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JOEL SEIDMAN

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JOEL SEIDMAN

Oral History Project in Labor History

Interview with Joel Seidman
by Morris Vogel
July 13, 1970

Total time - 1 hour

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Oral History Project

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Respondent : Joel Seidman

interviewer : Morris Vogel

Date: 7/13/70

I. Professor Seidman, I'd like to ask you about your family background and any involvement with labor there.

R. I've been interested as far back as I can remember. I decided to do my graduate work in the field of industrial relations in which I took my doctorate in 1932. I was interested prior to that time and ever since.

I. There was no family involvement, no family in any union?

R. Not to any extent. My father was sympathetic but never a member. He was an immigrant, came over as a half-grown boy, worked in a plant for a number of years while he went to school at night, and ended up his career as an attorney. He remained sympathetic to the labor movement but was never personally involved.

1. And you grew up?

R. In the city of Baltimore, Maryland.

I. When did you come to Chicago?

R. I came to the University of Chicago in January, 1947 when I joined the faculty. I'd been here for a brief time prior to that as a staff member of the National Labor Relations Board in 1942-1943.

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I. Why did you decide to teach in the field of labor?

R. I had been working in industrial relations. I took my doctorate in the field of industrial relations, and I'd worked in one capacity or another in that field all the time. I came here directly from government service with the National Labor Relations Board, but I always had an interest in research and writing types of activity. I always liked the teaching process itself and the involvement in teaching, and also the free time for my research and writing.

I. How about labor education that I know you've been interested in?

R. Yes, I've always been interested in that and still am. I worked in that on a full-time basis from 1934 to 1937 at Brookwood Labor College. Since then I've been involved on a part-time basis, intermittently, first with the American Labor Education Service over many years until they disbanded, and then with the labor education program here at the University of Chicago, also from time to time with the labor education program at Roosevelt University.

I. How about teaching at Brookwood? What kind of recollections do you have of that?

R. Well, it was an institution where you got young people who were connected with or interested in the labor movement, and tried to train them to be more effective labor leaders. A number of people who had been associated with Brookwood got to be reasonably important in the labor movement thereafter. Roy Reuther was one

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of our graduates, and also served on our faculty for a brief period of time; he was one of Walter's brothers. Roy went on to become Political Action Director of the U.A.W. Another of our graduates, who came out of the shirt industry, is now on the general executive board of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. There are a number of others scattered around the labor movement, probably a bigger concentration around the U.A.W. than any other single union.

- I. In terms of the success or failure of the project, are there any things, looking back, that stand out in your mind?
- R. Well, I think it has to be phrased in terms of the record of its graduates, many of whom have held reasonably important positions in the labor movement. I mentioned U.A.W. Another one was Steel. One of the regional directors of the steel union was a graduate of Brookwood. They're scattered in a number of other unions, including the United Mine Workers and the Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. Julius Hochman, who's no longer living, but was for a long time the second or third most important person in the Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, was graduated from Brookwood. Many of our graduates are with the needle trades unions, the U.A.W., the steel union. Brookwood folded primarily for financial reasons; it went down during the depression years when money was hard to come by.
- I. How was it financed before then?
- R. It was originally set up with a grant from the Garland Fund, the American Fund for Public Service. It got a grant of money on a

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diminishing basis over a ten-year period under the theory that, if it proved its effectiveness, it ought to be able to make up the gradual drop in the Garland Fund contributions from other sources, notably from the labor movement. But nobody could anticipate at the time that we would be in the depression of the 1930's when the money ran out.

- I. How about the curriculum itself, in teaching labor organization? What did this concentrate on? In how many ways was it successful, other than the model of the people who came out and were an aid to labor?
- R. The courses I was concerned with dealt with labor history, organizing, collective bargaining, union structure, and the like. Then there were courses in economics and in simple things like writing, since some of the people who came there had very little formal education, They ranged all the way from people who had not quite finished grade school to people who had finished college. Probably the typical person there was a high school graduate or a high school dropout, and that meant that there had to be some remedial work at the reading and writing level along with economics, union history and structure, labor legislation, public speaking, simple dramatics, and the like. The general political orientation could be called roughly democratic socialist, although there was no political test for admission. Probably more of our students held that point of view,

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though some were pure and simple trade unionists. The faculty tended to have a democratic socialist orientation.

- I. You mentioned one of the things you concentrated on there was labor history. How do you teach labor history to members of a labor union? Are there differences between teaching in a university to graduate students or undergraduates and teaching to unionists themselves? Are there differences in emphasis, or differences in classroom response?
- R. Well, with the kind of group I had out of the labor movement, one cannot assume a background of understanding that one can generally take for granted with a college group. Though students who came out of the plants had had considerable personal experience in most cases, usually they had done only a limited amount of reading. Typically they had been active in their unions and may have participated in some type of labor educational program, But many did not have reading skills, and often only limited library facilities were available. For most of these students one could not assign articles in the learned journals that could be read easily by college students. One could not assign a reading list and assume that the students had the background to understand the material. One would have to go over the material much more slowly and repeat much more than would be necessary with college students. Some Brookwooders who were college graduates have held important positions in the labor movement. For example, Nat Weinberg

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became research director for U.A.W. and after that a brain truster for Walter Reuther. He went to Brookwood to get an orientation to the labor movement; students like that you treat exactly the same way you treat graduate students in a university.

- I. Why did these college graduates you mentioned at Brookwood get involved in the labor unions?
- R. I think, typically, they had some kind of political orientation, typically of a democratic socialist variety, though it could have been any other point of view. Usually they had a desire to get into the labor movement, where they would be likely to work with union research or education projects, though some would get into organizing activities. They needed orientation to the practical problems of the labor movement. The people who came out to Brookwood with a plant background were trying to equip themselves to be more effective, so that they could run for office with a better chance of being elected. The people who came from a college background wanted personal contact with the labor movement.
- I. How were people who came out of the movement itself chosen or selected to go to Brookwood? Was this a self-selection process, or did the local themselves decide?
- R. That worked both ways. Sometimes a union group would select one of their bright young people whom they hoped would develop, and sometimes a union officer had somebody he wanted to get rid of

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for a while, Sending him to Brookwood was a convenient way of getting him out of the local organization, The officer could hope that whatever political base of support the going man had built up would be largely dissipated by the time he returned, So there were both good and bad motivations. Sometimes the labor groups paid the expenses of people they sent, and sometimes the young person came on his own.

- I. Was there a difference in personal satisfaction involved in teaching people from the labor movement from your teaching in an academic community?
- R. Well, there was a degree of personal involvement on the part of many Brookwood students that helped the educational process a great deal, Students were interested because it was more like the environment in which they planned to function. One gets in college, too, an occasional person who is more personally involved, and such a person is more like the people we had at Brookwood. The degree of personal involvement or emotional identification was important because it gave motivation. And when one turns to the students that one gets in a graduate school of business, these people give you a personal relationship of another sort, many of them are interested because they might find themselves at the bargaining table some day. They want to know how to handle collective bargaining, to protect the interests of the management group.

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I. Do you find that that makes you act differently in a classroom to your students or take a different attitude in your teaching?

R. Well, I take a different attitude because in a sense I became, over the years, more "impartial" as an observer of the labor movement and of labor-management relations, rather than approach the problems from the point of view of the labor movement, which is what I would have done when I was at Brookwood, And this is in part, I think, a reflection of the institution I was connected with, but to a much greater degree, it reflects the development of my own thinking.

I, I imagine, back at Brookwood, you'd never thought that in the sixties you'd be here teaching at a business school, teaching the other side.

R. No, but I was quite prepared to be and long wanted to be a college teacher. That was the depression period when there were hardly any openings, but some of my colleagues on the Brookwood faculty taught courses at Columbia University during that period; I would happily have done exactly the same thing. I would have expected to teach either at the undergraduate or graduate level in one of the social science departments. I would not have expected to, at that point, be teaching in a business school. I approached business school teaching with some hesitation. When I was first asked to teach in the business school, I was asked to take an occasional class, which I did. But after that, when I

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was asked to join the faculty, I was at first a bit uncertain about it; I thought that the students would expect a faculty member to look at labor-management problems from the point of view of a business institution. In my own experience I had started looking at problems from the point of view of the labor movement; then over a period of time I evolved to the point where I looked at them more from a public, third party point of view, Well the business school authorities at the time said that this was no problem as far as they were concerned, that it might be good for the students occasionally to deal with some problems not approached from a business point of view, the environment in which they expected to spend the rest of their lives. So I found no problem at all. Occasionally one gets in a business school environment a very aggressive, anti-union point of view, This is very rarely found now among the younger people who come to the business school; one is more apt to get this in the evening program from people who are middle aged.

- I. What about this process of moderating your views, going from a union slant to a public slant? You mentioned the same thing has happened even in the business school, starting with a pro-business to a public slant. Do you have any insights from your own process as to how that happens?

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R. Well, as far as the business community is concerned, I think it represents pretty largely a difference in generations. The business generation which reached maturity, say, by the time of the 1930's excepting a few industries, had been used to making decisions affecting their work force unilaterally; some of that generation had to deal with unions because the unions were strong and the law said they had to, but they never really made the adjustment in their point of view. Unions were still an outside influence that they objected to and thought their concern would be better off without. They have been replaced, as years have gone by, with people who recognized that unions existed, who are concerned with an accommodation with unions so that the primary objective of the business institution can be achieved. They don't want their labor costs to be higher than their competitors and they want to maintain maximum managerial flexibility. They want to produce efficiently, and as long as they can achieve these objectives reasonably well, then they get along. Their concern is minimizing strikes and not having too many grievances pile up and in general having an effective relationship, I think the young people growing up today who expect to go into business schools find unionism part of the American scene, and they're really going to have to adjust to the presence of labor unions, probably in whatever institutions they work for, And so they come in prepared to learn how to achieve that objective. It's been, I think, not so much an evolution in the thinking of any one individual as a change over

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a period of time, as the institution of unionism has become established and accepted in this country.

- I. You mean, as someone who started with a union slant, you've become less defensive about the existence of the unions, now that they are accepted?
- R. No, I've been making my observations, really, from the point of view of the business people one meets in classes. As far as my own evolution is concerned, I think that what I like to do best is to do research, write, and reflect about policy issues in labor-management affairs. And I suppose my thinking has been affected to some degree by economic conditions. I was at Brookwood during the 1930's when production in this country was at a very low ebb and unemployment was very high; my thinking, I'm sure, was affected by it. It has been succeeded by a long period in which we have had rising living standards and reasonably full employment and a greater acceptance of unionism on the part of management and union-management accommodation on the whole. This has been the environment, certainly, of the last twenty five years; and in my own work I feel that I can make the greatest contribution by critical evaluation of unions and union-management affairs.
- I. How about turning, then, to the period since you've been in Chicago. How have unions dealt with the problems of things like ethnicity?
- R. Well, I think there the critical distinction is whether or not the

union controls employment opportunities as through a hiring hall or whether the employer controls employment. Another important factor is the level of skill involved, whether or not there is an apprenticeship program and, if there is, whether the union has a large measure of control over the applicants who are accepted into that program, here, I think, the extreme case at one end is the building trade group, where many of the unions operate apprenticeship programs, typically in association with management, and where applicants for the apprenticeship program are accepted, often screened, by the union. Until the last several years, we had a situation where in some of these unions the number accepted in the apprenticeship program was always much lower than the number of applicants. There was always great pressure on the part of the members to give preference to their own sons and nephews. Many of the unions, by the time they took care of the relatives of the present membership, had hardly any, and sometimes literally no other places available. And this meant that whenever the membership consisted of a single racial or ethnic group apprenticeship was apt to be limited to applicants of the same racial or ethnic group. Others entered if they had the chance to learn the trade elsewhere as in a non-union segment of the industry or in military service, so that they could function in regular jobs in the industry, in which case they might

be a threat to the union-controlled section. Now this meant that Negroes, by and large, were shut out until just the last several years from many of the branches of the building trades. This was very true among the plumbers, the electricians, the steam-fitters, the elevator operators, and some of the others. On the other hand, the carpenters always had a minority of Negro members and the trowel trades, like the plasterers, always had many more. When you got to the poorest paying section of the building trades, laborers' union, then you found a large group of blacks, If one goes from the building trades to other areas where the level of skill is lower and where the employer does the hiring, then the union, if it had a union shop, took whatever people the employer chose to hire and to keep. And the unions here have been mostly of the industrial type. In these unions there has generally been a much greater acceptance of, and greater interest in promoting the welfare of, minority groups -- Blacks, Puerto Ricans, and others. Of course one finds some prejudice among the membership of these unions against minority groups, and some union officers share these prejudices. So you have a very spotty kind of thing. But, by and large, this group of unions has always been more interested in the welfare of minority groups.

- I. Have there been any specific unions or union leaders that have aggressively sought to further the status of minority groups within their unions?

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R. Well, there have been a number. You're thinking of Chicago?

I. In the Chicago area.

R. Specifically, I'm not sure I could name names on that, I know the U.A.W. has been much interested in that. One of the ways one tells is whether or not members of minority groups emerge as officers. And the U.A.W. here stands out. Willoughby Abner is a very intelligent, able young Black who became one of the officers of the U.A.W. and until recently was with Federal Mediation and Conciliation as one of the top national officials. Now he's concerned, I think, with training and placement activities in the inner city for minority group members. Sid Lens, in Building Service, has been very interested over the years in this issue, and there have been many others. My impression of the steel union is that it has been on the whole more passive. It hasn't actively discriminated, although this was a spotty thing, and there has been discrimination in some of their locals. When we had big packing plants in the city of Chicago, there the employment was perhaps two thirds Black, and so these groups typically had Black leadership. We've even had rare cases, in the city of Chicago, where discrimination worked in reverse, where officers tended to be Black and where the problem was whether the whites would get a fair deal inside the union,

I. What unions were these?

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- R. Well, the case I'm thinking of particularly was the Maremont Corporation, one of the cases where Black officers tried to manipulate seniority rules to give extra protection to Black employees and discriminate against white employees. This resulted in a National Labor Relations Board case against both the union officers and the company for not giving fair representation. This is the sort of thing one meets fairly frequently in locals with white officers, but you can also get it where you get Black officers, and there have been occasional cases like that. Of course, from that point of view, the number of cases where you have Black officers discriminating against whites is very, very small. All I'm saying is that this can happen and sometimes has happened. The great bulk of discrimination in unions, of course, has been by whites against blacks; extreme cases occurred where unions, particularly in the railroad industry, negotiated contracts that prevented Blacks from being promoted or even being hired in the future.
- I. You mentioned an aggressiveness on the part of the U.A.W. in opening the union up to racial minorities. Had any of this started before you came to Chicago, or can you remember when these kinds of actions may have gotten under way?
- R. Well, I really can't talk about the Chicago situation within the U.A.W. There is a Ford assembly plant out at Hegewisch, but I've

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never had any personal contacts there and don't know their problems. The biggest U.A.W. organization in town has probably been at International Harvester, and there I've had just a moderate amount of contact over the years, but not enough to really talk much about their problems. It's one of the places where now they have a militant Black group, formed on the order of the D.R.U.M., the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement in Chrysler plants in Detroit. For a time the problem in U.A.W. plants was **to** get fair treatment for Black minorities on the part of the white-controlled local: in some plants in the city of Detroit the problem now is a revolutionary Black movement that is equally opposed to leadership in the union and in the company, and has not much use for either of them. There the problem is to keep the union working along constructive trade union lines. There is a unit like DRUM at International Harvester, though I've no idea whether it's developed any strength. I've merely seen some of its literature.

- I. I wonder if you can remember when the ethnic problems were other than black-white and racial. Can you remember in either your Chicago experience or before that where unions had troubles with ethnic minorities, religious minorities?
- R. Well, unions have had the same problem that political organizations in communities have had, such as in Chicago, where you have a wide variety of ethnic groups whose interests must somehow be accommodated

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and where the political leaders want to put together a slate that can win certain elections. In plants, there is much the same thing. If there's a variety of ethnic groups in the plant, then each one wants to get some reasonable representation in the slate of officers that wins in the union election. And a number of unions have had problems because over a period of time the officers have tended to represent an ethnic group formerly predominant, while new ethnic groups come in and do not get represented sufficiently, in their judgment, in union leadership. This has been an acute problem in the Ladies Garment Worker's Union. It may be a problem in some of the New York Locals. The leadership in the Ladies' Garment Workers' Union tends to come overwhelmingly from the skilled group, the skilled male group; this means the cutters. And this is a male group with a high degree of skill and with a permanent commitment to the industry, whereas most of the other employees are female and they tend to come in and out. Over a period of years, the ethnic composition has changed from being predominantly Jewish, with a strong admixture of Italian and some other immigrant groups. The composition of the working force has changed very sharply and now the Negro group is extremely important, and so is the Spanish-speaking, primarily Puerto Rican, group. These people have not been sufficiently represented in the leadership. But it's partly skill,

it's partly sex, and it's partly experience. They should be on their way up now, but the Ladies' Garment Workers' Union's in a position where its leadership nationally still comes from a group once predominant and now a small minority in its own industry.

I. Row about the problem of job loss now due to increasing technology?

I realize that brings up some of the same problems as ethnicity and race, but how are different kinds of unions handling that in the Chicago area?

R. I'm not sure that I'd know enough about the unions that have faced this problem to be able to comment on the way they have handled it. There has been some job loss in the needle trades, particularly in the Ladies' Garment industry, but mainly for a different reason. There it's been the tendency of the industry to migrate from high wage to low wage centers. They need a relatively low level of skill in that industry. And they simply cannot compete for personnel with high-paying industry, such as the building trades, or the steel industry, or the automobile industry, in a city like Chicago. So there's job loss, but it's left the city for non-technological reasons. The meat packing union has had a different kind of problem. There it was primarily that the plants in the city of Chicago were obsolete, that they were on high priced land, and they were inefficient to operate because of their age. And here because of developments in technology and in marketing, like refrigeration, there has been a tendency to relocate the industry

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in places closer to the sources of supply and to build small plants rather than big ones. So the industry has left the city of Chicago almost entirely and is now located in a series of smaller communities in the South, Southwest) and West. And the job loss here has been primarily experienced by the Black community, since their work force was about two-thirds Black about the time they left. But here again, there was nothing the unions could do about it. The plants here simply closed, and for the most part people did not get re-employment rights. A wholly different labor force was recruited in other places, and the local unions in the city of Chicago simply went out of business. Another of the industries that experienced job loss most strikingly has been the railroad industry with an impact in the city of Chicago among other places. There was little that the unions could do about that, though they tried to use some of their bargaining power to increase the number of jobs. It's a question of whether this makes a contribution to social progress, since the jobs the unions want to keep are ones that management wants to eliminate as unnecessary. And as far as the particular people who lost jobs were concerned, this was always done in accordance with the union contract, and people of lowest seniority were let go first. I don't know if this has had any impact as far as ethnicity is concerned. Other industries have experienced a very severe job decline over the years, as the

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coal mining industry, which probably suffered more than any other single industry in terms of the sharp decline of manpower needs.

- I. In meat packing, you mentioned that when the industry moved out of Chicago, the workers who had been employed there did not receive job rights. Is this a usual thing that a union will tend to bargain for its workers? Is there a special reason why in this case they did not bargain for job rights for the workers who were left behind in Chicago?
- R. Well, re-employment rights can only be given when the same company establishes plants elsewhere. And in many industries this simply is not the case. You take the local service industries, for example. When there is a loss of jobs in a particular area people stay in the same area, and later get reemployed by other companies in the same area. It's only when you get national companies, companies operating in more than one area, that you have opportunity for employment rights to be asserted. I suspect that the meat companies were not anxious to give re-employment rights, partly because the union had been very powerful here in the city of Chicago. The companies were going to small towns, usually without any union tradition at all. And they also found themselves paying higher wages and much more in the way of fringe benefits than the labor market in the small towns to which they went would require them to pay. So they were very anxious to get rid of the union. Had they offered

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employment rights, I don't imagine many of the people would have accepted it, as far as skilled maintenance people were concerned. Their skills were in such demand in the city of Chicago that, if their meat packing plant closed, they could get other employment without any trouble. As far as the Blacks were concerned, going to a small town in the Middle West might mean going to a community where there was no Black population at all, and problems of family adjustment to a new community and family happiness were involved. So that the number who would have accepted would probably have been limited. There's some experience on that, because some of the Armour plants that have shut down in other parts of the country did give re-employment rights in other plants, at least to some extent. And their experience was that very few people availed themselves of that opportunity.

I. I wonder if you could comment on what differences union leadership, or the kind of communities the unions are located in, makes in the union's relation with ethnic or racial minorities.

R. You mean minorities within the unions?

I. Within the unions.

R. I see much more influence in terms of the union leadership philosophy than I do the community relations as a whole. And there, I think, the important factor is the philosophic point of view of the union

leadership. In many of the C.I.O. type industrial unions, you had people who emerged in positions of union leadership who had a broad concern for the welfare of low-income social groups, quite apart from winning bread-and-butter advantages for their own membership. I think Walter Reuther typified this kind of leadership. Ralph Helstein, whom I mentioned before, also represented that point of view. To a lesser degree, Pat Gorman of the Meat Cutters Union also does. Many of the people in the needle trades unions, especially the Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, and also the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the Hatters Unions, represented this point of view. In these cases it reflected typically a democratic-socialist philosophy. Many of the people in the needle trades, and to a lesser degree some of those in the U.A.W., represented this point of view. Indeed, some of them preferred union leadership, though other careers would have been quite open to them. That's particularly true of Walter Reuther, who could have gone over to the management side. Ralph Helstein, who I mentioned, was a professionally trained man, a graduate of law school, and yet he chose to become a union leader. He would have enjoyed a much higher income, I'm sure, if he had practiced law, There are some people who gravitate to union leadership positions because of a strong interest in helping to solve problems of society, going beyond immediate job relationship problems. Leaders of this type had a strong interest in minority groups because they were disadvantaged

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and discriminated against. On the other hand, the more typical union leader, the bread-and-butter type of leader, would more likely be responsive to the majority of his membership. He would primarily be concerned with winning bread-and-butter advantages for present membership of the union, and not be concerned too much with minority tendencies, particularly if they were outside his own membership.

- I. How about outside forces and whatever roles they may have played in the development or the carrying on of various unions? Did ethnic organizations make an impact on union development?
- R. I'm not sure what you're referring to. I can't think of ethnic organizations as such that played a role in union development. There was a strong interest in unionism on the part of the Jewish immigrants who came to this country, but their organizations were not primarily ethnic in character. They were more strongly influenced by the socialist, and to a lesser degree, the anarchist and communist movements. And the same thing is true, I think, with regard to the bulk of the immigrant groups who came from Europe. In the case of the Negroes it is, I think, different because there you have strong racial groups that have exerted strong pressure in part on the union movement, in part on the management for hiring them, and in part on the government, to adopt legislation to increase employment and promotion opportunities.
- I. How about religious institutions and involvement with unionism?

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R. Well, there have been some religious groups that have been quite sympathetic to the labor movement. The Roman Catholic Church has been, one of these, going back a long way back to the time when Cardinal Gibbons exerted his influence back in the early 1880's to keep membership in the Knights of Labor from being forbidden to Roman Catholics. There's always been a close relationship between the Catholic Church and leadership in the American labor movement, since A.F.L. leadership has been predominantly Catholic. There's always been a close relationship between the Catholic Church and leadership in the building trades. There's not been much activity, interest, influence, that I see as far as most Protestant groups have been concerned, although there is an occasional group where ethnicity and religion have combined to exert an influence. For example, a group from Holland settled in Western Michigan where they built a labor organization primarily representing their ethnic and religious group. They worked primarily for employers who came from the same background; if there was a sharp disagreement between labor and management in one of the plants, the minister of the church had a great deal of impact on the thinking of both sides, particularly if he discussed the issue from the pulpit on Sunday morning. One finds limited influence of this nature. Within the Jewish group some of the rabbinate, particularly of the Reformed rabinete, have been interested in the labor movement. In the Protestant group, there have been some religious seminaries, notably

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the Union Theological Seminary in New York City, that over the years have had a strong interest in the labor movement and in social reform generally. There have been cases where some of the graduates of Union Theological have chosen to go into the labor movement rather than into the ministry. Yet, the Protestant church, as a whole, has had little relationship with the labor movement.

- I. How about in the more recent past? Have religious institutions, churches, synagogues, been at all involved in changing labor's views, or making unions that have been less receptive to racial minorities more receptive?
- R. There may have been cases where that influence was effective, though I don't know of any offhand. I think that the religious groups have been more influential in changing public opinion nationally, which in turn has reflected itself in terms of the passage of the Civil Rights Act, which provides some government pressure on unions. And they have had some impact on particular individuals, in union positions and in management positions, who in turn may have altered their behavior as a result. This is something, however, that is speculative. I see government pressure as being most effective there, and I see religious groups as making a contribution to the climate of opinion which permits passage of more effective legislation.

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- I. So it's all on the legislative level that you'd see the recent involvement ?
- R. Insofar as I can trace the development, I see no direct influence by religious groups on civil rights type activity within plants, though I see religious groups having more impact upon legislative enactments. It may be true, however, that some employers who have made special efforts to open up employment opportunities to minority groups have been influenced by religious leaders of their faith.
- I. Row about, more historically, another outside force, the university and its impact on the labor movement?
- R. Universities have had an impact primarily in terms of educational activities carried on with labor groups. The University of Wisconsin has certainly had an impact on the understanding and ability and competence of labor leaders in its area. A number of other state institutions, like the University of Illinois, the University of Minnesota, Rutgers, Pennsylvania State University, and others, have had fairly active labor education programs; so have some private institutions, such as Roosevelt.
- I. Could you evaluate the performance of institutions in the Chicago area, like Roosevelt or Chicago, impartially?
- R. Well, I suppose Roosevelt has done more over the years than any other institution. I think three institutions have been active

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of course, on a statewide basis including Chicago. The Roosevelt program has been a very practical oriented program, concerned with steward training and elementary tasks of that sort, for the most part. The University of Chicago was active over a period of years, though not very recently. Chicago concentrated on developing materials for use in leadership training programs and with giving promising union leaders a liberal education background, trying to compensate to a degree for their lack of college exposure. The Illinois and Roosevelt programs were more closely geared to the immediate problems of administering unions and engaging in collective bargaining.

- I. How about the effectiveness of these university programs? Have they made a difference by being there?
- R. This is hard to demonstrate. The effect is always upon the development of particular individuals . If individuals are very promising, maybe they would have developed anyway. Perhaps, if they attend programs, they develop sooner. May be attending a program like that gives them opportunity to rise in their organization to a position of greater responsibility and to engage in collective bargaining and other union programs more effectively .
- I. You wouldn't know whether these programs are designed to change the outlook of the people who come into them, or whether, if they are, they're at all effective at that?

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- R. The effort is not to change the outlook of active unionists, but to equip them to function more effectively. For example, how does one handle a grievance? How does one present an arbitration case? What is the law of industrial relations? How does one go about negotiating a contract? How does one function as a shop steward? How does one keep up membership activity and loyalty? These are the kinds of questions that they address themselves to and this assumes that the person is already interested and motivated and that he's already functioning at a lower level of union leadership. And the university program is designed to equip him to do that. Or, take another kind of problem. If one is working in a plant that has a job evaluation system, how does one get to understand the system? How does one know whether or not the job is properly slot ted? If there is a time and motion study system in the plant for setting a piece rate, how does one understand what the time and motion study engineers are doing? If workers think that the wrong rate had been established on this job, is there a way to correct it? These are very practical problems that institutions like the University of Illinois and Roosevelt in their labor education programs have been concerned with.
- I. There's one other outside force. I wonder about social workers, and I realize that this is more historical (except recently, of course, with the food stamps and the Teamsters). What may a union have

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gotten by having friends among social workers? Is there any kind of impact that the profession of social work or the settlement house may have had on the unions, in your memory?

R. Settlement houses have done two things, perhaps. On the one hand, they have offered opportunities for education, training, and development for a number of young people who have risen to positions of labor leadership. So, in a sense, they have done the same kinds of things that the universities have done. At the same time they have helped in the passage of legislation, at the state and the federal levels, addressed to various social ills, as child labor, working conditions of women, and so on. Hull Rouse and its staff had considerable influence over a period of time on state legislation in Illinois.

I. But you find no recent reenactment of chapters like Mary McDowell and the University of Chicago settlement during the stockyards strike where the social workers took an active role, both mediating and providing resources for the strikers to get them through?

R. There's really not much need for that kind of thing anymore, because the day of the amateur mediator is largely past. Now we have the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, a group of professionals, who provide this service. In terms of helping strikers, most unions now provide strike benefits, so there isn't the same need for aid from settlement houses. Social workers change, too, and so instead of being associated with a settlement

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house, a social worker now typically represents a public agency. And the contact with union leaders is now apt to be with regard to unionization of social workers; the social worker, as a more marginal type of professions¹ person, is more likely to be involved in a union for his personal benefit.

I. Thank you.

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