes. That was quite a difficulty. And I remember there was a little local of the International Ladies' Garment Workers, a little factory in Batavia, Illinois, a solid Republican area. I had promised them that I would come to their meeting which turned out to be the night before the election. They had a meeting and they were pretty much surrounded by Republicans. Then we went over to a place where there was a radio, and we heard Roosevelt's fireside speech on that night before the election. The next morning, when the returns were in, no one was more surprised than I. I did expect him to win, but not with so great a majority. I think Alf Landon is still living in Topeka, Kansas. He really is the Liberal in the Republican Party of Kansas these days,

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- I. Now you said you wanted to tell me a little bit about the Federated Press.
- R. That's right, In the Thirties there was all this feeling among liberals and progressives that the labor movement was not getting

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the recognition that it should be by way of the press. And so, some of these people conceived the idea, (this is before World War I) of organizing a news agency on the basis that the Associated Press is organized. The Associated Press, as you know, does not publish newspapers; it collects news and sells it to its member newspapers. They can use it as they see fit. The Federated Press announced **as** its purpose the gathering of labor news in particular, which they would sell to their member newspapers, chiefly Labor papers or others. Of course its activity was on a very small scale compared to the Associated Press. Among the people that they attracted was Louis Lochner of Wisconsin, who was opposed to World War I and ended up in prison for it, and Frederick Kuh, who belonged to a distinguished German Jewish family. His father was a distinguished ear doctor. There was also Maude McCreary, who was a very eloquent agitator for labor and a great many people like that. The thing you had to do was -- number one, get the endorsement of the Federated Press of various labor unions and get appropriations from them. Now, by and large, the labor movement was sold on the value of the Federated Press. The labor movement was about as conservative then as it ever has been. Most of the newspapers treated them with indifference. A few condemned them and said they were red. Now, my function for

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the Federated Press was to go to various unions to urge them to endorse the Federated Press and, if possible, get an appropriation of money. Well, by that time, I had spoken in many of the mining towns in Illinois, so I was very well known to them and very popular and they would ask me to come. I remember one of the speeches that I made that was a difficult one and sort of a triumph, but not wholly due to my ability. There are always complicated conditions. There was a meeting of the Illinois state convention of the Miners Union. The president of the Miners Union of Illinois at that time was a man by the name of Frank Farrington, who was at the time at sword's points with John L. Lewis. John L. Lewis was never popular in Illinois. He came from Illinois, and at one time the miners had an injunction forbidding him to come there. There was this feud between Farrington and Lewis. Farrington was fighting for his political life in the miner's union. There was at that time a considerable rumbling among miners against their national union. There was one very fine fellow by the name of Alexander Howatt who came from Kansas, where they passed the Kansas Industrial Law, which forced compulsory arbitration in labor disputes and that was a big issue. So there were these murmurs and this political fighting, particularly between Farrington and John L. Lewis. John L. Lewis was out for getting Farrington, which he finally did. That's another

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interesting story. There was at that time in Springfield the annual meeting of the miners of Illinois. Through Tom Tippett and other people that I knew, they got President Farrington to agree to let me speak. He wasn't strong for anybody like Tom Tippett or other dissenters. He was politically involved in his own union; he had to get that support. And so he let me speak at that convention. That was when I was at the height of my "dedicated oratory." And I got the miner's union to endorse the Federated Press and even to contribute a thousand dollars. Well, that was a sensation.

And I recall when I left the hall and I was at the hotel, a man asked to see me. He said, "What do you do for a living?" "Well, whatever you get, I can offer you a job that will pay twice what you're getting." I said, "Is that so, what's the job." Well, it turned out that the job was to sell insurance. I said to him, "Listen, I'm nothing of a salesman, I couldn't sell a drink in the Sahara Desert." "Oh," he said, "you're being over modest. The whole town is speaking how you captured that convention! Nobody thought that you would succeed, everybody's talking about it." But I said, "Brother, I believed in that, and if I took a job selling insurance, and I was selling for, say, New York Life, and the person I was talking to said, 'I've heard about Metropolitan Life', I would say, "Oh, yes, that's a good company too. It's all right as long as

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you buy some insurance!" I convinced that man that I wasn't the person to sell anything.

The Federated Press then sent Louis Lochner to Germany; we were getting international. Frederick Kuh was sent to Berlin. Frederick Kuh had a very fine command of languages. He belonged to one of the best educated German Jewish families. His father had his children learning French and German when they were quite young. I was trying to think, there were two times that I had to talk to him. This must have been '33. At any rate, I was in Europe for some reason, and I interviewed Frederick Kuh in Berlin. I remember how he'd offer me some cigarettes, and I wasn't a smoker, but I'd take one and take two puffs and put it out. He said, "Don't you like them?" He was longingly looking at these American cigarettes so I took the hint. And while we were talking there came a message from Vienna; there was a big revolt there. The workers had stormed the Palace of Justice in Vienna, which was big news and he was handling it.

Subsequently he was representing the Federated Press in England, and Louis Lochner was representing the Federated Press in Germany. Louis Lochner was there throughout the Hitler period, and that was the time that the wonderful correspondents of the Chicago Daily News

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were exposing Hitler. That's the time when Edgar Mowrer wrote the famous book, Germany Turns the Clock Back, and the Daily News wanted to recall him. They thought it would be dangerous for him to stay in Berlin. Hitler would make remarks, of course. He'd always say that Mowrer was a Jew, which wasn't true. And he'd say, "These lies that he tells, I can't be responsible if some of our loyal Germans would attack him." Not that he was suggesting it -- oh no -- but finally, Mowrer had to leave Germany as the Daily News feared for his life. Lochner was there throughout the Hitler regime and the other correspondents were suspicious of him, of his relationship, not so much being treasonable, but compromising. "How could you stay there, if you published the truth, like Edgar Howrer and some of the other correspondents?", the other correspondents would ask.

I recall that the first time I saw Lochner was long before that, on my first trip to Russia. That was in '27. He met me and arranged where I was to stay. By that time, he had been divorced from his American wife and was married to a German one, Then, the next time, was 1937 and Hitler went into power in January. I didn't want to go to Germany, I wanted to go to Sweden. That was the I.L.O. the, that was '37, and I couldn't get to Sweden without going through Berlin for one day. I went through and made a contact with Louis Lochner. We'd been old agitators together, comrades in arms out to establish

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the Federated Press. Nearly all the foreign correspondents at that time in Berlin looked askance at me. The I.L.O. had gone on for three weeks. There were employer delegates, worker delegates and government delegates. Hitler had sent no delegates to the I.L.O., but he arranged for a great big party after the I.L.O. conference was over. He arranged a great big banquet, and invited the businessmen who had been at the I.L.O. conference from many different countries. Louis Lochner was invited to that conference and the other foreign newspaper correspondents said to me, "You don't get invited to that conference just for nothing."

Then came the invasion of Poland. That started World War II. That was 1939, wasn't it? That's right. The Nazi army was in Munich, then it went smashing through Denmark and Prance, meeting no resistance. Louis Lochner was a war correspondent in that area, and all his dispatches told of how the Germans smashed into Denmark and how there wasn't an Allied plane in the skies. They smashed through France and not a French plane resisted them. Well, you remember all that.

Subsequently, Louis Lochner came back to America. I remember he spoke at a meeting at Mandel Hall and I went to hear him. In the audience were distinguished men who had been persecuted by Hitler and had come to this country. I'll never forget the look of skepticism on their faces when he spoke. He was quite on the defensive. He

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said, "I wasn't for the Nazis. I was simply reporting what happened. The Nazi army did smash into Denmark, and there was no resistance. They did this, and I simply reported it." He was very much on the defensive.

Many years afterwards I discovered that he established a radio program somewhere in Southern California, and I knew people thought he was very good. Of course, I often thought about Lochner and his position in World War I. A lot of us who were opposed to the war made the mistake about others who opposed the war. These people were not opposed to war; they were pro-German, like George Sylvester Viereck, the great writer. You see, when Hitler came along, they were pro-German. The reason they were resisting the World War, apparently as pacifists, was really that they were pro-German. And they were allied with a lot of us who weren't pro-German -- if anything were pro-British. Well, the Federated Press limped along for a few years, but finally went out of business.

I. How long did it take?

It. Well, not many years.

I. Was it union newspapers who printed their material?

R. Yes. If you could get them to do it.

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- I. But not many of them?
- R. Not many of them. They were still conservative. Not till you got the C.I.O. did you get labor papers that were militant. It was a very boring time in the American Labor movement. Samuel Gompers played a big role in World War I. And it was he that really got the I.L.O. established as a reward for what he had done in persuading American working men to support the war. Eventually the Federated Press petered out. Tom Tippett became educational director for the Machinists' union; he did a very good job. And Tom Tippett, the coal miner who had worked hard for the Federated Press, subsequently became Field Representative for rent during the war when we had rent control. Of course he was always attacked, a fine character. For a while, Carl Hessler, who was also on the Federated Press lived on the North Shore.
- I. Was Carl Hessler part of the Federated Press, too?
- R. Oh, yes. He was.
- I. Carl Hessler was a student at the University of Wisconsin. His father was a wealthy hardware merchant in Milwaukee. Carl got his doctor's degree in Philosophy under Max Otto of Wisconsin, who was quite a remarkable man, quite a great liberal in religion. He always said he rose from being a bartender to a YMCA secretary.

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He was quite a liberal. He gave a famous course in religion which was quite liberal and I took it. And every year, the Catholic clergy of Madison sent a petition to the trustees of the University of Wisconsin to have Max Otto fired, but they never did. He was a very remarkable man. He had a great influence on Carl Hessler. In the meantime, Carl Hessler received a doctor's degree in philosophy. He opposed the war. In World War I President Wilson appointed Judge Mack, who was the great liberal judge of the juvenile court, to go to the various camps where there were conscientious objectors, to persuade them to join the army. He came to the camp where Carl Hessler was, and he said, "Now, Mr. Hessler, all we want you to do is put on a uniform." It's very shocking, it's hard to tell all these young people that all these conscientious objectors are a bunch of sub-normal nuts, when here is a Phi Beta Kappa, Ph. D. who is opposing the war. And Hessler looked at him. He said, "Put on a uniform? Why, I'm against this war! I am not a pacifist. I'll fight in the war when the working people of the world combine against their masters." His own brother was in the American Expeditionary Force. His father thought he was silly to do this, and he was arrested and put in prison. I remember a beautiful letter that Max Otto wrote to him. It was very lovely. He was at Camp Leavenworth and his wife, Muriel, stuck by him through all this. They had two children.

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She was a teacher, and when he was arrested and sent to prison, school system after school system refused to give her a job because she was the wife of a man who was a prisoner for resisting the war. Everybody was for this war. And Mrs. Hessler, that's Carl's mother, was very devoted to Muriel and appreciated her sticking by her son. So did Mrs. Hessler. And then one time the story came out, there was a fellow by the name of Clark Getts who was also in prison. The prison authorities had to give him a job. They knew they were all educated men, so they gave him the job of teaching English to the other prisoners. Of course, you know what they did while they were teaching English!

- I. They were teaching their ideas, too, I bet.
- R. Sure! And then the story came out that Carl Hessler had pushed some cigarettes under the door where a prisoner was in solitary confinement. He was punished for that and was to be sent to Alcatraz. His mother was heartbroken and she talked to his wife, "Muriel, I think we should talk to Carl, and write to him. Isn't he going too far? He shouldn't do that." And she said, "I wouldn't think of breaking his spirit," his wife replied. And he was in Alcatraz. Then it was after he came out that he got involved in

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the Federated Press. Although he was a distinguished scholar, the academic world was closed to him. I remember about that time there was some women's organization in Milwaukee arranging a charitable meeting. Car's mother applied for admission, and when she did, the secretary said, "You have a son, haven't you, Mrs. Hessler?" "Yes, " she said, "I have a son who fought in the American Expeditionary Forces." She said, "You had another son." She said, "Yes, I had another son." She admitted that he was in prison, but she embarrassed this secretary very much.

I. Did they accept her into the club?

R. I think they did -- oh no, they told her to come back.

I. So they didn't.

R. You see, there was Victor Berger, who was quite a Socialist from Milwaukee, and Adolph Germer, a very handsome Socialist. They went to prison. I never heard of Carl and his family again until about 1951 or 2, when I was working for the Jewish Labor Committee. Two men came in and they said that they represented the United States Immigration and Naturalization Organization, part of the government. One of them was very belligerent, terrible -- sounded

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like McCarthy. He came to question me. I was in the office of the Jewish Labor Committee. I learned from Len Despres afterwards that I didn't have to answer them at all because I wasn't working for the government. I was working for a private group. And this belligerent man came to interrogate me about Carl Bessler and the Federated Press. They were looking up the history of Carl Hessler after all these years, I said, 'Yes, I knew him years ago.' 'We know you knew him,' he said to me. We can look in the files of the Federated Press and there are many references to you.' And I said, 'Yes, there would be. I spoke at many meetings for them.' And this fellow got more and more belligerent and critical of me. It was a bad time.

- I. You had a worse time in the fifties for having done it than you did at the time?
- R. Yes, sure. And this belligerent investigator said there were a lot of Negroes being evicted from their homes at that time. It was a terrible time then. And when something came up about these evictions I said, 'Well, they're poor, and they can't pay rent.' 'No,' he said, 'It's a bunch of Communists.' 'Oh,' I said, 'I don't think they know anything about Communism. They're very fine people. I used to teach in that part of the city and they're just poor.' Then he flamed up.

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Everybody was a Communist. And then, of all things, he launched in on David Dubinsky of the International Ladies Garment Workers. "Well," I said, "If you knew anything about Communism, you would know that he put up the biggest fight against the Communists in his union and threw them out." He blustered some more, and I said, "You know, I'm a taxpayer, and my taxes pay your salary, and I object to my money being used to pay the salary of a man like you, who knows nothing about Communism!" Oh, we had a hot time! The other fellow who was with him had more of a sense of humor. But after all those years, they were trying to find out about the Federated Press.

- I. Which had been dead all those years.
- R. Yes. After it dissolved, one of the things that Carl Hessler did for a living was to work for a mortician, an undertaker.

- I. I wonder if the mortician got into trouble.
- R. The last I heard was his being in Seattle, Washington visiting a son of his who had become *a* lawyer. You know we're now on the third and fourth generation of that era. So that was the Federated Press.

Oh, I was going to tell you this. There was this bitter fight among the Illinois miners, between Frank Farrington and John L. Lewis.

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Tape 14 - Side 1

The story broke that the Peabody Coal Company brought the news to John L. Lewis that they had given a bribe of 75,000 dollars to Frank Farrington. That ended Frank Farrington's career in the Labor Movement, but I've often wondered about the tender solicitude of the Peabody Coal Company for the miners. They were anti-labor. Now, why were they so eager to get into this fight to help John L. Lewis.

I. Why do you think?

R. I don't know. It's been one of the mysteries, one of the sad things. You know, as time went on, and the Progressive Miners were organized, that was the fight against Lewis's crowd.

I. Did you ever have any contact with the Progressive Miners?

R. Well, I must have talked to some of their various leaders. You know, Raiser, an instructor in one of the Illinois state universities, wrote that book about John L. Lewis. His Ph.D. thesis is the biography of John Fitzpatrick. His father had been a member of the Progressive Miners, the protest group against John L. Lewis. Did I tell you about this article on the United Mine Workers? Do you want to take that?

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- I. Yes, I'd like to.
- R. That corroborates what I used to hear from Tom Tippett absolutely. Oh, you must take that. Rare it is. It's a recent article in the May 1971 issue of The Progressive called "The U.M.W.'s Last Chance." It describes the tactics of the leadership of the United Mine Workers which John L. Lewis practiced. At that time, Tom Tippett had no use for Lewis, and neither did Powers Hapgood. Powers Hapgood's father owned the Consumers Conserve Company. He was a millionaire. He was a cousin of Norman Hapgood, the man who finally convinced the old man, Henry Ford, that he was silly in his attack on the Jews. After Ford had spent 4 million dollars attacking the Jews, he got him to retract it. Well, Powers Hapgood was a graduate of Harvard. He became quite a radical and he went to dig coal almost all over the world. He was a great friend of Tom Tippett's and all of us; we knew him well. Tom Tippett used to describe a meeting of the United Mine Workers Union. A delegate, who was known to be a dissident, would get up and ask for the floor. Lewis would roar at him, "For what purpose does the delegate rise?" And if that didn't frighten him, his thugs came in and beat him up. They beat Powers Hapgood at one of those meetings. Another practice of Lewis's, which is described in this article, was and still is the most dangerous to the interest of the miners. If there was a sub-district that had dissidents, he would take their charter away from

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them and appoint an administrator. There was a time when many of the sub-districts of the miners union had no power at all. They were under the control of these administrators that Lewis had appointed. This man Boyle, who succeeded John L. Lewis, used the same tactics. It's very interesting to read that article, "U.M.W.'s Last Chance-- 1971." Here's a union that has an enormous pension fund. Incidentally some of the liberals in this country were so in despair of the conservatism of the A.F. of L. that they grasped at any person or leader, who seemed more active than some of the A.F. of L. leaders. They made quite a hero of John L. Lewis when the C.I.O. was organized. In Labor's Non-Partisan League in 1932 the Miners were active. Then, you know, Lewis broke with Roosevelt. One of the reasons somebody said was that Lewis thought he could treat the White House as a sub-district of the miner's union. There was some dispute, a labor dispute. I don't know if Roosevelt said, "A plague on both their houses", and that made Lewis furious. He got up on the radio and repudiated Roosevelt, and roared about "He who sups at labor's table." The miner's union under him in '36 had contributed 50,000 dollars to the campaign, and he urged that none of the miners vote for Roosevelt. Oh, he roared! Well, the miners then liked him.

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I. Lewis?

R. That's right. They thought he had gotten a lot for them. But when it came to Roosevelt, there was a great split. But to get back to the article in The Progressive mentioned above describes just exactly what I used to hear years ago from Tom Tippet and Powers Hapgood. Lewis bought an elegant big house in George to which has great prestige, and lived there until his death, which occurred recently. Friends would come in and so on, Once Tom Tippet wrote an article about him in Nation. You might like to look that up. He pointed out how Lewis just mouthed big words. He said that if there was a labor dispute, he wouldn't talk about the labor dispute, but the "embroglio." It was a very good article. There were the dissidents all the time. When it was said that at last in 1936 Lewis organized the steel workers, Tom Tippet says, "Oh, no, he didn't! Franklin D. Roosevelt organized the steelworkers!" Tom Tippet used to tell me that both he and Norman Thomas used to say to Lewis, "Why don't you go down to West Virginia and Kentucky and organize those miners?" Especially West Virginia, it's a big bituminous field. As a matter of fact, their wages were so low that they could sell coal very cheap, and that coal was sent to Illinois. A movement was started in Illinois, "Don't buy any of this coal, because it's non-union."

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Well, it didn't work. People bought the cheaper coal. Tom Tippet and Norman Thomas had ventured down in West Virginia and Kentucky. As soon as they'd get off the train, these vigilantes would come with a gun, and say, "Get the hell out of here." But Lewis never went down there until the Roosevelt's National Labor Relations Act made it safe for him to go. And so Tom Tippet always said, "Don't tell me Lewis organized the steel industry after it resisted all these years. Franklin D. Roosevelt did." That was his story.

Another good book to read in that connection, but I think I've told you that, is Unions of their Own Choosing, by a man by the name of R.R. Brooks. He was a professor. There were a lot of professors that got interested in Labor in those days. He tells this story -- or is it called As Steel Goes? It's based on the organization of the Steel Industry. There was a man, I think his name was Schwab. He was an operator, a steel owner, and he said, "As steel goes, so goes the country." Brooks describes the three attempts to organize the steel industry, one in 1892 with Carnegie which was marked by bitter violence. Bitter violence! The other one was 1918, that Fitzpatrick and I were in. Now, we lost that strike, but we dramatized for America the conditions in the steel industry. And the third was '36, when Lewis, (that's the C.I.O.) did it. But we had paved the way. More important than what we did was the legis-

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lation of the Roosevelt administration.

I. They never would have cracked steel without that change in the law.

R. Never.

I. I interviewed some miners in southern Illinois, and they claimed that Lewis never really worried as much as he should have about safety in the mines, that he would come in after an accident and make much of it, but that they had appealed to him many times before the accidents to do something and he never did.

R. That's all in this article. This is all about Boyle, who succeeded Lewis and then the murder of Yablonski, his wife and daughter. The Labor Department was remiss.

I. This is something else that these miners said, that the government always backed Lewis up in legal battles they had with him. This was during the Progressive Miners fight.

R. Yes, sure!

I. But they insisted that the government always stood up for Lewis.

R. Yes, that's the time we lost Walker as the president of the Illinois State Federation of Labor.

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I. Is that right?

R. Yes, he was the president, and the Progressive Miners fight came, The Progressive Miners were kicked out of the A.F. of L. and so Walker said to Mr. Olander, "I cannot accept the presidency of the Illinois State Federation of Labor; I have joined the Progressives, which have been loyal to the miners;" and he gave up a well-paying job as President of the Illinois State Federation of Labor.

Re resigned then and that's when we elected Soderstrom. Soderstrom had been elected for years on the Republican ticket as legislator, and his son, Carl, is still elected on the Republican ticket. Of course, they kept Soderstrom until the last breath left his body, which was just last fall.

I. Anything else you want to add today?

R. I think that, although it may mean some repetition of what I have said above, it is worthwhile to review some of the statements made in the article, "The U.M.W.'s Last Chance", as it shows how a powerful union like the U.M.W. has degenerated as far as service to it's members are concerned and discusses also the relation of the American labor movement with our government. Also it may be indicative of a trend that might develop in other large national unions.

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official is elected. Of 145,000 working coal-miners in the U.S., 90,000 are U.M.W. members; 90,000 are pensioners or inactive and ineligible for pensions.

How come that in an industry so essential and therefore with great bargaining power, there are so many bad conditions for miners? A special fund, Sinclair points out, kept secret until Ralph Nader exposed it:, will allow Boyle, Titter, and Owens to retire at full salary for life with more than \$1.5 million of the miners money as a nest egg. And yet many miners -- members of the union -- are denied their pensions. And mine-disasters in this most dangerous occupation, continue without adequate safety-devices.

What about the relation of U.S. Labor Department with the miners and their leaders?

In the 1968 disaster 78 miners were killed in a West Virginia mine owned by Consolidated Coal Company. When Boyle went to the scene, he said, "As long as we mine coal, there is always this inherent danger."

Now we come to the reaction of the U.S. Department of Labor to the Yablonsky murders. There was a hot union election going on. There was continued disinterest on the part of the U.S. Department of Labor in the great difficulties that developed during that campaign.

When Yablonsky, the candidate running against Boyle, was knocked senseless in a meeting in Springfield, Illinois, George Schulz,

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Secretary of Labor said, "It was done by an emotionally wrought union man reacting to Yablonsky's speech," although there was ample evidence that a group of Yablonsky's opposition was present at the meeting.

The policies and procedures ordained by Lewis have been carried on by his successors, even to the point of the union's linkage with coal companies, a "sweet-heart" relationship which dates back to Lewis. The U.M.W. organization's vast wealth allies itself with the coal industry.

I have quoted at great length from the article "U.M.W.'s Last Chance" by Ward Sinclair, because I feel it is an excellent point of departure for a survey of the future of the American labor movement, and its relation to regulatory government agencies, notably the United States Department of Labor.

American Unions affiliated with the A.F. of L. or now with the A.F. of L. - C.I.O. are autonomous organizations. The national organizations have practically no power over them. Therefore one cannot generalize about all unions on the basis of the activities of one union. The United Automobile Workers Union, under the leadership of the late Walter Reuther, has been conducted under very democratic procedures. Long ago it established a Review board, to which a member

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of the union can appeal for the redress of grievances he alleges against the officers of the Union. Moreover it has been noted for a social consciousness, a feeling of responsibility to the larger community. It has helped to get progressive legislation passed. It has been in the vanguard in the fight against racism and also against war. In the march on Washington, it participated actively . The A.F. of L. did not participate. Other unions in various degrees have supported measures, fighting Racism. But now we have the powerful A.F. of L. -C.I.O., with President Meany, supporting the Vietnam War. The Machinists, with a fair degree of liberalism, is also supporting the War in Vietnam, as it has many orders for war materials. It is true that for many years the Machinists had in their constitution a clause to the effect that they would never recommend anyone but a white man for membership. The Machinists had been organized in the South, but for many years, this provision had been largely been ignored, and resolutions were brought in to the national conventions to have the provision dropped. But, alas, now the Machinists are tied up in the Military-Industrial Complex.

The Unions have made great strides in the area of worker's education, and in addition have been generous in granting college scholarships to the children of their members.

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One would hope that there would be the kind of cooperation with industry, that would not lead to "sweet-heart" contracts.

There is the hope that American Labor would apply itself more vigorously to support the "unorganized", particularly the agricultural workers. There has been considerable activity of late by organized labor in that area. It is heartening to note how generously the International Ladies' Garment Workers are helping the agricultural workers. "In 1967 the I.L.G.W.U. loaned the Farm-Workers a health-mobile: In 1971, they contributed \$12,000 for the purpose of expensive and essential equipment for the newly built clinic of the farm workers.

What of the relation of organized Labor to the government agencies, both Federal and State, established for the protection of workers? Liberals have often pointed out how some of these regulatory agencies have been stocked with members whose interests opposed to regulating the industries they were supposed to regulate.

Certainly the actions of the United States Department of Labor in the recent Yablonski Case were and and indifferent.

We need to be reminded that these agencies, especially those connected with labor problems, were established to serve the workers or union members, not their leaders.

Under conservative administrations, organized labor will have to work vigorously, as it has in the past, against watering down of Labors efforts and gains, It will again have to assume the leadership

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t&at it exercised in the past against war and discrimination in every area of American life -- political, economic, educational, on the basis of race or sex or national origin.

***** End *****

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