

BOOK 25

KATHERINE HYNDMAN

Oral History Project

I, Katherine Hyndman hereby direct that the interview
recorded 1970, at my home
Date Location
by Staughton Lynd by the Roosevelt University Oral
History Project in Labor History be handled in the following manner:

USE BY RESEARCHERS

Open _____
Closed Pending Instructions _____
C l o s e d u n t i l - _____
Permission needed to cite or quote

Elizabeth Balanoff
Director, Oral History Project

x Katherine Hyndman
Signature of interviewee

Interview with Katherine Hyndman

Staughton Lynd

CONTENTS

Franklin County Funeral	1
CIO organizing in southern Illinois	9
Communist Party organizing in southern Illinois.....	11
Socialists in southern Illinois.....	14
Work in a Clothing Factory.....	15
Early job experiences	17
Work for Bauer and Black Co.....	24
FBI Harassment of CIO organizers.....	35
McCarthy period.	39
Communist elitism.....	42
Left wing theory vs. experience.....	49
Depression struggles.....	51
Corruption in the Painters Union	54

Interview with Kate Hyndman
By Staughton Lynd

R. Now in this I want to talk about the heroism of people, real heroism. Now Franklin County, Illinois is was run by the sheriff of the county whose name was Robinson. And he was a real brute, absolutely a brute. The United Mine Workers locals were run by gunmen, real gunmen. There were only a few of the mines that were working. And those mines that were working were under the United Mine Workers. The other miners who had broken away from the United Mine Workers were unemployed. They belonged to the Progressive Miners. And they had a little hall. Anyway, we had some of our people who lived in Franklin County who were our people. There was a conference of the Workers Alliance in Springfield, Illinois. A bunch of people had come up in a truck from Franklin County which, as I said, was really terror ridden. They had come, and we spent the day at the conference. In the evening they drove back in this truck, just an ordinary truck. I didn't know what happened to them because I had no telephone or anything. I was living in Springfield. The man who was really in charge of the coalfields was out of the country, and I was in charge of the coalfields. I had no telephone. As a matter of fact, I lived in a room that didn't even have a light. It had no heat. That's how poor I was. Anyway the next morning there was a young man by the name of Ruby who was an organizer who happened to be in the coal fields at the time. And the two of us were having breakfast. We were having coffee and doughnuts and we bought a local newspaper. The local newspaper announced that there had been an accident close to Franklin County in which two young men were killed and a whole number of people were injured; And it happened to be this delegation of people from Franklin County. Both of the young men

who were killed were Communists, both of them. The others, there was a bunch of others injured. A truck loaded with watermelons had sideswiped them on a narrow bridge, which was one of those freak kind of things. As I said, a whole number of people were injured. And these two young men, who were our people, were killed.

We had to go down there. We had to go down to Franklin County whether we liked it or not. So we went to a sympathizer in Springfield. We had no, money. We went to a sympathizer in Springfield and got a couple of dollars for gas. That got us as far as Montgomery County where our people were working openly in a small town called Taylor Springs where as Communists they belonged to the town council and everything else. So we went to Taylor Springs. We got some money from the people in Taylor Springs for gas to take us to Franklin County. We went to the home of one of the young men who was of French descent whom I had met. I had met his mother and father and I had met his wife. I had been to their home. So Ruby and I drove to the home of this one young man who was killed in the accident. We were there only a few minutes and the word just spread everywhere. We were there just a short time when here comes the leader of the Progressive Miners, the leader of the Workers' Alliance down there, and some others, so-called Socialists. They came and begged and pleaded with us to please leave town immediately, that the sheriff and these gunmen are going to break up the funeral service.

We had gone to the home of this other young man. And his mother was so frightened she wanted nothing to do with us. She said that she would have a private family funeral for her son. So then in the meantime, as I said, the leaders of the Progressive Miners, of the Workers' Alliance and some of the other so-called leaders in Franklin

County came to us and pleaded with us to leave right away, that all We were going to do was going to bring terror down upon all of them. So we said, "Well, it's up to the family. If they want us to leave, we'll leave." The father said, "My son was a Communist and he's going to have a Communist funeral." And the family said, "We want you to stay." Then others of our people said that they wanted us to stay. So I think that the following day, whatever it was, the funeral was to take place,

The funeral was held in the town of Zeigler. And it was held it in the Progressive Miners Hall. It was in kind of a low spot and the heat must've been over one hundred degrees. It was so hot, it was just stifling hot. The place was jammed with people. The sheriff and his deputies were there armed. The thugs of the United Mine Workers were openly there, with the clubs in their hands. But the people just jammed this hall. It was agreed that Ruby was to speak at the funeral. They even got the leader of the Workers Alliance to say a few words and the leader of the Progressive Miners to say a few words at the funeral. And Ruby was to speak as a Communist at the funeral. The word spread throughout the people in this hall that when Ruby got up to speak, that's when the gun men and the sheriff were going to beat him up and they were going to break up the funeral. The people in the area had collected money and had bought a wreath and great big wide ribbon. And on this ribbon in gold it said "Communist Party." That was the wreath that was on the coffin. The family and Ruby sat in a kind of semi-circular place right next to the casket. A whole group of miners were there. As I said, the word spread that when Ruby got up to speak, that's when the action must

take place. And that's when they were going to break up the funeral. When Ruby got up to speak the miners grasped arm to arm and they just pushed back, so that none of the thugs could get anywhere close to the casket or close to Ruby and to the family. So they were thwarted there. And, as I said, the miners just grasped arms. And they just held back. And nobody could get through. They just pushed them back and they couldn't get through.

In the meantime, the old jalopy that we had gone from Springfield down to Franklin County, something had gone wrong with the car. So one of our very good Kentuckians decided that he would fix it. He was a very good mechanic besides, so he would fix the car. He wouldn't come to the funeral, but he would fix the car. Then he told us that he would meet us at nine o'clock at night on a certain dirt road along the river bank somewhere. Come without Lights. He would be there with the car under a certain great big tree. The local people would know where it is, and so on. Well, they hadn't broke up the funeral in the hall because the miners by locking arms had pushed them back and they couldn't get to them. So, then the word spread that they would break it up at the cemetery. That's where they would attack. Well, they got to the cemetery. Certain of our Croatian people gathered around me and it was agreed--you talk about guerilla warfare or something, you know. These people were just tremendous. Certain people would take Ruby and hide him in the back seat of their car. And we would get out of the cemetery.

Well, we got to the cemetery. A friend of the family made a speech in French, so that the stupid sheriff and all of these thugs and gunmen who came with guns and clubs and holsters in their hands didn't know whether he said "God bless America" or what he said

because he spoke in French. So they were thwarted there. He said a few words and that was the end of the service. And, as I said, certain people surrounded me and got me into a car. Certain people surrounded Ruby and got him into a car. Everybody was dispersed and left the cemetery, and so on. Then the sheriff and others had an idea that we were in Zeigler. So our people went to all the taverns and all the places in the public square to get the rumors, to get all of the latest news. The sheriff and his deputies were almost out of their minds. They were so enraged that they hadn't been successful that day in cowing the people. And you talk about exuberance on the part of the people, that they had held this funeral and they hadn't broken it up. As a matter of fact it broke the reign of terror in Franklin County.

Anyhow, our people brought back reports that the sheriff and his deputies had set up roadblocks, that they had the idea that Ruby and I would try to Set out of Zeigler that night. So they set up a whole bunch of cars watching for us. They knew the make of our car, the old rattle trap. They knew the car we had come in. They were going to be watching for us. They were going to watch all the exits and when they got their hands on us they were going to kill us. So, as I said, I had stayed with one group and Ruby had stayed with some others. Then at night the people that I stayed with put me on the floor of their car. We took certain side roads and went along certain other dirt roads that they knew only, you know, and without lights. It was moonlight. Without lights. And we came to this dirt road. It wasn't a main highway. It was just an ordinary dirt road along the river bank under this great big tree. And there was our good Kentuckian who later went to Spain and distinguished

himself as a sniper. A real Kentucky hillbilly who knew how to use a gun. So he was there waiting for us with the car. Then the other group brought Ruby and so the two of us got together. So they told us, "Now look. Drive along the dirt road without lights, because the sheriff and his deputies are half out of their minds because they haven't been able to find you. And if they find you they'll kill you." Especially they would kill Ruby. They may not me. They would beat me up. But they probably would kill him. So we got in the car. The car's running fine. So we're driving in the dark along this dirt road. And they said, "When you get on the main road you have to turn on your lights. You can't drive along the main road." But this would bypass the place that they had taken us. It would bypass Zeigler altogether. And they said -just stay on that road and it would get you out of Franklin County. Once you get out of Franklin County you'd be out of the jurisdiction of Sheriff Robinson and you'll be OK. So we're as tense--just imagine how tense we are, you know. When we get to the main road Ruby turned on the lights on the car. A sign said such and such a county one mile away or whatever it was. It would be the end of Franklin County. We would be entering this other county another mile away.

All of a sudden the car started to sputter. We looked at the gauge We are out of gas. We barely made it over the hill. And down at the bottom of the hill there's a gas station. So we pushed the car, plus you could kind of glide downhill. We got the car to the gas station. Between the two of us we had \$2.57. So we bought \$2.00 worth of gas and all we had left was 57 cents between us. Poor Ruby, as nervous and tense and everything else plus running out of gas, you know. It was a whole episode. In those days the gas pump

was loose, a great big loop. In those days, also, cars had bumpers that stuck out. Poor Ruby didn't watch. He had parked close to the gas pump. So as soon as we got the two dollars worth of gas we wanted to get out of Franklin County. It was just less than a mile away, a very short distance. He stepped on the gas, and all of a sudden we heard a horrible crash. The bumper of our car

got stuck in the loop of the gas pump and had broken the gasoline pump.

We stopped and here comes the man who owned the gasoline station.

And he wants \$15.00 damages to pay for his broken gas pump. We've

got 57 cents. "We don't have \$15 .00 on US. We have friends in

Taylor Springs. If you let us go, we'll go there. We'll get the money from them and we'll send it to you." "Nothin doing," he says.

"I've seen poor people like you before. You're not going to get

away with this . You've going to pay the \$15.00 or else." "My uncle is the sheriff here." I looked at the gas station and it says

Robinson's Gas Station. It's the nephew of the sheriff of Franklin

county . That's whose hands we fell into. So we went inside to try

to plead and to talk to this your man, to plead with him to let us go.

It so happened that I had a ring, it was an agate ring.

I won't go into the whole history of it. The ring had been given

to me by a young woman that I met in Omaha, Nebraska, who had come

from Montana. The ring was the most beautiful ring I had ever seen.

Her father had it personally made for her when she graduated from high school. She thought so highly of me that when I left Omaha

she gave me this beautiful agate ring as a keepsake of our friendship

and what not. So I had this ring. Now I had been offered a number

of times, by a restaurant owner, by a waitress, and different people

in cheap places that I had gone to eat and get coffee and doughnuts,

who could see that I was poor. And here I wore this gorgeous ring. And they had offered to buy this ring. And I had been hungry. There had been times when I was so hungry that I could hardly walk. But the idea of parting with that ring, of going through a pawnshop and having a pawn--I couldn't. I couldn't possibly part with that ring because that ring meant so much to me. So while we were in this gas station and poor Ruby was showing his 50 cents, his fifty cent fountain pen. He had a cheap, couple of dollars wristwatch, whatever it was, trying to leave something in the way of collateral. This young man would have nothing to do with it. He's going to ring up the sheriff. He's going to call up the sheriff and have us arrested. This young man and his wife had living quarters in the back of the gasoline station. She heard all of the arguments and stuff going on, so she came out. And I was ready to faint. I wasn't so worried about what they would do to me, but I knew that they would probably just about kill Ruby if they got hold of him. First of all, he was Jewish. Secondly, he was a Communist. And he got away with the speech at the funeral, and so on. There was a kind of a desk in the office of this service station. So I was just hanging on to this desk, just hanging on, you know. What are we going to do? The young woman came and she said, "Oh, my." She said, "That's a beautiful ring." "Do you like it?" "Oh, " she said, "that's the most beautiful ring I've ever seen." So I said, "Do you want it?" "Oh, she said, "I'd love to have it." So I said, "Mr. Robinson, if I give this ring to your wife and this ring is worth much more than \$15.00, will you let us go?" He says, "OK, if she wants this ring, then you can go." And so I parted with that ring and Ruby and I got away from Franklin County. And we got away from that.

Now, if that wasn't an experience, I tell you.

Now, on this whole question of changing of tactics and attitudes towards certain things. I told you how the United Mine Workers was run by gunmen and what not. But in the meantime, in 1935--I think it was about 1935 that Lewis began to organize the Committee for Industrial Organization. John L. Lewis was doing something that Progressives had to agree with. You had to agree with it. It was organizing the unorganized, organizing the mass production industries, the steel industry, the automobiles, and what not. Now, we had to change the attitude of our people who are members of the Progressive Miners.

I. Where were you then, back in 1935?

R. I was in Southern Illinois. I was in the coal mining towns. We had to change the attitudes, since Lewis is now doing something progressive and worthwhile, we had to change our attitude towards Lewis. We had to work with someone who had fought. Not necessarily with all of the gunmen, but with some of the officials in the United Mine Workers. We had to work because they are doing things even in the coal fields and so on. But we have to convince our people. We had a horrible time convincing our people who had left the United Mine Workers: Then it was decided that the man who was the organizer of the party in southern Illinois has to meet with Ray Edmondson who is the gunman. And Ray Edmondson agrees that he will meet with the Communist organizer of the southern Illinois, of the coal fields. He agrees to the meeting. The meeting is set in the Leland Hotel but our people are suspicious. They know that Edmondson is a gunman, and they are afraid that Edmondson is laying a trap for the party

organizer. It was just like Some of the things you see in the movies. Our strongest people came from different little towns. They went over every floor from the basement up. They cased the joint, so to speak. They stationed themselves on every floor of that hotel, around the hotel in different places. I was in a certain place and we had messengers running back and forth to make sure that nothing happens to the party organizer. As I said, our people stationed themselves on all the different floors, on the elevators. They were keeping watch, making sure. And, believe it or not, when the party organizer got to Ray Edmondson's suite, Ray Edmondsun was there with his wife and nobody else. And that ended the warfare. Now, as a matter of fact, this man who at that time was the Communist organizer in southern Illinois, through Ray Edmondson and through John L. Lewis, became an organizer for the CIO in later years.

I. (Alice Lynd) Did they know that he was a Communist?

R. Of course they knew. Of course they knew. But they also knew, there's one thing that John L. Lewis and some of the others knew, and that is that the Communists were incorruptible. They knew that. Now, for instance, they hired a whole number of people to work as organizers to organize the CIO. The Communists that they had hired kept only so much for their own out of their own salaries. They kept only so much for themselves. The rest of it they contributed into the union treasury and helped out in other ways. And John L. Lewis knew that these people were incorruptibile, that you couldn't buy them. They weren't there from their own self-interest. They weren't a bunch of fourflushers. They really were, you know. They got out and they did the organizing and they did the job. Lewis knew that. And that's

why Lewis had so many Communists in the early days of the CIO. Lewis was nobody's fool. He knew. But then, once they got them all organized and everything else, then, of course, then they got rid of the Left. For one thing, he established himself. But in the early days when it really took guts to organize the mass production industries, they used the Communists. There's no doubt about it.

I. Was there a lot of CIO organizing in southern Illinois?

R. Not too much, no, because the towns are scattered. They're small.

I understand that during World War II some industries were brought.

But the whole attitude of Ray Edmondson and some of the top officials changed toward the Left because Lewis wanted it changed. So this whole question of their attitude toward the Left began to change when Lewis began organizing the Committee for Industrial Organization. He spread the word through that they were to stop their warfare against the Left, especially against the Communists.

Oh, let me tell you another experience that we had. You know our people in Chicago sometimes didn't use good sense. The party organizer had gone to Chicago. And he comes back to southern Illinois with 10,000 leaflets to distribute in Franklin County. Now, how are you going to distribute 10,000 leaflets in Franklin County. You just can't do it. Now, in some of the other counties, in some of the other places, people will go at night and go to door, put it in mailboxes or put it on the door, or put it in front of the house. But in Franklin County you couldn't even do that. People were too afraid. Really. I forgot what the leaflets were about, but anyhow there were 10,000 of them to be distributed. All right, you have to distribute. They give you 10,000 leaflets, you have to distribute

them. And you have to distribute them in Franklin County. How are we going to do it? For the party organizer it's a brilliant idea. While he was in New York previous to the time when he had gotten all of the beatings, he had met a young man who was--what do you call them, the people who transport things across borders?

I. Couriers?

R. No, not couriers. There's a certain name. Oh, why can't I think of it? He used to rustle from Mexico. He owned his own airplane.

I. Smugglers.

R. Smugglers, that's right. He was a smuggler. And he became very good friends with the party organizer while they were in Franklin County in the jail. So this man who was a smuggler had told the party organizer, "Look, if any time you want to distribute leaflets in Franklin County I'll go up in the air. Before the sheriff can wake up to what's going on, the leaflets will be all over Franklin County." So the party organizer got the brilliant idea that he and I are going to drive down to Franklin County. And all he has is what this fellow told him where he lives, in some outskirts of some small town. The last he had seen him was when he was with him in jail. So we go. We start out from Springfield. It 's night when we get down close to Franklin County and in those days roads weren't paved. So we're driving, I don't know where. We were trying to find this little town where he lived. It's way off the main roads, whatever it is. And in the middle of the night we are stuck in the mud and can't budge. Can't budge! So he slept in the front. of the car. I slept in the back of the car. In the morning farmers are

going with their teams with the milk cans to the local town to deliver their milk, to sell their milk. So they helped us with their teams, to pull us out of the mud. We got into this little town and we came to the gas station to buy some gas. The man who owned the gas station slept in the gas station. And he chewed tobacco. He must've been sleeping because he was still asleep when we got there. It was early in the morning when these farmers got us out of this mud. And he was sleeping on a cot on his back. And the tobacco he had been chewing had run from his mouth right down his neck. Then we asked him could he tell us where this man lived who owned the airplane. He said yes, he could tell us. So he told us how to get there. We drive out there. The man's wife is there, but he isn't. He is back in jail for smuggling. And we had gone out there, all of this horrible trip, for nothing. For nothing.

I. So what did you do with the leaflets?

R. So he and I at night with the car. We drove and just threw them out of the car. We just took chances. And that's how we got rid of the 10,000 leaflets. We just simply threw them out of the car. We drove as fast as we could, through a town at night, and got rid of the leaflets.

But the thing about these miners, I mean, the people who are native Americans, who feel this is their country and by golly they're going to have a say-so, and so on. There was a small town named Taylor Springs where, as I said, the Communist Party officials had their headquarters right in the main part of town. It was a small town and they were on the city council. Would you believe it or not that a Communist Party training school was held openly in the city

hall? During the day only these people who were students came to the training school. But in the evening it was open to the public. And all of the people from the town would come in the evenings where, there would be discussions.

Then, I want to tell you something else about some of the socialists. In those days there were different kinds of socialists. They weren't Norman Thomas socialists. The socialists in the coal mines were militant socialists. They didn't agree, and there was some justification about some of the bureaucrats and some of the tactics of the Communists. But these people had principle. They held their organizations and they were militant. They always took a positive progressive position in the towns where they lived. And some of these socialists, some of these people were just magnificent. They were marvelous people, they were just magnificent. As a matter of fact, I used to stay with a family where the son was a Communist but the mother and father were very active Socialists. And they let me stay there. They let me stay there. As I said, their son also went to Spain. A whole group of young men from the coalfields, including our Kentuckian, including this young man whose father and mother were Socialists, and so many others, they held a farewell banquet in Taylor Springs for the youngmen who were going to Spain. And the Socialists and the Communists and the non-Communists and the sympathizers and everybody who had any decent feeling came to this banquet. And the mother, this woman who was a Socialist and whose son was a Communist who was going to Spain, made one of the most beautiful speeches I have ever heard at this farewell banquet for these young men who were going to Spain. I mean, that's just the kind of people they were. We cannot give up on the American working

class. We just can't! Because I am sure that the Appalachians as well as others, including probably in southern Illinois where these people work in various kinds of places, in these small towns where people do not have work--there are good people.

I worked in a clothing factory when my husband was ill. I worked in sweatshops in my younger days, in the thirties I worked in sweatshops. But I had never seen anything like this sweatshop that was organized, that supposedly was a union shop. It was LLGWU. Ordinarily in these sweatshops that I worked in, in Chicago, you have long rows of machinery, sewing machines on this side, sewing machines on that side. Then there's what would you call it, an inclination in the middle where you sewed the things when done, in the middle place. And then as you finished sewing so many dozens, you trimmed them off and you piled them up, and so on. The girls sat next to each other and across from one another. And, they were so helpful. Workers are so helpful to each other. They could almost tell when someone came to work whether they were experienced or not. So they could see that you had no experience. And they would help you. They'd say, "Oh, not like that, not like that." They would give you a hand, come over and help you, and so on and so on. And they would cover up for you and help you to keep your job even though you said that you were experienced as a needle trades worker which you weren't. Maybe you knew how to run a sewing machine, but you weren't an experienced needle trades worker. But the workers would help one another. And these were all non-union shops,

But in this sweatshop in Gary where I worked there was supposedly a union shop. They had it so organized, each machine. There were no rows where rows of women worked next to each other. They had it

so organized, I don't know, they must 've had some kind of mathematician or something that helped them to work it out. They had each machine with it 's own motor so located that no two workers faced each other or could talk with one another. So that nobody could help anybody. Secondly, you had a box they would bring your work in. They told you, when you are almost finished with you work, they had a dunce cap. If you were ready for some more work, you turned your dunce cap and put it on your head with the green side out. If your machine broke down, so that you didn't even get up to go and talk to anybody, you sat at this machine and worked. And you let them know ahead of time that you were finishing whatever work you were doing. You put on this dunce cap with the green side out so that the assistant forelady, whoever these people were, would bring you work. If there was something wrong with your machine you didn't get up to look for the forelady and say, "Look, where's the mechanic? My machine has broken down." No, you took the dunce cap. You turned it inside out and you put the red side on your head. And you sat at your machine until they sent the repair man to repair the-machine. During the so-called coffee break, there was a women's restroom and a place where you ate and you had your so-called coffee break. They had a place where they had a coffee machine. And you paid so much a week, whatever it was, for coffee. But I have never seen anybody so exhausted. The women would just sit and they would 'lay against the wall. They would be covered with lint, with all kinds "of colors of lint all over them, over their hair, over their clothing, from the material that they would be working on. And everybody would be so exhausted that they would just lay eyes closed, leaning on the wall to ease their pain. The clothing factory had been a

garage . They made-casual clothes, and I worked on the second floor. It was all cement and cement block and what not. The owner of the place was So stingy, the union was so rotten. The union leadership was so rotten. He was too stingy to have the heat on during the night. I worked there during the winter, so that when you came to work he would turn the heat on when he opened the factory at 7:30, eight o'clock, or whatever time it was. And that blower--there weren't radiators. It was blower heat so it took quite a while until the place got warm. In the morning when you started to work you kept your galoshes on and you worked with your coat on. The ladies rest room didn't even have any heat whatsoever so when you went to the toilet, and this was freezing January weather, you almost froze to death. You dreaded to go to the toilet because it was so cold. Now , I am sure there are other sweatships like that kind of sweatship that I worked in. And believe it or not, the FBI went to them and told them who I was and they fired me. They fired me.

- I. Tell Alice about the first job you had. Was it here in Chicago where you had to pretend that you were older than you were?
- R. Oh, that was in Cleveland, Ohio. We lived in southern Iowa . Very, very poor. The coal mine was owned by the railroad, the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad. It was soft coal. Most of the miners were pretty well worked out. It was used mainly for fuel for, the trains and for local consumption and so on. So the miners worked during the winter, and during the summer they worked one or two days a week . That was what they worked, usually in the summer time one or two days a week. So you actually had to have a piece of land and

you had to have your own cow. You had to have some chickens, you had to have pigs so that you could exist, and so on. Anyway, conditions were quite bad. As far as the economic crisis, it began in the coal fields where we lived in southern Iowa in the early Twenties at the end of World War I. It was the end of any kind of so-called prosperity. During World War I the coal mines worked every day. But once the war was over they worked during the winter, and worked only a day or two. So that I had to go East.

There was no kind of work in the town where we lived. The only thing that you could do was find a job as a servant with some middle class family in the county seat, in Centerville. And there weren't too many openings there. And I had had such an experience once.. I had gone to Centerville to shop for a dress or whatever it was. The woman who owned the dress shop said, "Would you want to earn a dollar or two? " whatever it was. Because the train schedule was such there was no direct connection between the town where we lived and the county seat. You had to take either a train, and then you had to transfer somewhere else, or you had to walk so many miles to the Interurban, whatever it was . Anyhow, the Interurban went only twice a day, there in the morning and back in the evening. So I had time to kill. So this woman asked me to go to her home and to clean her house for her and then come back to the shop and she would pay me. So I went to her house. And her son and daughter who were bigger and stronger and healthier than I was--I was only thirteen years old, or fourteen, whatever it was at the time--they were just sitting around while I washed the dishes. I washed the floors, I dusted and I cleaned, and what not . Then I went back. After I'd finished cleaning the house, I went back to the dress shop. And the woman said, "I don't have the money to pay you today." She said, "but the

next time you come into town I'll pay you." And I decided then when I saw these healthy youngsters, who were bigger and stronger and healthier than I was, sitting there while I did the work, I decided that I would rather kill myself than be a servant. So therefore, when I reached the age of fifteen, I decided then I would go to Cleveland with my older sister and her husband and get a job in Cleveland.

We lived on the near west side which is the slums of Cleveland. And in the area there was a balloon factory. So my sister said, "Now look, if you tell them that you're fifteen years old they won't hire you. That's too young. Tell them you're sixteen." So I went to this balloon factory and they said, "How old are you?" And I said, "I'm sixteen." They said, "Well, you're too young. We can't hire you." So I went back home. And somebody told me about a macaroni plant, a manufacturing plant some place in the neighborhood that I could walk. I just came to Cleveland. So I went to the macaroni factory. "How old are you?" "Seventeen." "Too young." So then the following day, somebody had told us about a clothing manufacturing plant to which I had to take a streetcar and I could go way out a certain distance. So I went there, to the personnel office. And they said, "How old are you?" I said, "I'm eighteen." They said, "All right. Come on in, take off all your clothes." And they strip you naked. And a doctor gives you a complete physical examination to see if you're healthy enough to work in their clothing factory. So the doctor looked me over. He could see I wasn't eighteen, you know. So he says, "I'll tell you what." He says, "About three or four years from now," and I'm very small as it is; I'm only about five feet tall. He says, "About three or four

years from now," he says, "when you're eighteen," he said, "you come back and we'll give you a job.

I've got to have a job. So I knew a young man who worked for a foundry way over on the east side. We lived on the near west side of Cleveland. Way over on the east side of Cleveland! And so he said, "Why don't you go there with me?" Now, he was a skilled man and he belonged to the union. They started at 8 o'clock, or whatever it was. And they got through at 4:00 or 4:30. The most part of the shop was non-union. So I went to the hiring office. And they said, "How old are you?" I said, "I'm nineteen." "Do you know how to read and write English?" And I said, "I do." "You're hired." So that's how I got my first job. Now, my job was getting home that day. When I got out of the factory I looked around for this young man that I knew. He's nowhere around. So I ask, "Well, what about the people from this plant?" And they said, "Oh, that's union. They get out at 4:30," or whatever. Now, I have to get back. All the way from the east side of Cleveland to the west. I had to go through the public square. I had to transfer about three times, and what not. And like a homing pigeon, you know, I had to remember, where did we get off and where did we transfer. And I found my way home. I found my way back. And I worked in that horrible, stinking foundry. I worked in the shellac department where your clothes just stank from the shellac, it was so horrible. So finally they went bankrupt. Then I lost my job there.

Then after that I went to work for the American Can Company and I also told them I was nineteen. They put me to work up on the fifth floor. And you had to walk up five flights of stairs to go do work. They put me painting milk cans by hand. And most of

the fifth floor was the Lithographing department where they had the gas ovens. The piece of tin is painted and then it is dried through the kilns, through these gas ovens. Then the pieces of tin as they come out are real hot. And they had men with leather gloves who would take these pieces of hot tin and stack them up as they came out of the kiln. It was so hot working up there. It was just impossibly hot. Well, anyway, the men who took the tin off the kilns, off the lithographing things, had some grievances. And apparently they all agreed they wanted higher wages. They went to the boss, and the boss refused, so these men stopped working. Then, what did the boss do? He called on the girls and other young men who were painting, like myself, and put us to work because the men who were at the beginning of the lithograph stopped lithographing. There was a certain amount of tin that was already in the ovens that had to come through. And they were so worried because the tin was just pouring out. They didn't give us any gloves or anything. I almost cut off three fingers. So I go home, this hand all bandaged up. And my brother-in-law says, "What happened?" So I told him. He said, "You dirty scab!" He said, "Serves you right. You should have known." I knew unions. My father was a union member. I knew about unions. And I knew it was wrong. But you're frightened. You don't know what to do. And the boss tells you, "Do this. " And this is what you do.

And I have to tell you something about my father. My father, even though he disagreed with John L. Lewis, he was a good union man. And they had a good union in the coal mines where he worked. So when mines closed down and the family was kicked out--as a matter of fact, the court closed the mortgage. And the family had to move to Chicago, which we won't go into now. Anyhow, my father had to get a job. And here

he's a man who can hardly speak any English, who can't read or write English. The only kind of work he can do is laborer work. So he went some places that were building railroad cars. It was labor work. So the first place he went to, the guy says, "You belong to a union?" My father says, "You betcha, me belong to union." And he takes out his United Mine Workers membership card. And he says, "I belong, you betcha." He says, "I'm a long-time union man." And the hiring man says, "Get the hell out of here. We don't want anybody who belongs to a union." So my father learned a lesson very, very fast. The next place he went to ask for a job, the guy said, "You belong to a union?" My father said, "Never. Never heard of 'em." And that's when he got hired.

I have worked in places in the old days, you had to sign what they called a yellow-dog contract. In order to get a job you had to sign a statement that as long as I'm an employee of this company, I promise that I will not join a union. You had to sign a statement you would not join a union as long as you were employed by that company. And there were a whole number of companies that had such yellow-dog contracts. So that some of the kids, you know, who think they know it all, don't know what the old timers went through. There were times in factories where I worked with the American Can Company and with the Continental Can Company, and I worked in all kinds of places. The men, for instance, if a man was a machinist, if he did something and whatever it was, wasn't worked right, that was deducted from his wages. Not only was that deducted from his wages, but he would get the hell bawled out. I have seen grown men stand there and take such horrible abuse that the tears ran down their face. And they just stood there. They had nothing to say because there was no seniority, nothing. You

took all the abuse. And you took it, and that was it whether you liked it or not, because anytime the boss could bring a relative or friend who would replace you and fire you from your job. He could bring somebody else there. And so you had to take all of this. This is the whole question of what unionism meant and why these people sacrificed so much to have a union, to have some seniority so that they could have some dignity, so they wouldn't have to stand the abuse. I remember that my sister and I worked for the Cuneo Press. Now, the press men were union. But there were whole sections of the place that were non-union. And these union men didn't give a damn. I don't know even if today they care.

- I. Well, what's the situation today?
- R. It's probably still today. Now, I've worked there. They were printing a magazine, whether it was Cosmopolitan, Saturday Evening Post, it doesn't matter. Anyhow, they were printing one of the big magazines. And they had an assembly line. And each employee -- they had these rubber fingers on their fingers -- had to put a section of the magazine. As the assembly line came by, she put her part. Then the person who was next to her put their share of it. And that's how the magazine got put together. I didn't work on the assembly line. But one of my sisters did work on the assembly line. They did everything but beat the employees. If they missed -- because it could happen that the line went fast, you know, sometimes. You tried to pick up. They had a forelady that walked back and forth and if one of the girls missed and didn't put her section that whole thing had to be pulled out. They would call them every abusive kind of name that you imagine. The girls would run screaming to the ladies room, just run screaming, crying,

into the ladies room to get away from the forelady, from the abuse. Now, those are the kind of conditions that people had to put up with.

I worked in sweatshops during the Thirties. Now this sweatshop in Gary that I worked in, that was in the Fifties. And that was still a sweatshop. And that was an ILGWU shop. There were some of the women who worked in that sweatshop who had grievances pending for a long time. And the reason they didn't quit was that they said they would not quit, they were going to stay there because they wanted their grievances settled. For instance, the work is seasonal. Maybe you'll make fall skirts, and how many woolen skirts are you going to make, you know? So that there's a quick changeover of different kinds of work and there's different prices on the different things, and so on. Anyway, some of the sweatshops that I had worked in there would be no heat. Also this was in Chicago. And this you went through an employment agency for and paid \$15.00 to get the job!

I. Was that where you were elected steward?

R. No, I was never elected steward. I was never a steward. No.

I. Do you remember the story you told the other evening when I was here, where you weren't elected steward -- you wrote a letter?

R. This is when I worked for Bauer and Black.

I. All right.

R. If there had been a union there, I would have been a steward,

I. You were in effect a steward.

R. No, assistant forelady. In some of these sweatshops there would be no

heat until the place was opened. And you worked with your coat on. I lost two jobs in these sweatshops because the bosses refused to believe that I was just an ordinary needle trades worker. They said that I was too intelligent, that I must be an organizer for a union and they fired me. They said, "We don't want you. You're a union organizer. Don't kid me." They said, "No one of your intelligence is going to work in a place like this." And this took place in two places. I lost my job because they thought I was a union organizer.

I. And were you at that time?

R. No. Heavens, no. I was just looking for a job. And then the swindle that they would pull between these factory owners and the employment agency. They took it out of your pay. They would keep you until the \$15.00 was paid up. Once that got paid up you got laid off. Then you had to go to another employment agency and go through the whole thing all over again and work a few weeks. Then they took it out of your pay to pay the agency. And then you'd get laid off. Then there was one factory, I remember one sweatshop I had worked in. I had worked with Bauer and Black. There they were very careful. Their machines were in good shape. The stitches had to be small. Whatever product Bauer and Black made was first class. And it was produced putting out first class work. No second class ever went out at Bauer and Black. It had to be firstclasswork. Then, after I got fired at Bauer and Black--

I. Tell Alice the story about it.

R. Well, let me finish this one first. So I went to work in this sweatshop. And the man put me to work. All you do, you don't make an entire dress.

That's only in the better dress shops where one woman makes the entire dress. All you do, you just make parts of it. So I looked at the stitches. My God, the stitches were so big. So I changed it, you know. I adjusted it, made the stitches smaller so that they would hold together, you know. The foreman came by and he looked at my work. And he happened to notice that I had made small stitches. He says, "What in the hell do you think you're doing?" He says, "What are you doing with such small stitches?" I says, "Well, that garment is better." I said, "It had great big stitches." He says, "What do I care about the big stitches?" He said, "As long as they hold together until the customer buys it." So he put it back on great big stitches, just to hold together until the customer bought it. That's all that they were interested in. And that was it! As I said, you worked only piece work. And the piece work rates were so low that you made around \$5.00 a week. That's what you made.

I. When would that be?

R. Huh?

I. \$5.00 a week, at what time, what year?

R. This was in the Thirties. In the early Thirties. \$5.00 or \$6.00 a week was about all that you could make on piece work. When did they come out with the first minimum wage? It must've been about 1939 or '40.

I. '38.

R. '38? '38 when they came out with the minimum wage?

I. Right.

R. Oh, my God! You should hear the fuss! They're going to go bankrupt, you know, because the wages were 30 cents an hour. And then to raise it from 30 to 45 cents, that's a tremendous increase. The first minimum wage was 45 cents an hour. That's what it was. Now, a few words about my working at Bauer and Black. Bauer and Black was one of the nicest companies I have ever worked for really, at first I was quite happy there.

I. This was in Chicago?

R. Yeah. We used to be at 26th and Dearborn. They've changed now. I don't know where they are now. That's all ghetto now I'm sure, because Wesley Memorial Hospital used to be there. They moved, too.

I. How old were you when you came from Cleveland to Chicago?

R. When I came from Cleveland to Chicago I must have been about sixteen. And the interesting thing is this, that I had lived with my sister and her husband in Cleveland. Now, in those days nobody worked a whole year at a time. You worked a few weeks and then you had layoffs for a month or two and then you got another job and you worked a few weeks. In my early youth, there was nobody that I knew who ever worked steady. There were always lay-offs, constantly. So anyway, we were in Cleveland. We were in Cleveland and my brother-in-law got laid off, so they decided to go back to the farm in Iowa. And I'm not going back to the farm in Iowa! There's nothing back there to go back to. Well, where are you going to go? Well, I'm going to go to Chicago. Where? We had a cousin whom I had never met, whose address I had. And that was all. So my brother-in-law thought he would scare me. He says, "All right, here's \$5.00. You want to get off?" Because my ticket was for

Iowa, not for Chicago. But when we got to Chicago, I said, "I'm getting out, and that's all that's to it." So he said, "OK wise guy. Here's \$5.00. You go ahead and you live in Chicago and see what happens to you." So this happened. I was about sixteen, because when I went to Cleveland I was fifteen. When I came to Chicago I was about sixteen. So I took part of- this \$5.00 and I took a cab to the address of this cousin whom I had never met and she took me in. She had a couple of boarders already but she made room for me. Where did I go to work at first? I worked at different places. Anyway, I finally got a job at Bauer and Black which was clean, very nice, and so on. The wages were only 30 cents an hour. But they had an extra Christmas bonus. You got--how much was it? You got \$50.00, I think, for the first year. I know that my last bonus was \$200.00, which you got at Christmas time. You know, when the Depression came, when the big crash came in '29, Bauer went bankrupt. And they were bought by Kendall Company, Kendall Incorporated, which still owns Bauer and Black. So we used to have a paternalistic kind of thing at Bauer and Black. And as I said, it was clean, it was quite nice, and I made many friends there. Then, the '29 crash came and the Kendall Corporation took over Bauer and Black. And they decided to modernize the place. So they started bringing in different kinds of machinery into the place. And there were certain kinds of work that I had done, oh, certain parts of men's athletic supports and braces and what not. And you had to have it, oh, kind of flanged. You had a certain heating place and you went and flanged them by hand. Well, they got machinery in there. Then, of course, my sister worked for the American Can Company. And she told about all of the modern machinery that they were bringing, all the people they were laying off and the modern machinery that was

taking the place of people, and so on. So I became very much concerned. When I first started at Bauer and Black I worked in the corn plaster department. And you put certain things on by hand, on the corn plasters. Well, shortly, they got machinery and the whole thing just went, you know, one-two-three. The machine just put out by the thousands instead of putting them on by hand, and so on. So that I could see machinery taking the place of human beings and the people who didn't have an education would be without work. So I became very, very much concerned.

Meanwhile I knew about the Progressive movement because my father was a charter member of the Communist Party where he used to live, when he was a coal miner. And when we came to Chicago, they had all kinds of cultural organizations that were led by Progressives. They had choruses, they had the various amateur acting groups in which we took part and which I liked very much. And I had become acquainted with a whole number of people who were Communists and who were very good progressive: people. So then, of course, I learned from them a great deal. I became very much concerned as to what was going to happen to the working class with the introduction of machinery. Then, I went to a meeting and they were organizing. It was supposed to be a conference of working women, to organize working women. Well, I worked in a place with working women. So I had some friends, some people to distribute leaflets at the factory where I worked. And this was a general city-wide kind of thing, a conference of working women, to organize working class women. So I talked to some of the girls in the department where I worked and told them that this would be a good thing, because I pretended I didn't know much more than they did. We had leaflets distributed from the place. Of course, what I should have done was that I should have gone to their homes, you know, and got

them to go with me. But, of course, I was the only one who came to the conference even though the others agreed. They thought the program was excellent, the idea of organizing women, because at 30 cents an hour this whole business was awful. So when I came to the conference I saw a woman in disguise. She was the personnel director of Bauer and Black. She was all in disguise. So I thought, oh boy, there it goes. I'm going to be fired. When I got to work on Monday, instead of being fired I got promoted. I got promoted to assistant forelady. They thought I was probably some poor misled human being, some poor misled thing. And they raised my wages to \$20.00 a week salary, which was something. So I decided that I would use my position, since I had it to teach new people as they came to work. I would use my position to talk to the girls. Then the Kendall Corporation took over. And they called a meeting of all the foreladies, of the assistant foreladies, of all kinds of people. I used to have access to the entire area. There were two buildings at the time. I used to run errands as assistant forelady from the main office to this office. I used to have access to the entire two buildings. Well, anyway, they called a meeting of all of the foreladies, assistant foreladies, and so on, where they changed the managers of the factory. The whole bonus system was done away with. All the paternalism was all gone. The company picnics -- everything was gone. They announced that they were going to keep only the most efficient of the employees, that their employees, if they weren't efficient they didn't care how many years' they had worked there they were going to be laid off. And it was up to the foreladies to judge who was to be laid off and who was not to be laid off. We had to judge on the output of the various people, but there had to be a big lay off. And we had to increase the production

so that the production would be the same with about fifty per cent of the amount of employees. So this new manager makes this speech, And he tells you what we have to do. We're all company employees, and we have to think of the company first. That's our job, he said, We had to think of the company first. So, he says, "Does anybody have anything to say?" Well, how can I sit there, you know. I am so naive, very naive. So I raised my hand and I said, "I protest!" Everybody's flabbergasted. I said, "Where do you expect some of these folks to live," because there were a number of elderly women who worked as inspectors and who worked in the department where I did who were quite aged. And there were others who were slow workers. I said, "What do you expect some of these old women to do?" I said, "'Go down to Indiana and 22nd to be prostitutes?" And they were quite shocked. So then, what did I do? I wrote an article for the Daily Worker in which I said that the company was going to lay people off regardless of how many years they had worked in the factory. They were going to keep only the most efficient. And they would have to produce to make up for all those that were going to be laid off. I wrote this article to the Daily Worker. Of course, I didn't sign my name to it. I ordered about six copies, whatever it was, ten copies. to be sent to me personally. I got it, I clipped this article out about Bauer and Black, and so on. And as I was sent on errands through the different departments, I brought some thumbtacks and then I stuck up this article that I had written in different parts of the factory including my own department. I put it on the bulletin board in my own department. In the meantime I had some messages to deliver to the main office, after I had put the thing up in my own department. When I came back to my own department the whole place is a bedlam. The

forelady is ready to tear her hair out. Nobody is working,. Somebody is standing up on the work table. Everybody's gathered around. And he is reading this article that somebody found on the bulletin board and it deals with the workers at Bauer and Black. And they thought it was the most magnificent, the most wonderful thing. Hooray! Somebody cares about us. Listen, it's in print. It's in a newspaper. Look at what they said, you know, about us, about layoffs and all this. And the forelady and everybody else came running and put everybody back to work. And nobody said a word to me. It was my job at the end of the day after all of the girls left, I would make sure all the windows were closed, that the aisles were clear, the machinery was shut off. That was my job. The forelady would leave at 5 o'clock, whatever the quitting time was, she would leave right away. But it was my job to make sure that all the aisles were clear, that we abided by the fire regulations, the machines all shut off, and so on. But this particular date the forelady is still sitting at her desk. So I finished, cleared the aisles, shut off the machinery, checked the fire escapes and whatever it was. Then she said, "Katherine, you're wanted in the office." So I came down to the office, and there was the woman in charge of personnel. Her name I can't remember just now, it doesn't matter. She says, "Katherine," in her highest Bryn Mawr or eastern college fashion. She says, "We don't think you're happy here. And we think it's best that we sever all connections. And here's your pay." And so that's how I got fired. Then I called some of the girls who were my very dearest friends. And they said, "Oh, Katie, please! We don't want to lose our job. Don't do anything." Because the first thing I had thought of was distributing a leaflet or something, you know. And they said, "Katie, please, it's bad enough.

We all feel very bad. But there's nothing we can do. There's nothing we can do. We're helpless. You know we're helpless. We don't have an organization. There's nothing we can do. It's bad enough that you got fired, but what's the use of all of us losing our jobs. Just let it go at that."

A few years later one of the girls who had been my closest friend called me on the telephone and she said, "Katherine, guess what!" I said, "What?" She said, "I'm the picket captain at Bauer and Black." Some C.I.O. union came and organized them. And the girl who had been my closest girlfriend was the picket captain. And there was a certain woman who was a refugee from the Bolsheviki from Poland who had worked next to me at Bauer and Black. She looked like Greta Garbo. She was very attractive. She spoke with this, oh, what do you call it, dialect, whatever it was,. Anyhow, she told me the story. She was working for a living. They had run away from the Communists in Poland, or wherever it was. Anyhow, through some church or something they got a chance to come to the United States. And she worked next to me. She couldn't speak a word of English. She had a Polish-American dictionary with her and she and I would communicate through this dictionary. And what some of the other girls did was to teach her dirty words, you know, obscene words. And I didn't. I wanted Wanda to learn proper English. I had respect for her and she and I became very good friends. And what she was looking for was a man that would keep her. She wanted to be a kept woman. That was what she was looking for. As I said, she was very attractive. She looked like Greta Garbo. But apparently she never succeeded because at the time of the strike she was still there. So anyhow, one day while I was working at the sewing machine sitting next to her without even thinking about it I was humming the

Internationale. And she said, "Katherine, what's that you sing?" I said, "What was I singing?" She said, "You sing the Internationale." I said, "I did, maybe. Do you know the Internationale?" She says, "I run away from it." And she says, "Oh. I can't believe it." She said, "My best friend!" She said, "the one person that I respect, and you are a Bolshevik. I can't believe it. It was just too much for her, you know. Anyway, when Marie called me and said, "You know what? I'm the picket captain." And then she said, "You know what else?" She said, "You know who tried to go through the picket line?" Wanda!" This one who was a refugee from the Bolsheviki and who was looking for a man to keep her and who still was working at Bauer and Black, she tried to scab. The others had to physically stop her from going in and scabbing. So my friend Marie said, "Kate, we finally made it up to you." She said, "We've joined a union." And she was a picket captain in front of Bauer and Black. Of course, I understand years later the union became very corrupt. People took over and the union didn't amount to anything. There was some kind of clerks union that they had there. It was run by hoodlums, by gangsters practically. They owned one of the best women's wear stores in Gary. One day two tough looking men walked into the store and told the manager, "We want to sign a contract with the Retail Clerks Union." The people who owned the shop were liberals and believed in unions. The manager asked, "Do our employees belong to your union?" He said, "The employees have nothing to say about it. We have." He said, "We haven't even talked to your employees about it." So this man said "You call a meeting of the employees of my store. If they want to belong to your union, I'll sign a contract, but if they don't, then I'm not signing it." He said, "You are not going to pull that kind of gangster stuff on me. You're not going to pull it on me. I'm

not going to do that."

- I. Kate, don't you want some tea? Your voice sounds tired.
- R. No, I'm alright. I worked in this horrible sweatshop before the FBI came in and pointed me out, When you come in you sign a card to join the union. But you are not a union member until you are there a certain length of time. Then you have seniority and they can't fire you without reason. Oh, where was I?
- I. You had just gotten fired from a big sweat shop in Gary.
- R. So, therefore, in this place they could fire me, in this particular place, because I didn't have any seniority. They didn't have any reason for firing me. But there was nothing to do even if I had seniority. Now, then, I want to talk about this whole question of the harassment of people, people who were formerly organizers for the CIO. Once Lewis, you know, got the union stabilized, once they got the checkoff system through the company payroll and everything else, then he didn't need the left any more. Once they got the checkoff, they didn't need it. Up until then they needed the left. There was a young man. I want to tell you this story. He was in Pennsylvania, I think it was Philadelphia, who used to be an organizer for the CIO. And he was quite well known. Then when Lewis and the CIO no longer needed him he was laid off. So he came to Gary. And he came to a plant that had a contract with the United Automobile Workers. It was some assembly plant, it wasn't big. But anyhow, it was UAW and he got a job there. I think there you had to work ninety days before you made an application to join the union. You had to be there ninety days before you could actually be a union member.

And this particular man had only a few days more to go before his ninety days were up. In the meantime he had gotten a promotion. After he had been there less than ninety days he got about three promotions; with increase in pay and even the status of the kind of job that he was doing. Then he's called to the personnel office. And the personnel manager says, "I'm sorry, but you're being laid off. You're being fired." "Why?" He said, "I can't tell you. All I can tell you is the union leadership wants you fired." So then he went to the home of the union secretary. And he says, "What is this monkey-business? What do you mean getting me fired?" And he said, "Look, don't blame it on me." He says, "The FBI wants you fired. They came to us and they told us that you were here and they wanted you fired." So then this young man went to the FBI. And he says, "You S.O.B.'s. What's the idea of getting me fired from my job?" They said, "Were you fired from your job?" He says, "Yes. So and so said that you went to them." "Oh, " the FBI said, "he's a damn fool. He's a damn fool," he said. "We didn't want you fired from your job. All that we told the union secretary was to keep an eye on you and to keep us informed to make sure that you don't get any kind of leadership job in the place. We didn't want you fired." It was the union leadership who got scared stiff and got panicky. And he got fired. But that's the kind of thing that went on during the McCarthy period. I know some of the people who worked in the office of Local 1014, that's the big local.

- I. U.S. Steel.
- R. U.S. Steel. Do you know that the leadership of the union permitted the FBI to go through the membership records of the union members, allowed them to come in and go through the union records. That's how

low the union leaders sank, in that they completely collaborated with the FBI in turning over information about their members to the FBI- That's how bad it was! Some of these kids, they don't know what some of the early radicals went through, and all the difficulties, I think I told Staughton about the 1919 Steel Strike, what heroism that the steelworkers showed. You know these people are dead now, but you would have to talk to the people who had actually gone through the 1919 Steel Strike and lost it. Because they lost it. They lost the strike then. But you know what happened? The workers learned certain lessons., In a whole number of places, there were company unions. The companies formed the unions. And what happened in a number of places is that the workers, when the CIO began, the people who supported the CIO felt strongly enough that they actually turned over the company union into a CIO union. And there was nothing the company could do about it. They turned over the company union into a CIO union. But in some places where they had to go on strike and go through very, very long periods, like Youngstown and in other places it left its imprint because of the militancy of the people there. 1014 didn't go through that same kind of thing. U.S. Steel signed after the smaller companies all caved in, signing a contract. Then U.S. Steel signed. Not that there weren't good people at U.S. Steel. There were. And there probably still are. But some of the old timers, oh boy! They went through tremendous sacrifices and kept up, you know. And this whole question of what a union meant to them--that is why it's such a shame today that the unions have so degenerated. I remember, while I was still in Gary, that the payoff to a loyal person who supported the entrenched machine was to get elected as a delegate to a convention, because the stipend would be three to four hundred dollars

for two or three days. That's how they paid off people. They would be elected as delegate to the convention. And that's how you got paid off. Then they also had a payoff by being shop steward or shop committeeman or some kind of committeeman. And then the money dribbled down. They would turn in an expense account to the local. For instance, a grievance chairman would get up at a union meeting. They had a certain set order of business at a union meeting. And there'd be few people at the meeting. So they would have a grievance committee report. "I have nothing to report." The grievance chairman has nothing to report. The grievance men from different departments have nothing to report. Then, in the meantime the grievance chairman and a whole number of grievance committeemen all turn in vouchers for the time that they spent on grievances. But they have no grievances to report. And the union paid them. They hadn't spent any time on the union. I mean they just became that corrupt.

I want to show you some more on this whole question of corruption. There was a man I knew very well who worked in the Youngstown Machine and Tool. He had a wife and two children. And he was a very fine progressive kind of human being. They discovered that his wife had tuberculosis. So through his family doctor he tried to get her into the tuberculosis sanitarium. So he is halfway out of his mind as to what was going to happen because they were just incredibly young, they were quite young. So he sent his two children to his mother and father in southern Indiana. Then he and his wife stayed in East Chicago. So this poor aggrieved husband who was scared to death as to what was going to happen to his wife, happened to tell his troubles to the president of his local. So the president of his local said, "Let me see what I can do. Don't worry. Let me see what I can do." Two days later this man's wife was in the sanitarium. Political pull!

So this man changed. He went along with the machine after that. He quit his progressive politics. He was indebted to the people who were in power, because his wife two days later was in the sanitarium. And not only that! Not only that! But through this political influence, through this top union leadership. You were supposed to pay at the sanitarium according to your income. I don't know how the politician arranged it, but this man paid \$1.00 a month for his wife's stay in the sanitarium. That's how this whole question of corruption, that they get people indebted to them for certain favors and certain things. And they just go along with the machine. There were times, for instance, during the McCarthy period when there was no one who could come out publicly as a spokesman for the Communists, when there would be a mass mailing in the name of the Communists with the most revolutionary sounding kind of thing, signed in the name of the Communist Party and mailed out. The FBI did it.

I. FBI?

R. It must've been the FBI.

I. You mean just to see who would respond?

R. For instance, there was a mailing sent in my name, mailed to the "victims of capitalist oppression," or something like that. And it said, "Mail your money to Katherine Hyndman at such and such an address."

And you knew nothing about it?

No: And this thing was mailed to all kinds of people. It was posted in the courthouse at Crown Point, and what not. The FBI sent it out, in my name.

*Interviewer in this sequence is Alice Lynd

I. In order to do what?

R. I don't know.

I. To discredit?

R. I don't know. Apparently. I don't know what their motive was. For instance, there was a union election in 1944, which is United States Steel, the biggest local in the Gary area. The union election was being held. This was during the McCarthy period. And the union elections are being held in the union hall. That's where the voting booths are, and so on. And then at the tables they have the ballots, where you go get the ballot. In the meantime, they have chairs where people can sit down if they just want to sit there. But there are leaflets on all the the seats in the union hall in the name of the Communist Party. There were a few people who were relatively independent, who weren't part of this horrible corrupt machine that was running the local union. As I said, there were people who were independents who were running against the entrenched political machine in power. These leaflets addressed itself "Dear fellow workers," something to that effect. "In order to have a good, clean union, vote for Comrade so and so." And it listed the names of all of the independents. Then at the bottom it said, "Communist Party of Lake County, Illinois." And these leaflets are right there in the union headquarters. Now, how do you think they got there, if the union leadership and the FBI didn't put that stuff there in order to label these people who were independents as Communists?

I. You don't think the union itself might have done it?

R. No, I doubt it very much. I doubt that very much. I'm pretty sure

the FBI got out a number of mailings. Leaflets are mailed all over the county in the name of the Communist Party when there is no Communist Party and there is no one to speak for it or to disown it. And you should hear the language. It reminds you of some of these people in the Weatherman faction, you know, super-revolutionary, and what not. It said Communist Party of Lake County. And there is nobody to refute it. There is nobody to speak up and say, "This is a fraud. This is put out by the FBI." There's nobody to refute it, so they could do most anything that they wanted.

I. Rate, we're certainly going to stop when the tape is over. But if you get tired before that, just let me know.

R. No, I'm not tired at all.

I. Do you remember the last time I was here, just at the end we got on to a point that fascinated me which was the attitude toward leadership. And you described how it was natural for you to stay to the end of a meeting and help.

R. Oh!

I. Wash the dishes and help sweep up, and how you have been told that this is not appropriate for a leader to do this.

R. Yes.

I. That work that belonged to the rank and file.

R. Unfortunately!

I. Vicki's husband had similar stories to discuss. He went to a meeting

one evening and put up a sign with a hammer and a nail and had been told after this kind of manual routine--

- R. Yes. There were people in our movement, unfortunately, who believed in an elitism or something, that the leadership should kind of be apart. They should be leaders. They should lead, you know. And they should be people who shouldn't do any physical, dirty work, and so on. And there were people who in many instances isolated themselves. They did. For instance, if the club was having an affair it'd be a simple thing to serve coffee and cake. And you'd have to have a record player or somebody'd play the piano and they would dance. But that was peasant stuff for them, you know. And so we were working in Gary. There was a cooperative restaurant downstairs. And there was a hall upstairs where we used to have affairs. We had quite a few affairs where people'd play accordians, or somebody'd play the piano, or we would have records. It was mostly somebody who'd play the accordian, or somebody'd play the piano, and so on. We'd have the affairs upstairs and people would dance. You'd serve drinks, and you'd serve something to eat, and so on. The organizer and his wife would make an appearance somewhere toward the middle of the evening, you know. And they would stay a few minutes. They would say their polite hello's to people and then, of course, they would leave. And they would go to Chicago where they had more intellectual stimulation from friends more intellectual like themselves. They wouldn't waste their whole evening with these peasants, with these workers, and so on. I would come there before the affair started. And I would help with getting the dishes washed and making sure the dishes were all clean, and everything else. Then I would maybe dance **or** play cards, or whatever it was. And I would have a good time. In the evening when the thing was closing I would

stay with the women who were working in the kitchen and stay until every last knife and fork and until the sinks were scrubbed and clean. And Jim used to say, "Kate, you will never be a leader. Never! That is very improper for a leader to do manual work, to go washing dishes and sweeping floors, and so on. That is not proper." Then we had a newspaper, the Gary Post Tribune. And whenever they wanted to bring up something, they would always say, "Katherine Hyndman, leader C.P.," and so on. I had some kind of a title. But it was nothing. I mean, Jim was the head of the Party. And then a man by the name of George was the state chairman. Jim was the head of the Party. But it never, never could mention his name. So one night he was just absolutely burned up. They were at our house. And he said, "Now what the hell do they mean," he says, "Now, H.B. Snyder knows that I'm the head of the Party. Why do they say Katherine Hyndman's the leader of the Party?" So George looked at me and said, "Look, Jim. Now just forget about it. Officially you hold the title. But H.B. Snyder knows that when it comes to influence among the people, Kate had it, not you." Jim was so glib. He would out-manuever, he could out-talk anybody. I remember meeting with the steel workers. They would go away so angry, almost in tears, because he would propose certain actions and they would say, "Impossible. It's too leftist. It is impossible. It isn't practical."

- I. Vicki told us some similar things.
- R. Sure. We won't get any support. Dick tried to tell him, we won't get support for such a proposal. We can't get any support. What do you want us to do, stand on our sore thumbs and have us all chopped down? If we're going to work, let's propose things that we can get

support from the rank and file, at least some decent support so we don't stand out. But no, he would argue and he would say, "You 're cowards. You don't know what's going on in the shop. This is what's happening in Cleveland, This is what's happening in Buffalo. This is happening in Pittsburgh. This is happening--you know. The revolution is going on everywhere except in the place where you are and you don't even see it in your own shop." And then these poor guys would give up. And, as I said, they used to go away from that man almost in tears because it was hard to push over on them tactics that were unworkable, things that the rank and file wouldn't support. They wouldn't get any support on it. And these people thought that they were leaders.

I remember once I went to a leadership class in New York. And we had people from the Jewish upper middle class. Then there were some people from the South who were so-called hillbillies. There were people from the coal fields in Colorado. There were people from the coal mines in Pennsylvania. There were people from the coal mines in southern Illinois, workers who were attending the training school. The rules were that on Saturdays all the floors had to be scrubbed and mopped. The others all had to stay outside until the floors got dry, and so on. I remember one particular Saturday when the coal miners from Colorado and a coal miner from Pennsylvania and this coal miner from southern Illinois--it just so happened that these miners happened to be on the scrub team that particular day--and they were washing the floors. And it was kind of muddy outside. A couple of people, including one who happens to be one of the people who is supposedly the manager of the Daily Worker, or something. These upper middle class people from New York, they wanted to come in. And the

men who were on the scrub team said, "Look, you can't come in, the floors aren't dry yet. When the floors are dry you can come in. But they're wet." They said, "The hell with you." And they came in with their wet and muddy shoes and trod right over their clean floor. They didn't care. Who are these miners? I remember that during the training school we put on a cultural program. And one of these men, who as I said was one of the people on the Worker, the Daily Worker, whatever it's called now, he was sitting next to me. And this farmer from North Dakota-was sitting next to me, and then this guy Joe was over here. And they used to call this farmer "hayseed." They used to call him all kinds of names, I mean. So then, as I said, we had cultural people who were putting out some kind of a play. I think it was Irwin Shaw's "Bury the Dead," whatever it was, something like that. And they did a marvelous job. And so this Joe says to this farmer, he says, "A few months ago you had cowshit on your shoes. And tonight," he says, "here you are, enjoying a cultural evening with intelligent people." Now that's the attitude that they had towards coal miners, towards farmers, toward people who, you know, who worked with their hands or who weren't of the elite. I mean, they had contempt, absolute contempt, for anybody who wasn't part of the higher, so-called higher, wealthy people.

- I. How did you deal with that, Rate, you yourself?
- R. How did I deal with it myself? I resented it. I resented it, but I didn't do very much about it. Part of it was that I thought, who am I with my eighth grade education? Who am I to argue with some of these people? Although there were times when, for instance, the elections were coming up, say 1950 or '52 or whatever, whatever

elections are coming up. The Central Committee of the Party has an article in Political Affairs. And it says that we can influence the elections for senators and for all kinds of . . . all kinds of offices. So, I talked to some of the people. I said, "Look, we couldn't even elect a dog catcher. We couldn't even elect a precinct committeeman. Now this is sheer bullshit." But you don't go to the district office and tell them this. You just shut up. I mean, you might talk to a few people. But I had learned that some of the people who did voice disagreement with the bureaucracy, with their hallucination as to how powerful they were, got into trouble. They were removed from leadership and what not, you know. And what I did in Gary was I felt so much a part of the rank and file that I didn't give a damn, too much, although it bothered me. It bothered me that Jim would pull off the things, you know, that isolated our people in the different places.

Now, for instance, I think I told Staughton the last time he was here about this Operation Beachhead. Now, it's true that Negroes are not allowed to use the beach. I don't know. . . I don't know if they use the beach to this day in Gary. That I don't know. Maybe with Mayor Hatcher, maybe now they do. I don't know. But when, this was in 1949, the same time as the thing at Peekskill with Paul Robeson happened. That's why the beach thing was so much bigger. It kind of brought out what happened in Gary. Jim gets the idea late in the summer that what we ought to do is have Operation Beachhead, take a whole number of people, black and white, and go to the beach at Miller beach. In order to get to the beach, you had to go through an entire all-white area, through the Miller area, to get to the beach. When the idea was first put out the young people in the NAACP and others were very much in favor of it. But the word came out from the Democratic Party down

through the precinct committeemen, down through the leadership of the NAACP down through the Negro ministers and others, to stay away. Keep out. Don't go. Don't embarrass the Democrats. Don't embarrass the political machine. So the closer we came to the day that we were to go on one particular Sunday to the beach, the Left and leftist Negroes that we had with us, because of the political pressures from the political machine and the ministers and others, only a handful of Negroes actually went to the beach. Only a handful. And that in a sense isolated the Left from the Negro people. We had very broad contacts with the Negro movement. But this thing was just too much. You see, if it was something that they themselves had sponsored and were willing to fight for it'd be a different story. But here were a group of whites, and in many respects that's what broke the contact between the Negro people and the Communists in Gary was this business. And then, of course, the whole reign of terror that came after the 'Beachhead. The burning of the crosses, rocks through the windows and all kinds of things. A brutal reign of terror came. As I said, of course, the Negro people wanted no part of it. As a matter of fact, somebody said, "It's bad enough to be black without being called red, too!",

- I. I'm quite concerned about the extent to which I think radicals think of themselves as having the right ideas, and that they have to convince other people, in a sense working from theory down rather than, as everything you say, growing out of your experience. You know what I mean?
- R. Well, you see, according to Marx you're supposed to have a theory and practice. You're supposed to have a theory and then on the basis of

your theory you're supposed to form your tactics and strategy, and so on. And you have to have that. That's part of the problem today, I think, throughout the world. I think part of the problem is that the Chinese and the Russians are doing irreparable damage to the progressive movement throughout the world. I think part of the problem is that the Chinese and the Russians are doing irreparable damage to the progressive movement throughout the whole world, by their quarreling. Who are you going to pattern yourself after? Chairman, Mao Tse Tung? After Kosygin? And Breshnev? You know? Are you going to pattern yourself on the so-called Communism, or whatever it is, of the Soviet Union when they have to use tanks in Czechoslovakia? How can you tell the young people, how can you justify that kind of thing? How can anybody? So therefore the young people today, it seems to me part of the reason that they do such damn fool things, like the Weathermen, and the RYM II, and all kinds of other things, part of the problem is that they have no place. They have nobody in many respects that is a modern Twentieth Century theory, that is a theory based on the practicalities of today that they can stand up to and say, "Now, these people have the proper theory. They have done the proper things, they're the ones that we can hold up as an example of what is the right thing to do." There isn't. There isn't anyone.

- I. Well, how much do you feel the work you did was guided by theory as opposed to a sense of values? Do you know what I mean?
- R. I was never a theoretician. I don't have the education for it. I was never a theoretician. As a matter of fact, I used to be criticized for it. Part of my problem was that I cannot deal in generalities. It is very difficult for me to deal in generalities. I have to be specific. And that's what I used to be criticized for, because I didn't

deal enough in theory and in generalities. I had to bring something down where I could see it, you know.

I. I think that's where they're wrong.

R. Who? Who's wrong?

I. The people who insist on the theory, because, I mean, isn't there anybody willing that's not intelligent? It's not a matter of intelligence or education or anything of that kind. It seems to me that things have to be valid. And how will you know that they're valid unless they're specific and relate to real experience? And if they're to be understood by other people, you know, it can't be sort of a rarefied theory that only a few educated people can grasp.

R. Yeah.

I . People understand. It's got to have such meaning that life itself tells you, "Yes, that theory makes sense."

R. Yeah, I agree with you.

I. And it seems to me that the task of the theoreticians is to find some theory that makes sense to the people on the basis of their own experience.

R. You know, this whole question of so-called theory--I remember in my years in the Old Left that millions of people must've gone through the C.P. Millions of people. But very few stayed. And I think part of the problem was that the leadership, with all of the grandiose generalities, never knew how to bring that theory down to the masses of the people so that they would understand it, and would in any sense become, should

I say, enriched by it and that they would want to read. For instance, you take some of the literature. You take Value, Price and Profit, some of Marx's Capital. It's very difficult reading, extremely difficult. Very, very difficult. You take Lenin's Empiricism, whatever it is, some of these pamphlets. I got to sleep on it. I can't read it. It's too difficult because it deals in such generalities. If somebody would bring it down into some kind of thing that they write. Because there is no reason why we should have had such turnover. Many of these people were marvelous people, devoted people. But they could go to a conference in Chicago and go sound asleep. They'd go sound asleep while the district director is making his speech. He is dealing in some kind of generalities and the miners are back to sleep.

I. But, you see, my concern is that one should start with the experience of these miners. And if there are theoretical points which express, you know, reality as they perceive it, then one has a theory. But it seems to me that a theory that isn't related to their experience, really, what good does it do?

R. It doesn't do very much.

I. Yes.

R. It may make a whole number of people who are very glib, people who have good memories who can just spout out phrases, phrase-mongers. They can make a speech and just one phrase-mongering, one cliché after another, you know, and get by with it. Whereas the poor rank and filer who had come to this meeting, he is all confused. Like myself, who is he to question? Here is this guy, . you know. Who am I to question him?

I. Then why do they come? What did it represent to them?

R. To who?

I. To the people. To the rank and file for whom the theory was not the thing which drew them. What did draw them?

R. What drew them was the struggles for immediate demands for certain things. That was the thing that brought them. Their concern with whatever was the immediate problems. For instance, there used to be times in the Thirties when all you had to do was distribute a leaflet and you'd have thousands of people show up. Thousands of people would show up! Because they were concerned. And they didn't care how many policemen were there. They were not frightened by the police or anything. They came. Because the leaflets dealt with some of the things they were concerned with. I want to tell you an experience that I had. This was on the West Side in Chicago. We had a little Council headquarters on 14th Street in Chicago. And I was on my way to where the Greek workers had a club on South Halsted Street. And it was led by progressives. And we used to have many affairs and meetings and things there. I was on my way to meet the people at the Greek Workers Club, when I happened to see a woman and her children. They'd been evicted. They're out there, their furniture, all out in the street. So I hurried over to the Greek Workers Club and got a whole number of people to help break down the door, put in the furniture, and so on. The whole neighborhood came and helped us put the furniture back. Now, there was one experience that we had. And this was, I think, on 13th Street, close to Ashland in that area. We had this little hall on 14th Street. I hadn't been there during the day. But apparently some family had been evicted early in the morning. And some of the people who had been

in our little headquarters had gone there during the day and had tried to put the furniture back. But each time they had been arrested. In the meantime they sent some people over into the South Side, into the the Negro area on the South Side and got a whole bunch of people to come from there, to come to put this furniture back, break down the door and put the furniture in. And each time they came, all of them were arrested. So by the time I came there in the evening I learned that there was a family that had been evicted on 13th Street and that the police had been arresting people all day long, just taking them by the wagonfulls all day long. So, you can't let that go by. You have to do something. So we had a small meeting in this little hall, and said, 'Well, let's go. We've got to put that furniture back. We've got to. It's getting night, you know. We have to help this family.' So we get over on 13th Street. There is not a soul. This is the middle of the summer. And you know how crowded a Negro ghetto is with people. There isn't a soul, not even a dog. There isn't a soul on the street anywhere. There is this woman and her children and her furniture at this house. But you don't see anybody, not a soul anywhere. Nowhere! So we think, all right, we'll go. So a handful of us marched up to this house where this woman and her children were. As soon as we got there the police had been in hiding around different buildings. Police cars swarmed the streets around. And the police had been hiding in different places. The police come there and surround us. They're ready to arrest us. And I tried to go up into this small house. It had sort of an English basement. It was sort of a one family house, maybe two families, with an English basement. So one of the policemen jumps up on the steps of the house with a sawed-off machine gun, with a tommy gun, whatever you want to call it. I don't know. I don't know that much about guns. And he says, "The first son of a bitch that

sets foot on these stairs is going to have his head chopped off." Well, you can't let that go unchallenged, you know. So I stepped forward, a young white man steps forward, and a Negro couple, a young couple that I'd never seen before. So the four of us stepped forward. And this policeman is at the top of the stairs. And he is fuming. He is threatening he is going to chop us up. He's going to kill us if we dare to step. When we four went on the stairs the people came out of their houses. They came swarming out and they surrounded the police. And this policeman did not dare to kill us. He had been threatening to kill us. He just held his gun uselessly in his hand. And the four of us stood triumphantly up at the top of the stairs and were kicking at the door. The policeman who was in charge of the police said, "Now, look. We've had hundreds of people arrested. It's enough. This is it." He said, "I've had enough." The landlord was hiding around there with the police, too. He says, "I'll tell you what." He said, "We'll take up a collection. And whatever we collect that's going to be the rent." And he said, "You're going to take it, and you're going to open up that door, and this family's going to move in." So the policeman who was in charge took off his hat. He passed it around and took up a collection. And the landlord wasn't satisfied. And the policeman told him, "Now, you take this money or you get nothing." He said, "These people are going to break down the door," so he said, "you just shut up." He said, "You take this money. We've had enough. We've had enough trouble with this one house. Now you take this money and you go open that door." And so the landlord had to take the padlock off the door. And in the meantime, the four of us who had mounted the stairs were in the back seat. In those days the automobiles police used had window curtains on them, old type cars. And one policeman

was driving. And then this policeman who had stood at the top of the stairs sat in the front seat. And the four of us sat in the back, this Negro couple, this young white man, and myself, sitting in the back. This policeman who had the gun in his hand was so mad he was literally frothing at the mouth. Literally! He said, "You sons of bitches," and he was swearing. He said, "Just one word, just one peep." He said, "Just blink your eye, and I'll kill all four of you." So the four of us held hands, sat in the back seat of the car. We held hands. We didn't say one blessed word. We just sat there. We could hardly wait until we got to the police station so we could get away from this policeman. So finally we got to the Maxwell Street station. And we got out of the police car. But he was just that angry, that his authority had been flaunted.

And then I have to tell you an experience about corruption of labor. The Greek Workers Club had some marvelous people who ran it. And they used to feed people, you know, people who were out of work, the council food that was left over, or whatever it was. They fed people whatever they possibly could just as long as the club covered enough to pay the rent, So I was living with my parents. Someone from the state office came at night to my home with two packages of leaflets. There was an election taking place in the Painters Union. I knew nothing about it, the Painters Union. I knew nothing about elections in the Painters Union. I didn't know that the Painters Union was run by gangsters. Nobody told me. I didn't know, you know. All I was told was that I was to find people **to** distribute these leaflets at two certain spots the next morning. All right. A young woman that I knew, I will go to her and she and I will take this place around Madison and Ashland. We will take that spot. I will go to the

Greek Workers Club early in the morning before the men get up and try to find a couple of men who sleep there on the floor at the Greek Workers Club to have them distribute the leaflets downtown. There was one place where the union elections were taking place, someplace in the Loop. So I found a young man, his name was David. And I woke him up. He was sleeping on the floor there at the Greek Workers Club. I said, "David, look. There's some leaflets that have to be distributed at the Painters local. They're having a union election. There's some independents running against the union officialdom. And these leaflets have to be distributed in front of the union hall. This is down in the Loop. Can you find someone to go with you? Two people is enough." So there's a young man lying next to him. And he says, "I'll go with him." He says, "I'll go along. Sure," he said, "we'll be glad to." So then I left there. And I went to this young woman's house. And she said, sure she would go with me. So she and I went to this other district to distribute the leaflets. In those days we didn't have telephones. So she and I got in front of this union hall and started to distribute this small package of leaflets. It had the candidates, those who were running opposite to the officialdom of the Painters Union. But two gangsters started to attack us. This young woman got scared to death immediately. She gave up her leaflets. They said, "Give me those leaflets." So she gave the leaflets to them. I had the bulk of the leaflets. I had some in my hand. The rest I had under my arm. So they took those, the leaflets that were in my hand. And my friend, Katherine, became terribly frightened. And she was almost weeping. She just stood there, helpless. I was cussing, spitting at these hoodlums and calling them all kinds of names. And then as I held this packet of leaflets under my arm, and there as the

men came into the union hall I would take the leaflets from under my arm and distribute them. Finally, these gangsters picked me up physically and just banged me against the wall of the building. Then one of them knocked the package out from under my arm and then set it afire and burned it' in the gutter. Well, once the leaflets were burned there's nothing you can do. So I went home. I didn't learn until maybe that night or something that this young man who went with David to distribute the leaflets downtown was beaten to death by the gangsters. And David carried his dying comrade all the way from the Loop to the Greek Workers Club. He carried him in his arms, this dying comrade. This young man who didn't know what it was all about, who was just simply sleeping there next to David, who was unemployed, who was hungry, who had found a place to sleep in the Greek Workers Club and went to distribute leaflets. These gangster. hoodlums from the Painters Union, beat him up and they killed him. And they beat David so badly that he was never the same after that. I understand he was all covered with blood. Now that's the kind of thing we had to fight in some of the unions in the old days that were run by corrupt officials. That's the kind of thing that the Painters Union was big on.

I. Is that a thing of the past now?

R. That I don't know. I do not. Who wrote Waiting for Lefty?

I. Clifford Odets.

R. Yeah. Clifford Odets. Now, you see, that reflected correctly the gangsterism in some of the unions. That was, that really correctly reflected. . . .

I (Staughton Lynd) When I was in high school the school administration wouldn't let us do it. They said, oh, we'll give you time to do it-- four o'clock Friday afternoon, at a high school. The hall was packed. I played the crooked union boss.

R. Oh, no kidding!

I. The strike committee was there on the stage, in the spotlight. And according to the instructions in the play I would just walk around outside and blow cigar smoke. I'd never smoked a cigar before in my life.

R. (laughter) Oh, boy. There are probably still unions that are crooked. For instance, the Machinists is not a democratically run union. The United Mine Workers is not a democratically run union. The Steelworkers is not a democratically run union. Very few of them are. They have the monthly check-off. They have the money.

I N D E X

American Can Co	20, 22 , 28
Bauer and Black Co.	28,33
Centerville	18
Chicago	27,28,51
CIO	10,11,35,37
Cleveland.....	19,20,27,28
Communists	2 , 3, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 29, 39, 41, 46, 49
Continental Can Co.	28, 33
Daily Worker	31, 44, 45
East Chicago	38
Edmondson, Ray	9, 10, 11
FBI	35, 37, 39, 41
Franklin Co.	2, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12
Gary, Ind.	15, 24, 34, 35, 40, 46
Gary Post Tribune	43
Greek Workers Club	54-56
Kendall Corporation	28, 30
Lenin	50
Lewis, John L.	9, 10, 11, 21, 35
Machinists Union	57
Marx	50
NAACP	47
Odets, Clifford	56

Operation Beachhead	46
Painters Union	54
Progressive Miners	2,3
Socialists	2,4
Steel Workers Union	57
United Mine Workers Union	1,57
United States Steel Corp.	36.37
Workers Alliance	1,2,3
Youngstown Machine and Tool Co.	38