TAPED INTERVIEW

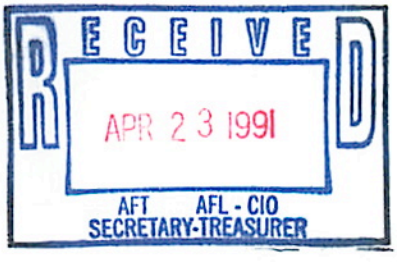
OF

HERRICK ROTH

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

February 16, 1987

A STENOGRAPHIC RECORD
By: Craig Williams



JOHN E. CONNOR & ASSOCIATES, INC.
1860 ONE AMERICAN SQUARE
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46282
(317) 236-6022

TAPE 1

MS. RENE EPSTEIN: This is Rene Epstein. My interview with Herrick Roth is taking place on February 16th, 1987 in New York. This interview is part of an oral history project contracted by the American Federation of Teachers.

MR. HERRICK ROTH: My adult life began in the bottom of the Depression when I was 17, and I think that probably was the greatest influence on me, although I certainly would relate my growing up through adolescence as a very important part of my life. And it had something to do probably what I did in the bottom of the Depression.

I was born in Omaha, Nebraska. My mother and father separated when I was two. I went with my mother back to her family home where my grandfather, her father, was still very much alive in Hot Springs, South Dakota, and he became my father. The consequence of that is very simple. He had lost his only son when the son was 11, and to have somebody who is two years old 50 years his junior but nonetheless still blue eyed as his son kind of rejuvenated his life. And he was a man who

happened to be a pioneer. I won't tell you all the background of that, but he was a real pioneer, as was his family, as was his wife's family. They on both sides of the street of the main line of the Union Pacific Railroad, having been creators of it, having finally settled in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and my grandfather's father having been the first to conductor on what they call Sherman Hill on the first scheduled run from Cheyenne to Ogden after the Golden Spike.

So he was rich in history, plus he taught me that the first black people in the mountain states were cowboys, and they taught him how to survey in the Big Horns of Wyoming, which was very near to where I grew up. So we used to go over to Clouds Peak Great Glacier and look over the territory.

It had a lot of effect on me, though, because of being of a pioneer kind of background, he had come to the Black Hills, South Dakota, at the age of 19 and become a cashier of a bank at the end of a railroad that was built into the Black Hills to meet the demands of the gold rush and lead in Deadwood. And they stopped at a place called

Buffalo Gap, the railroad did, and they ran out of funds temporarily, so they weren't going to build for another year. So my grandfather's oldest sister had married the man who had built the telegraph line from Deadwood to Denver, therefore, having connection to the outer world and made a half a million dollars, which would be like making a billion these days I guess, and opened all these small banks in the Black Hills, one of which is the Buffalo Gap.

Now, Buffalo Gap is 32 miles from Wounded Knee. And when I grew up in Hot Springs, South Dakota, the Ogallala Sioux -- incidentally, Sioux are Sioux, but there are seven Sioux tribes in South Dakota alone. The Ogallala Sioux nearest my home town of Hot Springs, they had excellent students who were also athletes, which usually meant boys, although in those days girls sports in South Dakota was just as prominent as boys, which wasn't true across the country, but it was true of the Midwest, Minnesota, the Dakotas and so on. Girls had basketball and did everything but football. So they'd bring in the best of the

athletes, and so in my high school graduating class of 39 kids, seven were Ogallala Sioux, the rest of us were northern Tutons, Germanic or Scandinavian primarily in ancestry, or English, Scottish, so on.

Anyway, in this kind of a setting, though, I grew up in a very populist Republican family. My grandfather was the one town banker. His was the last bank to close in western South Dakota before Mr. Roosevelt closed any of the banks when he became president because the drought was indeed Biblical, it was seven years. At the end of the 7th year, the last bank remaining in South Dakota in the western part of the state was in Hot Springs, and my grandfather was the head of the bank, and it broke his heart. But, nonetheless, that brought the Depression on to our family in 1932. I graduated from high school in '33, and I had to look around for a place to go to the university I suppose because I was the valedictorian of the class.

The school superintendent helped me by finding a school. I was going to go to the University of Minnesota but it cost $80 a year

tuition if you're out of state. That sounds awful, doesn't it, in these days. I couldn't get a job in Minneapolis. I couldn't go there to interview for a job because I didn't have the money to get there. So my school superintendent did find a way for me to get to a place that I'd never heard of, not Denver, but the University of Denver. And the chancellor there at the university, he and the superintendent in our town, who really wanted to make sure that I went on to college, had taught in Stanford in biology in the summertime, summer schools. So he arranged to get me a full tuition scholarship, provided I'd maintain for the first year a straight A average. Well, that was something. But, nonetheless, I also got a chance to hash for the first quarter, then become house manager at the age of yet to be 18 of a bankrupt fraternity house on the campus. So, outside of paying five dollars a month fraternity dues, my first year in college was what you'd call economic. I did manage to maintain the scholarship.

When I got to be a senior -- I'd been in all the school activities, and I had been editor of the

university newspaper, and it was twice a week, $17 a week to be the editor. I bought myself a new car, even in that year, in addition to maintaining my house manager's job at the fraternity house and continuing with my studies. So I was offered a job at the Denver Post, which they did editors of the university in those days, 56 hours a week, no newspaper guild, $15 a week for 56 hours of work on the beat as they called it.

And a gentleman on the faculty who had taken some interest in me in sociology said you really ought to be a teacher and we ought to get you some kind of fellowship here next year so you could teach. So indeed I got to be the coach of the college debate teams for one year, and I continued for another year and got my Master's degree, took my student teaching.

Then they had 13 jobs open in the Denver public schools. Seventeen hundred people came to apply for those jobs. In those days, you took a test, an eight hour test. Then they interviewed the top 100, and they came from all over the country. Denver was, even then in 1937, kind of a

pleasant place to attract teachers, particularly because Columbia University here in New York and John Dewey had decided to do, in addition to their experimental work here in Columbia with the public schools, Denver, Colorado is what they'd picked. And so it was an attractive place to come.

Plus, like Newark, New Jersey across the river here had the only single salary schedule in the country, which was a reform, which meant men and women were paid the same at all levels of teaching. And the teaching salary was good, $1200 a year. If you check around, you'll find out it wasn't much better than that in New York City.

Anyway, to make it clear, I've skipped through a large part of my life here to get to the point where I became a teacher, and indeed I did become a teacher in the Denver schools at a place called Smiley Junior High School.

Now, if you wanted to ask me why did I become a teacher, somebody convinced me I should. I did enjoy kids. I was an only child, obviously, because when I grew up my mother for a long time was a social outcast of a town of 4,000 people

because there was no other divorcees in town, and that was a traumatic thing for her.

In the process, what happened to me in my public school life and my growing up with a grandfather who is rich and a lore of history and outdoor living and what it really meant to him and all of his different experiences, including when Sitting Bull came through Buffalo Gap and the indians burned the town down and that's why they moved the bank to Hot Springs. He was a real populist Republican, which I had mentioned earlier.

But into my transition into what I call my adult life after I was 17 and came to the University of Denver, it wasn't just that I ran into some professors that might be considered somewhat liberal. Actually, they were just truly intellectual academics, and they were good. And the only reason they were still at the University of Denver was there was no place else they could get a job either, and they would work for nothing literally.

One was a Midwesterner who had grown up in Des Moines, Iowa. Had been shuffled off to Harvard

in the middle '20s and gone out to look for a place to teach in economics afterwards and ended up at the University of Denver. Of course, he was rich and full in the transition of the craft union to the industrial union. So I took an economics course that looked at the social transformation of labor. That was my only contact with labor, please understand, in which I had a reference to what labor unions were all about. That was my first reference. And it was only after the fact that I really thought about it a lot and I want to explain that -- because my grandfather's position with me alleges was, "Herrick, think it out for yourself. Just remember, when in doubt, think it out for yourself." He was a self-made person kind of thing. He knew how to play the trombone and the trumpet and the piano. He couldn't read music, he knew how to do it.

He built a golf course because the little town didn't have a golf course. So I learned to play golf, because he had built the golf course.

He knew what it was like to live in nature. He would take me out in the wintertime and we would

go out hiking in the snow. In fact, we used to make our own skis and cross country on the skis. And he would at certain spots stop and say, "We're coming back here now and we're going to have the best omelet you ever had." What he did was just put the eggs in the snow bank. When you come back, you see the solar quality of the day was through the snow bank that you had the best soft boiled eggs you ever saw. I learned things like that, you see, because it was real, natural kind of background.

But he really believed the best of America's frontier land should be preserved for all people. And there was a great U.S. senator from South Dakota, never made any headlines like Bora did from Idaho at the same period in his life, but a guy named Norbeck who had loved the Black Hills so much but came from the eastern part of the state, a place called Aberdeen, very near the twin cities of Minneapolis-Saint Paul, incidentally, 400 miles from the Black Hills. There is in the middle of the Black Hills 1700 square miles, the largest single state park in America, South Dakota of all

places, established by a guy named Peter Norbeck. And my grandfather used to think this is wilderness land at it's best, this is what we have to preserve, and so he believed in what the progressive Republicans were doing. He believed in what the progressive party in North Dakota did.

In case nobody knows, the biggest bank in North Dakota today is the Bank of North Dakota. It's owned by the state. The biggest cement plant in the West is at Rapid City, South Dakota, owned by the state of South Dakota, operated by the state. In other words, it was a kind of a socialism that went on. Of course, these things you rub up against.

Then when they put Rushmore Memorial up where it was, my grandfather was part of the fund raising for that. And the only thing he insisted on was that South Dakota should select one of the presidents. And he and a guy named John Boland did select one of the presidents on Rushmore, namely, Teddy Roosevelt, the guy who had come out to ride in the Badlands and get rid of his consumption.

So that kind of affected me because this was

a Republican Party kind of relationship that you don't normally see. In fact, if you look at the Bull Moose Party historically, you'll know that Teddy Roosevelt when he split from the Republican Party finally and ran for president at what would have been for him a third term, a second elected term, he, if he'd been elected, he had eight states in the country that he carried. Well, you have to look at them. One of them is the state I live in today, Colorado. Both of the Dakotas, they had always voted for the Republicans. They just swept the Republicans off the ballot for Teddy Roosevelt, because he did have, believe it or not, he was probably a capital socialist as opposed to a workers socialist. But nonetheless, the point is he exercised this same free spirit with the people of Montana, which was one of the states that supported Teddy Roosevelt.

But you look back at those eight states, two of them over here on the northeastern corner, the small ones, six of them through that upper Midwest area, voted for Teddy Roosevelt. Well, that was kind of the influence. So it was not difficult for

me when I got to the University of Denver to relate to anybody that seemed to express a new thought about the world.

But the other thing I noticed was in 1933 after Roosevelt became president, and here I was in college, the University of Denver was practically bankrupt as a private institution. And the way it got its feet back on the ground was the National Youth Administration. Now, we hear about CCC and WPA and PWA and everything else. One of the biggest single programs that the Roosevelt administration, because of Mr. Ikeysnik (phonetics), put in was the NYA. And the NYA provided enough to pay tuition plus like 15 cents an hour. A person could earn $17 a month working on the campus mowing lawns, working in the library stacks, whatever. But one half of the total student body was on NYA. The student body was only 2500. But 1300 kids went to the University of Denver who otherwise could not have gone to the University of Denver because the NWA provided -- it was the forerunner of what the G.I. Bill of Rights came where you could go anyplace you wanted to.

And whatever the price was was what the program paid.

So, that impressed me, the fact that there became a cosmopolitan kind of student body in the sense that the people in real dire poverty or who had lost it all, once maybe were upper economic related. In my home town, I guess our family was probably one of a hundred in town that might be considered affluent, if $300 a month income means you're affluent. But it was in those days, in the '20s, we weren't wealthy, but we had a nice house and we could buy a car and we could travel occasionally, and that's what most people couldn't do.

Well, most of the people the Depression hit were the people in that upper middle class who lost everything, and the people who never had anything to begin with. Here suddenly the NYA was giving to everybody the opportunity to go to colleges and universities. So, that impressed me.

So when I first voted for, I don't have to tell you, I voted for F.D.R., and I voted just because I thought he had put the country back on

track. Even my grandfather in those days, and he lived until he was 97 -- he didn't die until I was 47 because he was 50 years my senior -- but he admitted to voting for Roosevelt the second time around because he was rescued by working as a bookkeeper for a small oil company in eastern Wyoming but with headquarters in Hot Springs, South Dakota. Hot Springs is like a three corners area. It's practically on top of Nebraska and Wyoming, and so it's just barely in South Dakota.

He got Social Security after ten quarters. He didn't think it was right that he should get $37 a month payment over the age of 70 when he had only put into it so little, which in those days was three percent. It was one and a half percent each way, employer and person, on a small amount of income. He got it all back in about ten months is what he said.

But the other thing he liked was that Mr. Roosevelt did come out to dedicate Mt. Rushmore. And even though Teddy Roosevelt's face, the last to be put up there, was not up there yet, it was indeed Gutz and Borglam's great achievement when he

dedicated Washington that Mr. Roosevelt came.

Now, the Black Hills was so solidly Republican that everybody said, well, nobody will come to dedicate this mountain. They only had 50,000 in the whole state and they had 35,000 people there from the Black Hills alone. And those were the days when a lot of people had to come yet in horse drawn kind of vehicles and cars that couldn't go through the ruts that went up to Mt. Rushmore. And my grandfather was fascinated with that just listening to him, and we made sure we got there to the dedication of Mt. Rushmore.

We'll back into where maybe I first had the opportunity to understand that, yes, I had to think things out for myself. I think my grandfather's influence -- and my mother's too, although my mother to her dying day would have been almost rallied to vote for Richard Nixon again. But I think probably more through the idea that she always related Republicanism to an individual conduit by himself or herself. She was the only professional woman in town when I was a kid. Even though she'd only had one year of college when she

got married, there was nobody to run the local library in the middle of the 1920s, so she went before the city library board and applied for the job. And outside of the fact that she was a divorcee -- and they got over that trauma a little bit by some kind of a three to two vote and hired her. She worked for 50 bucks a month, and the library was open seven days a week. She knew what the value of work was, I can tell you.

And she put half of that money aside for two things: Either for her to travel occasionally, or to hopefully have enough to pay a first year's tuition for me when I went to college, whenever it was. But her whole attitude was you read everything you can. And she became an avid reader herself. And she had a wonderful selection of books in this little small town Carnegie library. See, part of the connection, when I mention the name Carnegie, or when I mention the word Roosevelt or something, it's the idea that there was still the mystique. Even in the upper Midwest, of the great philanthropists that the Harry Imans and the Rockefellers and the Mellons and the Carnegies

were, which in fact was not really the fact. It was in second and third generations of those families because they owed a debt to somebody. They'd exploited labor and natural resources for their own gain, all of them. But their differentiation was they then rose above the crowd, became the intellectuals of the political society, became the philanthropists, who having capital that they could invest and it could make enough money itself that it could continue to sustain, that you had across the country like 800 libraries were established by the Carnegie family after they'd first of all kept the steelworkers in the sweat shops forever. So there was this kind of dichotomy. It just didn't really make sense. Here were people who were revered and simultaneously having already exploited what the best of people were.

We're getting a little dialogue here while we're interrupting this conversation, which I think nonetheless is important. I think the real world, if you even go to a place like Nova Scotia today and you ask them where they go, they go to Boston

and London. And they go to New England, they go to New York and London. There is a geographical barrier, has been forever in this country, and it still exists to a large extent today, except for the people who love to ski on the slopes in Colorado and, therefore, are introduced to a new world.

The second war changed all of that in my opinion because it mixed people all over the place. For instance, why should I come to Ft. Monmouth, New Jersey from barren Colorado through the desert of Texas at Ft. Bliss. And I had the first peace time draft number. It's the only lottery I ever won. My number was 158, and so I was right off in the war, one year before the war began. But it did mix people up, therefore, they see life differently.

But what people have to remember about the West as I knew it, it's still relatively rural. The Home Stake Gold Mine, for instance, in Lead, South Dakota where many workers were partially exploited -- they were not exploited like they were in the copper fields, they were most of all not

exploited at all like they were in the coal fields of this country. The coal fields of this country, that was just plain, hard manual labor, the worst. And who cared, as old pea picking Ernie Ford used to say about, "I owe my soul to the company store, 16 tons, and the older I get, but I still owe my soul to the company store."

Lead, South Dakota was a company store, but Lead, South Dakota, because it was the richest gold mine in the world and continues to be today, built beautiful homes for the workers and, therefore, kept them at a different kind of a company solace. Sure, you could go to Lead, and if you were a miner you go into see the first talking picture in the state of South Dakota at the Home Stake Opera House because they installed it there. So you go see it for a nickel. Whereas, at Rapid City when it finally opened in the Elks Theater about the same time it opened in Scottsbluff, Nebraska and Denver, the Al Jolson "Seeing Fool," the first one around, it opened up there first in Lead, South Dakota, before it opened in Denver, Colorado. It was a very different kind of company.

If you go to where I live today and you go to the southern Colorado coal fields and see what the Rockefeller family did to the miners and how they herded them across from the Balkans in ships to Galveston, Texas and put them on cattle trains and brought them up there and had them work ten hours a day seven days a week for ten cents an hour, they did owe their soul to the company store. And the great coal field strike is something quite different than the gold mine in the Black Hills.

But the same thing would have been true if you'd gone to Butte, Montana. That was a slave town. The Anaconda Copper Company, the biggest of the copper cities in the country. Over 100,000 people living in Butte, when there were only 300,000 people in the whole state of Montana, quite a different thing. But I knew Butte, too, because my grandmother -- my grandfather's wife before she died -- she did die when I was still in the schooling stage of Hot Springs, South Dakota. Her oldest brother, who was a boilermaker from Cheyenne, Wyoming and had been organized, he went to Butte to help organize the mines. And after he

made it and became president of the city council and mayor of the city and put in the best tavern in town where on one side you had a cafe where kids could come, but you couldn't go over to where they drank on the other side. A whole different morality.

But he had seen that town go from the utter degradation of how you herded the miners in there to work, where the Wobblys really were in command. That never happened at Lead, South Dakota. Only the best of the miners went into that. Plus there was no dust in those gold mines, very little dust. It's a whole different environment. No, I didn't learn a lot of these things until I was older, because here I was looking at a model company town in the Black Hills of South Dakota who had great athletes who competed with the Hot Springs Bison on one end. See, remember, the biggest and the last buffalo herd as we called it -- they're really bison -- that existed in this country were all in the Black Hills. And out of that Custard State Park came all the bison or buffaloes you see all over this country now. They market them all over

the countryside. But that was part of Mr. Norbeck. He saved the buffalo, 250 head. They're in Yellowstone, they're every place else. They all came from the Black Hills, South Dakota, because a guy who was a populist -- now, it's a different kind of populism than the populism of the Joe McCarthys who come along and say they're populists, or the fundamentalist preachers today who appeal to populism, a very different kind of appeal. So it depends on how you define populism.

I was a populist only because my grandfather was a populist, meaning the people have control. And Mr. Roosevelt was not a big R Republican to him, he was a small R Republican. And he understood representative government, and he understood that the people had control of the government, that's all populism was. So, it did not make him feel badly that the state of South Dakota failed in its banking industry and, therefore, didn't compete with the private banks like he ran. But he also is proud of the fact that the state did succeed in keeping his state cement plant alive, even while it was otherwise totally

bankrupt. Whereas, in North Dakota, the real populist, the real progressive kept the bank of North Dakota alive, in spite of Chase Manhattan and other influences here in New York City. It's a great history, you have to read it a thousand different ways. The country is so different, there's no way, though, to equate.

I never thought about what the Jewish socialist community of New York was until I joined the AFT. I never thought about the intense anti-communist attitude of the Irish Catholic until I joined the AFT. And I never -- see, I never met a man like George Meany until I had to meet a man like George Meany, but who came out of this environment side by side with the Jewish community.

Ask Al Shanker sometime about how difficult it was for Mr. Meany to understand who a teacher is and the low esteem that he held. Carl Megel will tell you at the convention that he and I and a guy named Earl McGinnis from Wilmington, Delaware, who put a resolution on the floor of the first AFL-CIO convention in Atlantic City after the merger here in '55 -- the next one was '57 -- declaring the NEA

a company union. And because it passed on the floor, Mr. Meany adjourned the convention for the balance of the day, because his committee had been overturned and his teachers -- he knew about them, he'd seen them lobby in Albany all of his life. He knew that they were almost worthy of being in the AFT. Here's Al Shanker now, fourth or fifth in seniority of all the vice presidents of the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO.

Let me back up from that point, because in 1957 we still had not established in this country the right of teachers to bargain. We still hadn't sold the American Federation of Teachers as a delegate body at its annual convention that teachers should have the right to strike. There was the constant legal fear that you'd lose your job the day that you'd walk out, whether your state had a law to that effect or not.

So let me back up from 1957 because we were trying to say at that time to the AFL-CIO in its second convention, you have members all over this country who sit on school boards, they have constantly blocked out the idea that the National

Education Association is a company union dominated by deans of colleges of education, by superintendents of schools, and by principals and school buildings who have the right to hire and fire teachers, and yet you the labor union leaders in this country have constantly said you can't have company unions. Yet, you cater to the company unions in your own home towns no matter where they are except in Chicago, Illinois. And outside of that, there isn't a lot of proof of the pudding that it's anyplace else.

And in Chicago you have an unholy alliance between the Illinois Education Association, the Chicago Teachers Union and how you conduct business. Therefore, you work as labor teachers in Chicago, and the rest of the state you do not.

So, let me get back to this why having come into the AFT as I did -- and I'll tell you how I got there -- it became a fascination of mine from day one. As I think I mentioned, I had the first draft number when Simpson drew out the numbers of the 10,000 people in every draft district in the country. If you're between the ages of 19 and 25

you had to register, and I had to register, I was 25. So, my draft number came up first. Suddenly I was in the peace time army. I came to this part of the country. I learned a lot about New York City being stationed over here in Astoria for 13 months of my life and riding the subways and the milk trains to and from Red Bank, New Jersey, seven days a week for 13 months before I went overseas to the Pacific.

I ended up in Hiroshima, which is another story. But if I had any political influence on me, it was Hiroshima, because our signal office -- and I was assistant signal officer, 10th Corps, 6th Army -- and our job was to find the survivors. When I got my points and came home to Denver, Colorado, that was indelibly impressed.

But the other thing was I came home and found out I was going to get more leave pay as time and grade major for 91 days than I was to teach school for all year, 9th step of the teaching salary schedule, a year toward a doctorate at Berkley, California, top of the schedule literally in terms of academic training, because that's all the

further it goes, one year past the Master's degree, $2,280 a year, and my terminal leave pay was $2,810.

And that three months of terminal leave pay versus one year of teaching, I asked a question, noting that most of the men, 400 of us in the Denver schools, 200 of us went to war, 200 stayed home. The 200 who went to war and came back, most of them hadn't returned to teaching. I wanted to teach.

I still had my uniform on the first day of the semester when I got back and was mustered out. So I was immediately told I had to go to school or else I couldn't teach the semester, I had to wait until the next year. So I went to school in my uniform to teach. And I saw a little notice on the bulletin board, and the notice says, "Organizational Meeting, American Federation of Teachers, Denver Teachers Union, Administration Building" of all places. So I went to it that night. I was the only one there in uniform, and everybody else thought who is this kook who just walked in in his military uniform.

The people who were there, though, were really the people who were beginning to get ready to get what later became known as Local 858, the Denver Teachers Union. So I went to the meeting and found out that it was too late to get my name on the charter, they'd sent it in the week before. There were 55 names on it, one woman, whom I knew, and 54 men, most of whom I had not known, although two or three of the leaders I did know, people who had not gone off to war and they were still there and they tried to do something different.

So, anyway, the Denver Teachers Union got started in late January 1946. And I was among the first dues payers, because the first months of dues we had paid was in March of that year. In the meantime, we had lots of meetings. Suddenly, I found myself to have been elected to a position that they created a title for called executive secretary. And literally it was a full-time job while I was still teaching school full-time is really what it amounted to. But our dues were not the tea drinking society of two dollars to the CEA and two dollars to the Denver Classroom Teachers.

We charged eight dollars a year. Out of it we were going to pay 20 cents a month to the American Federation of Teachers.

And in May that year we chartered the Colorado Federation of Teachers and the Denver Federation simultaneously. And a guy named Irvin Kinsley came from Chicago to present the charter, so proud of the fact that we had suddenly organized out of Denver. And a guy named George Cavender and I had done most of that organizing, 17 teachers locals in the state of Colorado, all of which were on a shoestring. They came together and they had this chartering jointly of the Denver Federation of Teachers. We called it the Denver Teachers Union. But Mr. Kinsley came in and told us about he had tenure; that we're observing the same principles in the AFT that we were doing in the school system, therefore, he was the only full-time officer; that all other officers were simply those who came to Executive Council meetings at those times twice a year and to an annual convention at which policy was set and the officers were elected. He continued as the tenured secretary-treasurer.

And in that first meeting I think three of us, obviously myself, raised the question, well, aren't you an employee of the union as opposed to being a tenured official, and does any other union have this kind of thing. Then he explained the differences between teachers and the other unions, saying what we do in the AFT is we go to the local labor bodies and we ask them to support our goals, and that's our connection with trade unionism.

Have you ever thought about bargaining collectively was one of the questions. I'm sure that I must have put it. And I'd learned this at least in college if nothing else how you bargain collectively, how the industrial unions had to bargain collectively and how they bargained for everybody. And I think we also asked, "We understand we're a craft union, we're teachers only, we can't have clerks and secretaries and social workers and everybody else, we can only have teachers, and we have to teach full-time or else we can't be in this organization, but why not bargain collectively?"

"Because teachers can't strike" was his

answer.

Well, that got us to really thinking. In fact, we lost half of our new locals in one year because of it. It got us to thinking because we in the meantime were working at the Denver School Board to get a big salary increase. But we sent a full delegation off to our first AFT convention in Minneapolis that year, 1946. I was to go but the Denver School Board called a special meeting and had us to come to it to chastise us for asking for $600 a year, when, after all, the classroom teachers and the board had decided on one additional increment, which was $150 a year on top of the regular increment would be all the increase we would get, and we would get it in four years. And we said, well, you're going to lose all the men you've got in this system, you don't have many left, and the women in this system shouldn't be disgraced by this awful thing. They said, we haven't got the money.

So we went out to find where the money was. And two of us, George Cavender and myself, stayed behind instead of going to Minneapolis-Saint Paul,

because we brought a revealing figure into the Denver Board of Education. We had found one million dollars in the bank that they had not listed on their financial account, and that would have paid a $600 increase. And then we also asked, we want to bargain collectively and, of course, we were thrown out of the meeting fast, except that the next meeting they gave us the $600 and paid us off.

Now, in the meantime, our people came back from Minneapolis-Saint Paul elated, because the president of our local, John Eckland, was elected to vice president. And they had secret ballot votes in those days. Wouldn't you know, he ran 5- or 600 votes ahead of anybody else running, including the old timers like Mary McGuff from Saint Paul. Or you can go through the list, Jack Fuchs from Chicago, you can just go through the list all the way, and all the names that meant something in those days to the big cities of the AFT. Gary, Indiana; Milwaukee, Chicago, Minneapolis-Saint Paul. San Francisco was the only one from the West Coast that had any real standing

in the American Federation of Teachers. New York always had somebody on, although it was far from the largest local, Cleveland, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C. and Denver, Colorado. So suddenly we were on the Executive Council.

And John was so brash that he invited the AFT to come to Colorado for a convention two years hence. And in those two years we put together what we called the Denver and Colorado position. We went out and organized some new teachers locals in Colorado. We once had as many as 50. And our whole position was we wanted to act like a union, we want to bargain collectively, and we want to proclaim to the world -- laws notwithstanding, because no law said we couldn't strike. It was just assumed by Mr. Kinsley and his tenured position. And we immediately got in a battle with Kinsley and were constantly in a battle with him from then on. And that's how we moved even within the caucus structure of the AFT. But our whole thrust was we want to pass a resolution saying the first priority of this union is not all these great social and economy programs that we see these

constant resolutions on, we fight about between what is our political background, why do we want this, why do we want that, why are we supporting somebody in Italy, and this kind of thing, when we really ought to be rescuing the teachers of America and we ought to get them to the bargaining table.

The one thing, of course, Irvin Kinsley did say is we must immediately affiliate with our local central body, and there were about 11 in Colorado at the time, including the Denver Trades and Labor Assembly, which was a relatively large labor body -- Denver was a better organized city than many people perceived it to be from the outside -- and also the state federation of labor.

Now, Colorado had some unusual labor leaders in this time, and I'm talking about the general field of labor. Part of the reason was the great coal field strike of 1913, 1914, that eventually George McGovern did a Doctor's thesis on, and it became a book when he was running for president of the United States called "The Great Coal Field War." The greater description of it which we had in all the school libraries and which I even used

in history and English courses for people to read was called "Out of the Depths" when I was teaching as a junior high teacher. And I had read "Out of the Depths" more than once. John Eckland had read "Out of the Depths" more than once. Ruth McIntosh, the only woman, a very attractive, striking woman -- still alive incidentally, just recently retired from the Denver schools, but a tremendous spirit in the union, came from a Scottish bricklayer's family who believed in what the printing trades did in the old AFL. She used to tell us about it, how the printing trades helped organize the Committee on Industrial Organization within the AFL in the middle '20s, which was the forerunner of the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

And we listened to all these things. We began to talk to each other. We had an executive committee of 25 people when the union only had 100 members. And we went out and recruited women to be in the membership, since three out of four teachers in Denver were women, so that we would have women to talk to, too, of all generations in terms of had

they taught in Denver 10 years, 20 years, 30 years, whatever. And in this mix we kept analyzing, well, we might as well stay in the NEA, we might as well stay in the CEA, we might as well stay in the Denver Classroom Teachers Association, because we keep hearing all this what we finally called crap that we're professionals. If we are professional, then we ought to propose to the Denver schools that you will contract us as a professional clinic, or a firm, just like we're a law firm or a doctors clinic. We'll rent space from you, we'll teach all the kids in the public schools, we'll tell you what the price is, and that means we're a professional. We're not architects, we aren't lawyers, we aren't doctors, we're employed. As long as you're employed, what have we got? We've got a corporation. And the corporation is not for profit, that's the only difference. And because it's not for profit doesn't say that we shouldn't have our voice at the table, but the voice is not just one of coming in on hands and knees and saying we want another $600 some day or we want lights in our classrooms, which we didn't have in Denver.

All we had was one light in the corner of every classroom in this great system that John Dewey said was one of the best in the country. And that was for the janitor at night, as we used to call the custodial force. You couldn't turn it on in the daytime, even if it were cloudy and dark outside, because we had plenty of sunlight in Denver, Colorado, and windows in all of our classrooms.

So we went after 16 points, but we had to get on our knees to do it. And we said we ought to bargain it. Because as soon as they paid us off -- we got up to 400 members -- they took all the best men in the union, except about 20 of us who refused, and made them principals of schools, worked them into the administration, bought them off, brought in the new white haired father who was then the president of the American Association of School Administrators, a guy named Kenneth Oberholster from Houston, Texas. The very year they brought him, he was at the top of the big school organization of the administrators of this nation, a great leader in the NEA. And he came in and treated us with great gentility and with great

benevolence. And we had regular salary increases from then on. We made our point, but nobody else was going to give us a chance to make the point too strenuously.

Now, if it would appear to you in this discussion that none of us had an understanding of the industrial horrors of the Great Depression, that isn't necessarily so, because teachers who taught in Denver for the most part didn't grow up in Denver. Therefore, we came from all different walks of life and from all different places. Denver was a stable system, though, in the sense that there was not a lot of turnover. So many people were very native to Denver and Colorado in the Denver system, particularly in the bottom of the Depression, because they didn't know whether they were going to hire one or two teachers a year unless 20 people are going to retire out of a teaching force of 1600. Therefore, there was a lot of stability in the system.

That's why we probably had not had a union. That's probably why nobody talked about the AFT. That's probably why in my Master's degree at the

University of Denver I didn't know there was such an organization, the American Federation of Teachers. It never occurred to me there was one. I asked, "What was it?" when I saw it on the bulletin board when I came back. But I think the thing that everybody has to understand and you only begin to understand as you get into the labor community itself is that there's this myth about unions having certain kinds of political cast to them, which indeed the Communist cells of the Trotskyites and the Leninites in this country fighting each other probably in the bottom of the Depression did seek to get out of the trade union community, such as it was before the New Deal finally -- particularly Bob Waggner, not F.D.R. who got the National Labor Relations Act on the books. He had to fight F.D.R. for it, he was an open shopper, and Waggner prevailed.

But in the process of it, it meant that anybody could organize legally under the laws of the United States. And after the '88 and '89 cases that went through various courses to the Supreme Court and they finally said yes, this is a proper

function, government can define that you can bargain collectively. See, that's the key to this, you can bargain collectively.

Then the great movements where the big companies decided they were going to have the goons still keep people in the Haymarket or the Ludlow or the other kind of disaster kind of areas of life, or who were not themselves workers of the world, Wobbly socialists, the Eugene V. Depp's relationship to labor. Suddenly people who were just the regular working people had a chance to organize without being politicized in the process.

And they tried very much in those days, if you read the real history of labor, whether it was Detroit and the auto industry or Pittsburgh in the steel industry, or wherever it was, they tried very much to penetrate the communist cells into the labor movement for the purpose of whatever they thought the world revolution was going to be. But in this country the average worker still was an individual entrepreneur on the outside as soon as he got away from the company store. Therefore, he or she felt that he or she had the same opportunity

to survive in the marketplace. And what happened was that labor built a middle class community in this country. Therefore, it was the process that built the community as opposed to the political reference to so-called world conspiracies that haunted George Meany until the day he died. Anybody who was a liberal became a communist in his mind. Therefore, he had great difficulty accepting some of the teachers he'd seen lobbying in Albany. Because, one, they were kind of panty waists and/or they were related to some kind of a down under conspiracy that came from various aspects of a community like a great multi-mixed city like New York had become, and still is.

So, in that sense it was not hard for us out in Colorado to say, well, why don't we use the system for what it is. There is indeed a National Labor Relations Act. It does not include any public employees. It ought to include them. We ought to go to our federal brothers and sisters who are primarily in those days only letter carriers, because they're the only ones who had a majority of all the federal employees in their jurisdiction.

But see, they were craft. They were not industrial. We talked to them about it in Denver, Colorado. We talked to everybody we could about it every place we went. And we began talking like this to state conventions, so labor movements became well known and, all of a sudden, I probably in my time in the AFT was invited to more state labor conventions, I don't know, outside maybe eight or ten states in the country I was not invited to to speak. And, in the process, I became a president of a state body myself, and even at one point chairman of the state central body organization, which haunted Meany. The idea that Herrick Roth could be chairing a state central body of officers in this country, the presidents and secretary-treasurers who made up this body and who otherwise got together for perfunctory purposes. But a guy named Hank Brown out of the Pennsylvania coal mines, but a building trades man in Texas by the time I met him, were bringing poverty programs, as was Miles Stanley, the steelworker who was an intellectual in a sense in West Virginia. We transformed the central bodies is what it amounted

to.

But, we were always on the same theme, everybody is entitled to bargain. The federal employees are entitled to bargain, the public employees at the state, county and local government levels, and we were indeed local government employees, no matter how you define the jurisdiction.

So, we began to put one resolution after another beginning in 1948 before the conventions of the AFT. Sometimes we couldn't even get them out of committee. We didn't get it out of committee until 1955, never got it to the floor of a convention. It was either '55 or '56 -- Bob Porter or somebody can check the records for you and tell you what year it was -- and it passed.

And that time was when Gary, Indiana; Cleveland, Ohio and Chicago should have stepped right up to the bargaining table. Detroit almost could have. Milwaukee almost could have. Minneapolis could have. Saint Paul almost could have. Because they already had the majority of the teachers in the system within their jurisdictions.

The New York Teachers Guild, which was the aftermath of the breakup of the New York Teachers Union, which I don't have to talk about because people with great wealth of information of the Bella Dodd days and the Communist Party in New York and how it was part of the teachers union of New York City. So they formed, with the Jules Colodnys and the Charlie Cogans and the Rebecca Simonsons and the other great leaders here in New York, wanted pure democracy, they did not want controlled democracy. And they organized the guild. The guild wasn't any bigger than the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, which was once called a teachers union, too, and had the same conspiracy.

So here they have these groups that were just kind of sitting on the outside who were liberal, a little socialist inclined, but liberal in terms of all the progressive things. Was the Marshall Plan a good plan or not. We used to debate these questions on the floor of the AFT. I'm not saying it wasn't worthy of debate. Some of the most fascinating debates I've ever heard in my life were much better than I've ever heard in the Congress or

on the floor of the legislature in Colorado, in which I've served in both houses, and we had some classic debates, but nothing like we had in the American Federation of Teachers, absolutely nothing. And they were fascinating, they were intellectual, but they never got to the point of bargaining.

Since this is an AFT history, I really have to go to the convention in 1948, because it was from that point that even I and others in Colorado and California in particular got to the point of saying to the rest of the AFT why don't you wake up, you've got the membership, we haven't, and why don't we as a national organization become the proponent of collective bargaining, regardless of what you believe in political ideologies. And in this process in 1948, we held the convention of all places in Glenwood Springs, Colorado at the old Hotel Colorado, which turned out to be an inadequate hotel for any convention. But, nonetheless, John Eckland in his exuberance had just been elected president of the American Federation of Teachers and was in his first term

and said, "As I said in Minneapolis-Saint Paul last year --" now, remember, he's a second year member of the AFT and he's already president of the union, he swept a victory through a caucus, the Progressive Caucus which I was not a participant in that particular year, but which was easy because nobody literally ran against John. He had the support of the National Caucus and the Progressive Caucus, so he literally ran unopposed and became president of the American Federation of Teachers, this new, great bright light, who grew up in Bethany, Kansas, came to Denver to teach, and suddenly was president of the American Federation of Teachers.

John said, "We're coming to Colorado next year." Well, he thought he could get one of the two hotels in downtown Denver that were big enough to do this, including the new Hilton. Well, they were booked up for years ahead. Denver didn't have a lot of big convention hotels, and, as a result, he couldn't get there. So I had to go out and find a place to hold it, and we held it at the Hotel Colorado in Glenwood Springs. And the only time we

could hold it was over the July 4th weekend of all things. We'd always held AFT conventions, so we were told, at the end of August, just before the school year started. The school year never started before Labor Day in the old days in most cities. New York was an exception. And, as a result, we came in mid summer to Glenwood Springs.

Well, the big delegations got there. The small delegations didn't get there. One, Denver's air service isn't what it is today. It wasn't the fifth busiest in the world in those days, and people didn't fly very often to Denver, Colorado, so we didn't have a big convention. But we had the Chicago delegation, the big city delegation, plus Colorado, and that's really what it was, and that's all that were there.

And it was out of that convention we organized the Progressive Caucus, because as we put on the floor a resolution that even said teachers should have the right to strike, and we were having to propose it, and some Raoul Talhet was a new young president, along with Ben Russ from California who did come, and they came to defend

the Los Angeles Federation of Teachers, which was being reviewed by the Executive Council at that session for Communist domination to be excommunicated from the AFT. They'd already done this several times in the history of the AFT, this was going to be the latest thrust. They came to defend them.

At the convention two things happened, not really of design, except for John Eckland's design. He was kind of a designer himself, even though he was a Denver teacher, and suddenly he was president of a national union and, frankly, wanted to be the full-time president. But his design, he was smart enough in one year to determine who the power players were in the union, other than the Cleveland and Chicago Teachers Union people who were so rabidly anti-communist. And, as a result, he suggested to me, "Herrick, you ought to be chairman of this caucus. We have to get this Progressive Caucus -- Margaret Root from Philadelphia is sitting over here in a dead end corner, and we have to pull in --" I think there were three caucuses at the time -- "we have to pull in the others." Mary

Wheeler, she was on the West side of Chicago, I'm trying to remember the name of the school system, about 500 teachers. Mary was a very staunch, very much Irish Catholic herself. But I must tell you, just didn't like Jack Fuchs one bit, didn't like the domination of the Chicago Teachers Union and, therefore, could be wooed into a Progressive Caucus that otherwise was kind of open about things. So we wooed Mary and her group into the Margaret Root group. Then among us, suddenly I became chairman of the caucus.

Out of that, we put a slate on the floor and we swept the convention. A lot of people saying, well, it's only because there were a few of us there. But really, all the big city people were there, Philadelphia was there, New York was there, everybody was there except the smaller communities outside of Colorado. We had 40 locals there. You voted not by membership but by delegates who were there. So we had 40 small locals that maybe totaled 1,000 people. And Denver, which totaled 400 people, voting maybe all of our delegate strength would be 50 people. Whereas, the Chicago

Teachers Union was limited by the constitution to have no more than 20, it was the big one. So they come there with 12- or 15,000 members and 20 people to vote on the floor, and we won the election because the delegates voted one vote. It had nothing to do with membership.

In the process of it, though, the last day of the convention we had all these great international resolutions on the floor. And Jack Fuchs would walk up and down the side of the convention floor and would -- we had about 300 people in the room that was built for 200, so it was crowded. He'd say, "Don't vote with them, they're the Commies. Don't vote with them, they're going to undo you and keep that Los Angeles local in." He'd say this any time any issue came up that had any kind of a liberal kind of tinge to it. So, at the end of the convention, since the Chicago Teachers Union had been cut out except literally for one or two people being on the Executive Council, and they sat there with a minority of three or four, and we had the other whatever it was in those days, 15 people on the Executive Council. I was chairman of the

caucus, I was not on the council. John Eckland was there as president. We ran nobody for vice president out of the western states except Dan Jackson out of San Francisco who, incidentally, is a wonderful trade unionist, understood what we were talking about and who became kind of a real main stay of the caucus. But you won't hear his name many other times, because he never agreed to be an officer of the caucus, until we convinced them in the middle '50s that he should be in the AFT Executive Council. He never sought office. He was a guy almost without ego except that he wanted to take the industrial city of San Francisco and bargain, Local 61 I think was the number. And it was one of the older locals and had not been tainted with communist domination as the Seattle and the University of Washington and the University of Colorado and UCLA and the Los Angeles Teachers Union had been in the West side of the United States. We never saw the unions from Montana, from Anaconda or Butte, who had for years bargained contracts because their local Wobblys who controlled their central bodies said you're going

to bargain through school board, we are the system anyway, and, by golly, they did. They had been bargaining contracts, and somehow or another they never got to a convention. Mr. Kinsley somehow or another never got them there. He always spoke glowingly of them, but they never came.

So, nobody could tell us what bargaining was all about. But we went through this little transition out of the Glenwood Springs convention, and then suddenly I became almost the permanent chairman of the Progressive Caucus, which grew and grew and grew. And in this process, through the middle '50s we kept nurturing this Colorado resolution that we ought to bargain collectively. When Detroit finally got on the band wagon, when the Twin Cities finally got on the band wagon, when Boston decided they never had liked New York anyway and got on the band wagon, when Philadelphia began to grow, and when the Washington Teachers Union decided to get on the band wagon, we finally got enough votes to get the resolution through.

I'd have to look at the convention records, but it was either '55 or '56. And that was the

first year I ran for the Executive Council, because in the meantime our caucus got divided by the upstate New York, Boston, Detroit, Milwaukee, Twin Cities against the rest of us in the Progressive Caucus. And John Eckland was dumped as president by a secret ballot vote. And the Progressive Caucus won practically all the vice presidencies, and suddenly Carl Megel was president of the AFT.

Well, you see, Colorado hadn't really grown that much business, that's one thing. The big cities really rightfully should be kind of calling the shots on it anyway. I didn't really object to that. I was a little surprised that Eckland lost that vote because he was a guy who knew how to preside at a convention and he was good and he was articulate, very well spoken. Wherever he went to speak anyplace in the country, locals usually began to grow right after he'd been there to speak. Just really a very unusual kind of leader.

But Detroit had a guy named Arthur Elder, and Arthur Elder and his cohorts Francis Comfort, Mary Ellen Riordan then, rather young in the local, but Francis Comfort and Arthur Elder were Detroit. And

long since, since you were never supposed to be president of the AFT for more than two years at a time and Eckland had been there four consecutive years, it wasn't appropriate for him to be the president of the AFT any longer.

John's position was we ought to run for two year terms, the president ought to be full-time, we ought to get rid of the tenured position of secretary-treasurer. And in that fight that went on that year as to whether or not Irvin Kinsley would remain with the union, Carl Megel became the difference, because I'm positive to this day that no local in Michigan -- and they were 20 percent of the Progressive Caucus -- secret ballot, you don't know who or didn't vote, no local in Michigan probably voted for Eckland.

Well, since I brought up the name of Carl Megel, we'll speak briefly, because Carl and I in our own respective ways kind of became lasting friends. But Carl was always aware of the fact that I felt he was a less than adequate president of the AFT. A nice guy who had some of the same enemies as he would define them to us as he would

come to Colorado or as he would come and preside at the Executive Council meeting. Then quietly, since I was still chairman of the Progressive Caucus now sitting on the Executive Council as vice president, he'd draw me aside and say, you know, you have to do this and this and this, because he really wasn't for the Chicago Teachers Union leadership, so he would tell me. Whether he was playing both ends against the middle I never questioned. I suspected what he was doing, but that wasn't my point.

My point was, well, Carl, be a strong president, bang the gavel at conventions, act like you're in charge of the Executive Council. Even though you're sitting a minority with Joe Olandis, a former president from Cleveland being on the Executive Council, and Jack Fuchs by that time himself being on the Executive Council as a vice president, you've got your minority there. But put the coalition together. We're not standing in your way. We want to go someplace, but we also want to bargain collectively. Do you understand that's where the Progressive Caucus is, and most of us are on this council.

We also want the integration of our schools. And those are the two big issues before this AFT in the middle 1950s. And I used to say that to Carl time and again. Occasionally he would call me and say, "Herrick, I've got to go someplace to speak, will you come along with me?" And I'd go along with him. And then because the AFT had no money, we'd live in a twin bedroom kind of stuff. He would tell me all of his miserable kind of personal lives that he'd had. I could never get him to focus on the AFT. And I love Carl, except that I knew we were going no place with Carl. And for awhile, that's exactly where we went, because we forced collective bargaining in the next convention after he was president on the AFT, and the Executive Council then had to raise per capita and decided we're going to focus on a city that will take collective bargaining.

Let's talk about the collective bargaining issue and Carl's presidency. I'm sure Carl is for anything that the majority were for any time. I think he understood collective bargaining. I think he felt the Chicago Teachers Union stood in his way

of espousing it. Now, for being for it and espousing are two different things. He could not espouse it as a national leader until the convention made the statement, then he was forced to defend it, because he had to talk about teachers strikes, and Carl wasn't ready to talk about it. That's one reason.

The other thing is the Chicago Teachers Union had what we always called the deal between the Illinois Education Association. We've got the majority of teachers in Chicago, don't come in and raid us.

END OF TAPE 1

BEGINNING OF TAPE 2

MS. RENE EPSTEIN: This is Rene Epstein. My interview with Herrick Roth is continuing on February 16th, 1987 in New York.

MR. HERRICK ROTH: What I've just said about the deal between the Chicago Teachers Union and the IEA was this, that the IEA could indeed lobby in Springfield. The Chicago Teachers Union would go with labor delegations for labor purposes since they're one of the largest local unions in the Chicago Federation of Labor, which is the local central labor of first the AFL and then later the AFL-CIO. And they would appear in those capacities being supportive of general school finance issues and stuff. But when it came to teacher issues in Springfield, inevitably the IEA spoke, Chicago did not.

But the IEA did not try to get a strong classroom teachers organization under any name in Chicago and, therefore, Chicago remained forever a strongly dominant and majority teachers organization, the only real one in the country. Because when you get to the smaller cities like

Cleveland where they had one-fifth as many teachers as in Chicago or Gary, which had one-fifth as many teachers as Cleveland. Those were majority organizations too, but they were about the only three you could put your finger on outside of Atlanta, Georgia in Fulton County and say we're majority teachers unions in this country.

We'll talk about collective bargaining now as it came into the Megel years in his presidency, because they were not of his creation or his doing, he simply had to be reactive to it all the way. I want to talk about strikes only in the sense of the philosophical relationships of strikes. Detroit, Cleveland and Chicago probably in terms of labor movements and the closeness of our locals to their central bodies could indeed relate to strikes, could indeed go out and walk the picket lines with the Auto Workers, the Steelworkers, the Boilermakers, whoever is on strike, they'd go out and walk the picket line. Therefore, they associated themselves through ethnicity and/or a pure love of the labor movement being part of them. So, even to have a strike of teachers, they would

have expected, because they knew how to walk a picket line, that the labor movement in those cities would turn around and walk the picket line with them.

That was not true in New York, and the reason it wasn't true in New York is, indeed, when we started collective bargaining here in this city. First of all, I have to tell you why we started here in this city. Chicago said we have a fine arrangement with our board of education. Mayor Daly and the other mayors before and subsequent always appoint to the boards, since it's like San Francisco, Chicago and San Francisco have identical kinds of school structures. They're the nonreform school structures in the country. They're appointed by the mayor, confirmed by the city council and the board is not elected.

Denver and Newark were two of the first elected boards of education in the great Culbertson renewal of democracy in the American educational scene of nonpartisan democracy of electing school corporate bodies by the people in special elections not to be tainted by partisan politics to employ a

full-time superintendent who indeed would be in demand. And whether that was a reform or not is another matter. San Francisco and Chicago abhorred it and never did change, and I think probably haven't changed to this day.

So you have a different kind of a background as to why even those cities and teachers could relate, therefore, to the industrial center of all the cities. And San Francisco had been the same way. If it had a majority organization, it would not have feared a strike, even though some of the teachers in San Francisco came from families of great wealth and were teaching out of pure love of teaching and who lived on Nobb Hill, they would have walked a picket line, even though they were in the capitalist society of the Crocker Banks. And strange, strange kinds of things happened around this.

Now, Chicago said they wouldn't bargain, they said they had a nice arrangement. Detroit wasn't quite majority and didn't know if it was ready to risk it, even though it had been one of the leaders in the Progressive Caucus who was supporting the

Colorado position. In fact, Michigan was the first state outside of California to support the Colorado position for collective bargaining. We never had a majority in Denver. The more militant we became, the more we looked like we really wanted to bargain collectively, the more the school district went out of its way to hire in teachers from the East who loved skiing in Colorado, and skiing was beginning to come in the '50s to Colorado. And they were the new young jet set and they could care less about unions, and they were being paid pretty well because the Denver Teachers Union had somehow or another -- even though it changed its name to the Denver Federation of Teachers -- somehow or another had by intimidation forced a new salary schedule on the Denver teaching communities. You don't need unions when your belly is pretty full is what they used to say, and that's true, true in teaching too.

So we never made the grade. The only place we could have made it out West would be San Francisco. You had to jump all the way from St. Louis at the time, which was almost a majority, or Detroit, which was almost a majority. But there

were those three cities that wouldn't do it, Gary couldn't be the starter because Cleveland was bigger than Gary. And why shouldn't Chicago do it. And there you went, one, two, three. And Chicago said, no, and we had no place to go.

So we kept talking it over in the Executive Council. One year after the resolution was passed we got the per capita raised, which you had to get raised in the convention or by referendum -- oh, substantially, like from 20 cents a month at the top to a flat 35 cents a month or something per member across the country -- so we could hire a national staff. And Mary Ellen Riordan, or at that time Francis Comfort and Arthur Elder and Mary Ellen to some extent engaging in this. And Ellen -- oh, my, what was Ellen's last name -- anyway, the three women who loved and adored Arthur Elder, who was a great labor chieftain and a guy out of Wayne State's kind of background, knowing what labor philosophically was all about. And Arthur Elder was a great guy. I'm not trying to downgrade him at all, I'm just trying to say that the women who led that union -- and it was women

who led the union -- loved Arthur. And they

decided that New York has a lot of teachers organizations, and Dick Parish was on the Executive Council at the time, black and beautiful, from my point of view, although people would dispute that. But I don't dispute it and won't to this day. But Dick kept saying, we have 16 or 17 teachers organizations in New York. We have a black teachers organization, we have the high school men's organization. Most of these people don't belong to the New York Teachers Guild. Maybe we could amalgamate them in some way. So I kept saying we ought to have an election. You don't have to have everybody in it, if you get somebody to have an election. But there's no labor law everybody was saying to me. No labor law in New York says we can have a collective bargaining election like you'd file for one under the National Labor Relations Act.

And, so in the process of it we hired Dave Seldon to come to New York to say, well, what can we do to amalgamate a better base than less than 2500 members in a system that has 40,000 teachers. The reason it was the AFT decision and not the New

York decision is really one of numbers. The other thing is that there was no comprehension on the AFT Executive Council in my opinion, except for Dan Jackson, who had recently come from San Francisco, to even pursue the point that you win elections without having majority membership. But you had to get a root to get a secret ballot for that purpose.

In other words, if the teachers of New York were confronted with a choice, do you or don't you want to bargain collectively, question number one. If they say yes, then you have organizations qualified to be put on the balance hot. And since there were 16 or 17 teachers organizations in New York, one of which was the NEA, which its relationship to New York City was about like the New York Teachers Guild. In fact, it wasn't even the New York Teachers Guild. They just boasted as many members, whatever that meant. They had 2500 members or so. So, if they wanted to compete in the marketplace, first they'd have to get rid of all of their officials who were administrators from their organization or they couldn't qualify. And if they did that, then they could qualify and put

on the ballot. And even though they didn't want collective bargaining, then they would have to be in the contest with us as to who was going to bargain for the teachers in New York. But we had to cross the first hurdle.

One of the things, therefore, the AFT decided early on and really commissioned with the pure consent of both Dick Parish and Rebecca Simonson on the Executive Council, certainly with the Cy Begals and the Charlie Cogans and the others who were outside the Executive Council but were the real leaders in the New York Teachers Guild, the Alice Marshes, the others whose names are so well known. They had to determine, are we willing to change our own function, because one of the things that the council decided early on, regardless of what anybody else might say about it -- and you may not find it in the record because we didn't used to keep verbatim records except of just motions. But the whole thrust of hours of discussion with Mary Wheeler of West Suburban is what it was called, West Suburban, Illinois, and Herrick Roth, among others, and Earl McGinnis out of Wilmington,

Delaware, and Dan Jackson out of San Francisco leading the battle saying let's create a new organization. In other words, the AFT maybe if it can amalgamate the guild with several others and we say we want to maintain our name, let's give a brand new name to the organization. Let's find out who's going to give us a ballot, let's organize enough people, if there is a ballot, that say yes first to collective bargaining, and then let's be ready to have the teachers make the differentiation between whatever our new organization is going to be called. If it's still going to be the guild, that's fine, that's all right with us, but if we need a new name to get the others in, give it a new name.

Then we went the next step, and the next step was Dave Seldon will be there. He'll be organizing the staff of the New York Teachers Guild and any of the other organizations into kind of a coalition of organizations so that all of them will be organized to vote yes on the day they can vote yes, first in bargaining; secondly, on being the bargaining choice.

There were many support organizations in this -- there's no doubt about that. The AFT put Seldon on salary and gave him supports services. They also gave a grant. In those days we used to give state federations $1500 a year if they had more than ten locals to help subsidize their staff. You'd have to look back through the budget, but because we'd raised the per capita, I'm sure that the AFT itself put at least $50,000 in the first year on top of Dave Seldon and support staff into the organization, and Dick Parish was kind of the supervisor of it as being the man from the Executive Council. I'm sure people dispute that these days because later there was a falling out between Dick Parish and the Progressive Caucus within what was later to become the United Federation of Teachers.

The IUD was under control, primarily the Steelworkers and the Auto Workers. And Jake Slayman was head of the IUD, and he was a Steelworker out of Pittsburgh in Washington at the AFL-CIO headquarters. And the Auto Workers were the biggest per capita payers into it. And the

Auto Workers were in Arthur Elder's and Mary Ellen Riordan's and Francis Comfort's back yard. So the approach was made to the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO for a match. Indeed, they got it.

I'm just saying the greatest part of the expenditure, the investment, the idea, the strategy of organization and the lifting from the Detroit staff to New York City of one Dave Seldon was as an AFT employee, not as a New York Teachers Guild employee, brought about in about a 12 to 15 month period a strategy, a coalition of organizations, a new name, the United Federation of Teachers, and the first bargaining election.

Now, how was the bargaining election arrived at? Yes, the AFT asked people to come from various parts of the country to help in this organization campaign at the expense of the local or state organizations. It is true probably the AFL-CIO at a point put some organizational money in from their regional office in New York City. How much, I'm not sure. But the point I want to stress, regardless of what anybody says in this oral

history of the AFT for posterity is, this was a creation of the AFT, it was the design of the American Federation of Teachers, it was the failure of Chicago, Cleveland and Gary to take up the banner and win the first election. Therefore, we went to New York as the big city as opposed to Boston, which had a pretty good sized teacher union, but kind of understood what we were doing but were really off track with New York. Therefore, why go it. And Philadelphia, even though it had been somewhat off track with New York in some respects, was not a logical place to do it because there was no amalgamation of organizations possible there. Besides, it wasn't the big city. It wasn't the city with one million AFL-CIO members in it. It was not the city where one half of the families in the town related to a union that was affiliated with the AFL-CIO.

So we deliberately selected New York City. It was not logical when you had seven percent of all the teachers in the union. Denver, Colorado had fourteen percent. Why not select Denver. Well, Denver wasn't a logical place to win an

election, that's why, because everybody could care less about having a union, they were all doing well.

The role of Carl Megel in all this was to be around when you need to be around when the AFT had to have a presidential spokesman. He certainly was not sympathetically joined by anybody in the National Caucus on this. He was simply under the domination of his Executive Council, which was -- it's like having a completely highly Democratic Congress that can override the Congress of the United States and the veto. That's really what we were looking at in the AFT. That's an extreme example because the two are way out of proportion, but the mathematics are exactly the same. So Carl Megel became the errand boy in this. He wouldn't have selected Dave Seldon to be the guy to come here.

I'm not certain that those of us from the Executive Council would have either, except Detroit loved Dave. And Detroit didn't really want to get rid of Dave, but Detroit could see its involvement in it through a Seldon, and its relationship to the

IUD to the Detroit saying to the Ruethers and to the Slaymans, you know, and the McDonalds in Pittsburgh of the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department, we need your support in this, because we have not had labor support before to say teachers could bargain. Because with the right to bargain goes the right to strike, and we've always been told we can't strike. Suddenly, we have a whole new ball game.

The craft unions aren't going to give it to us, as they looked at it. The industrial unions, which were their home base around Lake Erie and around Lake Michigan, which are very strong, compared to the craft unions. Whereas, the craft unions back here were dominant in the New York area, not the industrial unions. Because the craft unions included the clothing workers and others that some people considered industrial, but the plain fact is they were particular crafts in the sense of dealing with the jurisdiction, it was a clear jurisdiction as opposed to the massive different kinds of crafts you have in a steel plant or an auto plant, which became industrial. So,

that's where we got our money.

I'm sure the money grants grew and in-kind services grew because I'm sure the AFL-CIO and the IUD gave staff members to come and advise and consent with Dave Seldon, who was in charge of this campaign, and the officers of the United Federation of Teachers. Now, in my own case, I came back here two years in a row. I spent a total of 11 days here in New York City. If anybody tells me that Kit Carson, Colorado is provincial, I can tell you that there are parts of Brooklyn that are more provincial in terms of teachers and schools that I went into where even the postman didn't know where the school was. And I was escorted on three occasions to major high schools, the biggest of which I believe was Washington High School over in Brooklyn. Not by subway, but otherwise I always went by subway quite on my own. I knew my way around New York, which I had a hard time explaining to New Yorkers I did. But I'd been here 13 months every day of my life going all over this city on behalf of the United States Army, so I knew what the city was.

But they assigned me a new young man who had just come into teaching and who drove me around in his little Fiat, and his name was Albert Shanker. And Al Shanker, I used to say to him, "Al, what are you driving this Italian car for?"

"It's all I can afford." I said, "Well, if you're in San Francisco, I suppose you'd be driving a Toyota or something." I said, "Why can't you get an American built car, don't you understand the UAW hasn't got its label on this car?" And he used to laugh about it with me. He'd explain that's all he could afford.

Al was really, no matter what else you hear about it, was being brought into the staffing of the UFT on a part-time basis by Dave and had no real relationship otherwise to the policy that was going on that was made by those who had been the leaders in the guild. Dave was expanding their concept of how you put other organizations together. Dave did a good job of that, I must tell you. When I came here for the first collective bargaining election, which was simply the right to vote on whether or not they could bargain before

anybody threatened to strike or anything else, and the school board finally consented because of political pressure of the union movement, namely, the New York City Central Labor Council. And the guy whom I later saw a lot of, an electrician, Harry Van Arsdale, finally went to the school board and finally went to the mayor and says, here are the facts of life, we want this election, and spoke to enough members of the city council who understood how many union people there were in New York. In other words, we had things going for us here we wouldn't have had going in Chicago, because Chicago was a mixed breed of union town. The Teamsters were predominant and the Hotel and Restaurant Employees. And there's no doubt about the fact that the Mafia controlled both of them in Chicago, and there was no place for us to do business.

The beauty of doing it in New York is, everything seemed to be legitimate. And Van Arsdale sounded just like Manhattan when it was first settled. But people also understood whether you were on Staten Island or Brooklyn or Queens or

the Bronx or Manhattan, they're going to pay attention. So the school board literally was told you're going to have the election.

It was a referendum ballot. Wouldn't you know, they sent it out right on the last day of school when they knew that half the people left town anyway. But, nonetheless, the ballots came back, the majority was for collective bargaining.

Now, there's some parts of this story that do not have continuity to me because for awhile I was not on the AFT Executive Council, of my design, however. And then I came back to the council afterwards. The first time I came here I met with officers of the New York Central Labor Council and as a perfunctory kind of thing, because those of us who had come in from the outside, from other places like Michigan and Minnesota and Wisconsin and so on who were supposedly staff. Actually, I was a full-time elected executive secretary of the Colorado Federation of Teachers, and at their expense I did come here. In other words, it was part of our volunteer contribution to the collective bargaining effort. But by the time the

second election came, the last time I came back to New York, of course, was simply a matter of the UFT or the NEA affiliate -- which the NEA had also amalgamated some groups together and, of course, they won.

At that same time, just by pure coincidence, I'd been talked into running for the state senate in Colorado. Wouldn't you know, I got elected, and it was an overwhelming victory for those of us who were new, and we outnumbered the old timers, therefore, we took over the caucuses of our legislative body. And I became chairman of both the education committee of the state senate for four years and also the joint budget committee, which is the ruling legislative body of 100 members of the Colorado general assembly. So I elected not to run again for the vice presidency in 1958 of the AFT Executive Council. Therefore, what is a local problem -- I would say at that point the United Federation of Teachers having 15- or 20,000 members, eventually 35-, 40,000, eventually more than that because they took in other people, became itself a dominant organization. And also became

the dominant union in the AFT, which caused no little trauma from time to time with Chicago, which always had at least 20,000 members.

When I ran again for the AFT Executive Council at somebody's request, and I think it was 1962, that same year the Colorado AFL-CIO, then called the Colorado Labor Council, had a president by the name of George Cavender out of the teachers union. And we were the second merged state in the country in the state central bodies after the AFL-CIO convention in New York here in the armory in 1955. By the year 1956, Tennessee and ourselves were the first two states to merge at the local and state central body level because we were given five years to do it. But Cavender led the charge. Cavender as a teacher then became full-time president, had been full-time president of the Colorado Federation of Labor, the old AFL before that. So he had resigned from teaching and had maintained his activity in the teachers union, but not heavily.

In the meantime, though, the full-time person, the Colorado Federation of Teachers, we had

grown. I had become while I was AFT vice president for western states in the middle of the '50s, I had lost that relationship, but we'd picked up staff from places I'd been like Arizona and other places. We had combined ourselves with the State, County and Municipal Employees, which I'm not sure the AFT liked. And I was really a union organizer, not teaching any more, having resigned from teaching at the time I was in the state senate. I'd built up a staff and we were organizing public employees and teachers both in Colorado.

And in 1962, somebody convinced me of two things, and they almost happened simultaneously: One of the requests of the Denver Federation of Teachers and the Progressive Caucus, which I continued to chair at AFT conventions during these years, that I should run again for the Executive Council, which I did, and I got elected.

At the same time, George Cavender was told by his doctor he could no longer stay as president of the state AFL-CIO, and shortly after I was elected again to the Executive Council, the industrial unions, and the miscellaneous trades and the

building trades who were in equal control of our state body couldn't agree on any one from any one of their groups, and finally they came in to see me and gave me 24 hours to say yes or no, would I be their new president. So, I suddenly became full fledged in the labor movement as the full-time head of the state AFL-CIO in Colorado, almost when I came back on the Executive Council. But I stayed, nonetheless, on the Executive Council for the next 11 years and got back into the thick of things. Also, I had a very different position than anybody else in the Executive Council. I was not a staff member of the union. I was an active member of my own local executive committee and my own local in Denver, Local 858, but I was not a teacher, therefore, I would never participate in a vote that related to teaching conditions of my own volition, and I was on the AFT Executive Council, but I became literally kind of a liaison between the labor movement and the state bodies across the country and the AFT. Not by design, but kind of the informal relationships that grow up. I began to know who all the presidents were in every state.

I began to get their perception of who the teachers were and who the teacher union leaders were. It was quite clear that UFT was strongly in command of itself. UFT was almost greater than the AFT itself, which nobody had visualized or had planned, but it happened.

So when the first teachers strike was here in New York and people were put in jail -- or later when I walked down Broad Street with the president of the state AFL-CIO over here in New Jersey, who most teachers hated anyway, but I could convince him Charlie Marciano I think his name was, that it's all right for Herrick Roth to come from Denver as a teacher and walk with him at the head of a parade when the black teachers in Newark didn't like either the president of the AFT and/or the president of the New Jersey AFL-CIO, but I could walk down Broad Street. And I was on the Executive Council of the AFT, therefore, I represented them. And Dave Seldon and others could eventually go to jail themselves to their irreverent actions of actually having teachers on strike, whether it was New York City or Newark.

Well, I'm going to give you kind of a generalized scenario, because my relationship with the teachers union, particularly from 1962 on, was less and less local, less and less state, less and less oriented to any particular local union in this country, and more and more oriented to the affairs of the days of the national scene and the AFL-CIO itself. If we were to assess where the teachers union was within the AFL-CIO, I think five times I was a delegate to AFL-CIO conventions from the teachers union. The last two AFL-CIO conventions I was not a delegate from the teachers union, but I was a delegate, of course, on the state AFL-CIO. The difference is the state AFL-CIO has one vote and one delegate, that was me.

So I went to every convention and I could perceive differences and changes. But until the AFT itself numerically grew to above 100,000 members, which was as I recall well into the middle '60s, because the UFT at a point was probably 40 percent of the total membership of the AFT, just like when we joined the AFT, Chicago was 50 percent of the AFT. But when it really began to grow and

when the big cities began to bargain, the Philadelphias and the Bostons and the Detroits and the Clevelands, and everybody else, and Chicago itself finally had to bargain, finally had to sit down and sign agreements. And, therefore, had to confront themselves with the opportunity to strike, and that's what I call it the opportunity to strike.

They then, each in their own way, became their own individual stories, and the AFT simply became the collective embodiment of these major city locals and at the AFL-CIO conventions became more and more impressive because the cross jurisdiction out of the Chicago Federation of Labor or the New York Central Labor Council or the Philadelphia Central Labor Council or whatever it might be, they had to be involved as long as public employees and teachers among them began to strike and were sufficient in size -- you know, in Philadelphia went from 1,000 members to 10,000 members, you got to know it was rather impressive in the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO convention. It was rather impressive in the Philadelphia central body

of the AFL-CIO locals in that city. It was impressive, too, because at the same time then the Fire Fighters and the State, County, Municipal Employees began to themselves bargain. And then it was a vying as to whether -- what's the district council, the State, County here in New York City that Jerry Worth came out of to be president of the State, County, Municipal Employees District Council 37 or whatever it is, whether they were going to be the dominant public employee union in the New York Central Labor Council or the UFT was. So, here's a Central Labor Council that says it has a million members. I used to read the per capita they paid on about 600,000. They had plenty of members but they didn't pay them all to the AFL-CIO. If they had 600,000, over 150,000 of those were public employees through the AFSCME District Council and/or the UFT. They were 20 percent of the membership of the central body. That kind of influence in the AFL-CIO was felt because you could go to a national convention in the AFL-CIO, or you could go to the lobbying outside the Executive Council halls, just like we could do today if we

went to Bal Harbour, Florida on this very day because the AFL-CIO Executive Council is meeting there, we'd find all the people who were key to the central labor bodies around the lobbies of the AFL-CIO Executive Council mixing with their friends and their neighbors and whatever they need to stay to their international union presidents who are sitting inside in the AFL-CIO Executive Council. That's where Al Shanker is today, he's down there in Bal Harbour.

Well, from the New York Central Body or the San Francisco Central Body or the Chicago Central Body, you got to know every now and then a teacher was among those who was there, and that was new. So, it brought a new aura. As soon as the teachers got to a half million members and the State, County were already past a million, who do you think is the biggest union in the AFL-CIO in per capita payment right now? It's the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

In a sense, what I'm describing here is a growing up process, a growing into process. There's something about numbers that impress

people. The labor movement today in terms of a reporting organization reports -- even though I have not been directly associated other than carrying my union card for the last ten years -- it reports yet around 14 million people who register under the Labor/Management Reporting Act to the United States government and/or are known by its report of its unions who do register, if they have at least one collective bargaining agreement under the National Labor Relations Act, therefore, the union has to register. What's happened is the absolute numbers have not grown, and even though the labor force has grown, but the absolute numbers in public employment has grown considerably. So, as you look at the AFL-CIO Executive Council today, it isn't just one person, like Jerry Worth out of New York, who did get on the AFL-CIO Executive Council before he died, and who was there before Al Shanker was there. And Al and Jerry weren't necessarily the best of friends, either politically or personally, and they were vying for their own power base in terms of New York City in particular. But, what I'm saying is that there's a

relationship, whether we like it that way or not, and the politics of America and the internal politics of societies where there's the American Medical Association, the AFL-CIO, the Republican or Democratic parties of persons who sometimes become more predominant themselves in their being viewed as the union or the organization, as contrasted with the membership who make up the organization.

What we're talking about here is what the ingredients of an institution become at a point. In other words, you sometimes have very strong leaders and they by virtue of their differences of their perspectives of either the institution in which they jointly belong and/or how they vy with each other become predominant in the process. I don't think the State, County, Municipal Employees and the American Federation of Teachers were ever met to contest with each other. Within the building crafts, the contest was rather automatic as technology rolled into the crafts as to whether the cement masons, the iron workers did the highway construction and the bridges. But with the AFT and the AFL-CIO and the American Federation of State,

County and Municipal Employees in. In one case, you have anybody who's a state and local and governmental employee, other than a teacher, in the labor movement within their jurisdiction, technically, the way you define jurisdiction within the rules of the AFL, or within the unwritten rules. In other words, State, County and Municipal Employees are not supposed to organize teachers. The AFT is not supposed to organize other than teachers.

The plain fact is, the AFT does organize other than teachers, and had from the start. The clerks in Chicago were members of the AFT long before they were anyplace else I guess. But at least the point is they'd set a precedent that in addition to teachers we have certain other people who are in the union. Or the great thrust that finally came to the UFT when teacher membership obviously wasn't going to grow because the number of teachers in New York City were not going to grow by virtue of what was happening to the public school systems. But paraprofessionals came in, and then other kinds of jurisdictions within the school

system, which technically not being certified teachers, the State, County and Municipal Employees might say, well, they're our babies. Or who organizes the teaching hospitals in the universities of this community. They can go anyplace I guess. Or they can belong now to the Service Employees International Union, if they're hospital employees, even though they're teachers really. So jurisdictions get confused.

But leaders also get confused. Where you have two very strong, very brilliant persons who come out of assertedly on both of their parts -- and this was true before Jerry Worth died. And Jerry Worth's wife I think was a member of the United Federation of Teachers, as a matter of fact, she was a teacher. You get into that contest of worth from the liberal Jewish socialist community, as asserted, and/or the Shanker from the same community as asserted. But each from different generations in a sense and different relationships to those communities. But in the AFL-CIO it meant something as to the impact to the respective unions.

Let's talk a little bit about some of the undercurrent or sometimes the main streams of what went on in the AFT as we were proceeding post haste and 40 years too late in a sense to reach the bargaining table. In other words, if it had been the 1920s I think and I had been a mature adult then, I would not have in my time of 1960 wondered why it took teachers so long to decide that they were worthy of bargaining, or that they were employees, whether they thought they were professional or not, because they drew a pay check and the working conditions were otherwise unilaterally given to us. But that was 40 years later. We finally had achieved some success.

So, I want to talk about the union as a social vehicle, because it indeed was that from its infancy no doubt, and the great teaching minds who could dare to be called union members. But please remember, in New York when the New York Teachers Union was infiltrated and almost I guess politically overwhelmed by the known Communists of the Communist Party of the state of New York, the liberality on all other social issues except how

you should perceive Communism per se, small C or big C, Soviet conspirators or not. The overwhelming intellectual community stayed with the New York Teachers Guild, and in all other respects was extremely liberal. In fact, probably articulated as well as any social institution in the country, even though they only had 40,000 members when we first came face-to-face with this great New York delegation that came to AFT conventions. They had a spirit about them that said we're concerned about peoples all over the world. The negative part of that spirit was we don't want them to be involved in a conspiracy. We want to be sure they remain democratic, and sometimes almost misunderstanding that you cannot impose democracy on people any faster than you can put any other political philosophy on them, unless you put force in the process.

So now I will discuss a little bit of these continuing strains that went through the AFT that related to the AFT prior to collective bargaining and during collective bargaining and after the first collective bargaining victories. Because,

some of them became predominant in the long haul. Let me go back to the first convention I attended in 1947, though, not the first one in '46, that Denver went to. Because there, everybody came back starry eyed and said you should hear these intellectuals, these great liberals, these people who can stand up and without script debate each other without missing a coma or an exclamation point -- as I don't do too well myself yet -- a complete sentence before you think of another thought and interrupt the sentence that you're in the middle of. They were just absolutely impressed.

When you asked them who are you most impressed with, inevitably the names of the New York delegation would come to the fore. Therefore, even though they were small and at that time two and a half, three, four, five percent maximum of the total membership of the AFT when Denver and Colorado became a part of the AFT. They were predominant in terms of the floor debates on the big issues of the world. And there were big issues of the world. And the plain fact is, the world was

closer to lower Manhattan than it was to Denver, Colorado.

So it wasn't that we weren't able to assimilate these things. We had some very well read people, they were scholars, they knew how to discuss things in the academic sense. But here they were in a union because our economics in Denver were bad, because our class sizes were overloaded, because we were confronting all the same problems that teachers were every place. How can you teach kids if you have 48 kids in a room. How can you teach kids if there's no counselor to counsel with them outside the room. How can you take time for planning. How can you improve the physical facilities. How come our libraries are so lousy that we can't even give the kinds of books. How come we're limited to 37 textbooks and they give us 50 kids. These are the questions, you see, that were overwhelming.

In other words, we were talking about working conditions. And suddenly we go to these great national debates in the American Federation of Teachers conventions where in four days there were

resolutions on the national issues and one day on the organizational business of the AFT, and that was it. Five days of convention, year after year.

Well, the predominant theme always related to a social issue. Until you got to the issue of Communism and who was a real Commie and who wasn't -- which was the fight of the Chicago, Gary, Cleveland axis as we came to say in our conventions versus the rest of the AFT. It was rather difficult to separate the real issues. But the funny part about it is on the way to the forum, as they say, the collective bargaining issue had to be superimposed on this, and yet we were talking about a process. They were talking about the great social values, the great international values of the world around them. They weren't relating, as I would today, that the day I was born there were one billion people on this earth. Today there are just short of five billion, more than whatever of the people whoever lived on the earth are alive today who would have known in the difference between the ages of 30 when I joined the teachers union and the age of 70 that this kind of a change would be in

the world.

But we were debating the issues that were relating to those changes going on, whether it was planned parenthood, agricultural, democracy, whatever it was.

I really could cover many issues, but I think you're going to get so many in this oral history that you will get more than you bargained for. But I'd have to say that the great underlying theme that kind of united the AFT in the early '50s was the fact that even the Chicago Teachers Union and the Cleveland Teachers Union had to get the point of understanding that Joe McCarthy wasn't good for the country. That the kind of lack of process of demeaning people and declaring them guilty before they in fact were guilty, even if there was guilt, and who their associates were, finally offended the best of the people. Because they were at home. They weren't worried about what was going on in Moscow or around the world. They were worrying about something that was just upstream in Wisconsin from the Chicago Teachers Union. They were paying attention to the more progressive and the more

liberal Milwaukee Teachers Union or the Wisconsin Federation of Teachers about we have to do something about our senator from Wisconsin.

So, we debated the great issues. We passed resolution upon resolution. We passed resolutions on world hunger. We passed resolutions on the Marshall Plan that said we shouldn't impose ourselves on the rest of the world, but on the other hand, we must get other people to help themselves.

We did good things in resolutions. It made us feel good, because if we were into a thousand different kinds of ad hoc social organizations out there, the AFT suddenly crystallized it for us and gave us these points to speak from, albeit a minor voice within the halls of labor, let alone within the halls of our society around us. Because none of us were really influencing our communities. We were only indirectly influencing the legislative halls in our state capitals. If you can believe this, so far as I know, and I may be wrong about this, I was the first teacher who was on a teaching payroll of a public school system ever elected to a

legislature in this country. That was 1948.

I think during all this time we always felt we were influencing people as we were passing these grandiose resolutions that we fought about so strenuously on the floors of conventions, whether we were going to send aid to any particular part of the world on behalf of the United States government. I guess the resolutions that eventually got to the halls of Congress were impressive or not impressive, depending upon how the member of the Congress looked at how important are these people as constituents of mine as opposed to are they uttering what I should be considering in the world around us. In that sense, we certainly didn't influence the labor movement.

The reason we didn't influence the labor movement at national levels was quite obvious. The labor movement was a controlled bureaucracy. It wasn't a one person, one vote. It was a matter of up to ten people from international unions sitting in the convention voting block membership, whether it was 500,000 Machinists or one million Steelworkers or whoever it was. All you had to do

was call for a vote from the chair, if the vote didn't seem right, the chair would declare what he thought the vote was going to be anyway. It takes too long for a roll call, so there was no democracy in it.

So, if we wanted to penetrate and look too liberal and to join the Newspaper Guild and the American Guild of Variety Artists and the liberal organizations of the AFL-CIO, the only thing we came to know, we could eventually say, don't worry about us as professionals organizing and bargaining in the public marketplace, we kept putting those resolutions in front of the AFL-CIO after we adopted it in the mid '50s, the bargaining relationship, we put it there saying that we could probably stand up and say other professionals also are in unions. The great artistes in the movie world, the great artistes of the theater world, the great artistes of the music world, the airline pilots who are already by that time making five times as much as most of the rest of us anyway were suddenly in the AFL-CIO. True, they didn't participate until their skin was being scratched

but, nonetheless, they were in. So we could say we're joining the Newspaper Guild and all the rest of the people, we're the professionals.

We occasionally got our resolutions through in a spirit to them and occasionally in committees before they get to the floors of either local central bodies, state bodies and/or the AFL-CIO itself, we occasionally would make an imprint. But we didn't make a marked imprint. Because we were joining a bread and butter organization, and most of it was bread and butter. Even when Colorado sent a resolution started by the typographical union, the oldest and the most conservative of the unions, on the floor of our convention to get out of Vietnam when we had hardly been there six months, it upset everybody in the AFL-CIO so much that when we tried to get it through the AFT we had a fight.

Let's just talk about what happens to an embryonic union, even though it's as old as I am. It was formed in the same year and the same month that I was born, March 1916. Therefore, I am the living example of somebody who lives as long as his

union, but I didn't know it at the time I was born I was going to be a part of it.

The union has had so much time to get organized that it did not, that when suddenly organization and collective bargaining was thrust upon it it became itself overwhelmed by the duties of organizing teachers, getting into the bargaining table and beating the NEA to the punch wherever we had enough membership to beat the NEA to the punch. That so overwhelmed us, we could pass the best international resolution in the world, the best concern for the poor and the poverty and the deprived in this country, and never have time to implement it in fact. Therefore, our academic debates continued until they suddenly hit us in the middle, and that was the great civil rights debate that began with Brown Versus the Board of Education.

Debate, incidentally, that we heard about through the Dick Parishes in our union because he and Veronica Hill out of New Orleans were the blacks on the Executive Council. One man, one woman. We ourselves then had to face, if the

schools of this country have to be integrated by order of the Supreme Court of the United States, how about us. And immediately the debate became, but we will lose our members, we'll lose our local in Chattanooga, which was a good local. We'll lose our Atlanta City local. We'll lose our Fulton County local in Georgia, the two big southern locals. In Mobile we're struggling anyway. New Orleans, how can we possibly do it. And we're looking at everything south of the Mason-Dixon Line, and we didn't have too much except in the deep South, that was Birmingham, Irving Fullington out of Birmingham. My, goodness sakes, talk about a southern segregationist. This man was the epitome of it. Yet, here he had been on the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO, been a leader in the National Caucus.

Suddenly Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit and Gary got caught with all these big southern locals on their side of the fence. And only we had New Orleans. But what did we have? We had a white local and a black local in New Orleans. The white local belonged to the National Caucus, the black

local belonged to the Progressive Caucus. So, we were immediately segregated ourselves. The blacks came to our caucus, and there weren't many blacks who ever came to a convention. Sometimes we wondered if Veronica Hill had any members because she'd arrive almost by herself plus one other, and yet she had the big local in New Orleans. She had the 4- or 500 members. The white local was only 100 members or so, but it was close to the school board. It was the one that got things done for its black teachers. And they would come and say so to us, just out of the story book, absolutely classic. And we began to understand how classic our organization was because it was truly reflective of American society, of American government, of American bureaucracy, private and public, because all we had learned in our early tenures as far as Denver and the rest of us who were new to the AFT after the second world war, we learned that the union movement adapted itself to its environment. It did not create its environment. The collective bargaining process that Mr. Waggner thrust upon an industrial America meant that the Steelworkers

bargaining with U.S. Steel took a different tact than they did bargaining with Bethlehem. In other words, you adapt yourself to the environment, keeping U.S. Steel alive so you've got jobs, but you better straighten them out while you're at it.

So the teachers had to straighten out the Chicago Board of Education one way, the New York Board of Education another way, the San Francisco Board of Education another way, the Wilmington, Delaware Board of Education a different way. And the point I'm trying to make is, that all unions being institutionalized, as all businesses are institutionalized in this country in our system of private entrepreunership, each have adapted themselves to the other side of the table. You don't in Denver, Colorado and our one name big industrial plant known as Gates Rubber Company -- still the largest producer of industrial and commercial belts in the world, I used to call them fan belts, but all kinds of belts, still the biggest producer. The Rubber Workers when they finally organized that plant in 1950 after struggling for years on end adapted itself to the

Gates' family philosophy or else it wasn't going to get to first base unless it closed them down forever. And they decided they couldn't close them down forever. So I'm just saying you adapt. And pretty soon instead of being a great liberal, industrial union known as the Rubber Workers, you become kind of a mirrored image of the company that you deal with. You want the company to survive, because if the company says we're going to move a plant to Memphis, Tennessee, where we don't have to have anybody who's in the union, then you think twice and you make accommodation for it.

Well, different organizations, of course, is what I'm saying adapt to differences, localities, regions, economics, demographics of various kinds. Some unions become strong as a national union. Some unions become strong by virtue of a collection of big locals. The Auto Workers, probably the least democratic of all the unions in the country, were the least democratic because the Ruethers understood early on that they better tackle the auto industry in toto, and not by its individual plants in Dearborn, Pontiac, Flint, et cetera, in

the different motor car divisions of Ford, Chrysler and General Motors. And, therefore, they set national policies.

The Steelworkers went about it a different way, even though they had industry wide bargaining eventually, they're one of the few unions where the way you elect a national officer is to go the small D democracy. Every member of the union gets to vote who's going to be the international president. There's a polling place in every union hall. No one union as a result becomes predominant. The Carnegie Steel local as opposed to the Bethlehem Steel local as opposed to the U.S. Steel local in Pittsburgh, none of them began to dominate the process, but their members determined whether Mr. McDonald or Mr. Able would be the next president after Phil Murray. And like the Mine Workers, that had grown out of the Mine Workers tradition, one person, one vote.

Not true in the AFT. We've gone the opposite direction. But the AFT has literally become a merged giant of the AFT in my opinion because the leadership has been almost co-terminus, from the

time that we got our first big, big victory here in New York City. So no union can be defined precisely in one term or another.

Let's just take, since Mr. Harry Van Arsdale comes out of this town and he has a good Dutch background there to work with Manhattan. But also he was an electrician. The electricians in this town in order to compete with the IUE, the industrial union which later was declared Communist, kicked out of the AFL-CIO, and a new IUE was created, as well as the independent IUE therefore continuing. The IBEW began to organize industrially, not just the craft electrician on the construction jobs or the maintenance jobs of these great buildings here in Manhattan. So, they had to change their complexity. But the IBEW at heart still was the union that said so much is going to be the dues every month, so much goes to retirement, we control our own unilaterally within our union. It became a strong union. So exactly the same condition prevailed almost at the bargaining table, let alone in the benefit to the members, let alone the cost to the member. How

much of gross wages above $800 a month goes into the union treasury, whether you're in Denver, Colorado on the building trades council or New York City in the building trades council. That became a prominent national union.

The AFT hasn't quite in my opinion to this day, and I still only carry a card in it but have not for a dozen years now been active in the sense of being in the AFT hierarchy of command of elected officers, the AFT hasn't been that. And part of it I suspect doesn't necessarily relate to where I started this, the thrust of what are the big issues that tended to get at the gut of how AFT could survive even as collective bargaining victories. But it has something to do with the fact that today the dissidents in the AFT aren't winning philosophically. They want to. That's because the bargaining table in the big cities is as strong as you can make it, and the people in command -- however they got there, however they now machinate, big D or small D democracy, are able to survive. And, therefore, those who say we ought to have open democracy, we ought to be able to vote our

membership, we ought to have secret ballots so we are not intimidated by the leaders who stand in front of the convention and say this is the way it's going to be, you're going to stand up and be counted. And if you know you want a special subsidy for your state or your local out of a national union, you're only going to get it if you are seen to be voting on the side of the leaders. AFT wasn't there when I left the AFT. AFT still had the secret ballot in convention.

Of course, the AFT as it dealt with all these big issues was so highly democratic in a convention that it was so open that there was really no planned position on most votes until you got into the late '60s. In the '50s it was very open, even caucuses themselves, even though they would try to get their delegates to the floor to support a great issue and would say we recommend this the way you go, nobody took any discipline over anybody who was in that caucus if that person stood up on behalf of his or her local or himself and spoke to the contrary.

That began to change I think in the mid '60s

after the collective bargaining victories, because any institution if it gets sophisticated wants to hold on to its power, and those who have designed the power base will design the manner in which they stay there. And that's not to say its leaders aren't great, but it's the reverse of what I call benevolent paternalism. It becomes kind of a benevolence big D democracy practiced in your image as opposed to the image of do you fear small D democracy, do you fear the right of all people to speak equally. Do you fear the right of the secret ballot of all members to elect an Albert Shanker as president of the AFT. I have often wondered if Al had to campaign all over the countryside when he first became AFT president, or Dave Seldon had to campaign all over the country when he first became AFT. He had to get to every union hall, which everybody argues against. They said, well, they'll spend all their time out campaigning. Well, if you devise four or five year terms they don't have to be because the president of a national union should see every one of its locals in its own locality anyway to even get a feel of what the union is all

about. You don't often feel it.

The same thing a political candidate has to do when he or she seeks to be a member of the Congress or the Presidency. You have to see where the people are. You have to feel them out. In the union it's easier because we're at least on a common base. Our common base is an economic base. We don't have to be involved in all these extraneous issues like a national political leader does. So I wouldn't say the arguments could be the same.

Frankly, I didn't go as a delegate to conventions after 1973. I was not involved in this process. I'm only told by people on both sides of the fence subsequently that the spirit of democracy on the convention floor has ceased. Whether that's so or not, I'm not here to judge.

The AFT curiously enough, I think if you look at the convention records, go back to the early '50s, even mid-'50s when the first resolutions came in about our segregated locals in the South, our two locals in the cities of Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia and Louisiana. It was of concern to the

people who seemed to want to think straight. Unfortunately, a lot of the concern came out of the upper Midwest, the Wisconsins and the Minnesotas. And if you look at their total structure of population in those states today, you'll find they are highly non-black. It's easy to be the great liberal out of Minneapolis-Saint Paul when you look at the ethnicity of the two cities, being five percent of the population is non-white, non-Caucasian. Sioux Indians make up two percent of the city of Minneapolis, the blacks three percent.

The main line across the northwest is still predominantly Scandinavian Germanic white. And it's easy to be a civil rights activist in a field where you're not faced with the civil rights internal issues like were faced in Denver with a different kind of mix. Whereas, an example, not true at the time but true today and still struggling, the Denver public schools with our own local, hoping to be a collective bargaining agent one of these times, but pointing out that we've integrated the schools in Denver, the first

northern city to do it. We have a proportion of Hispanics, blacks and I say other Caucasians, because Hispanics are very Caucasian in the school system. And now, eight percent Oriental American. Oriental being Vietnamese, Korean, et cetera, because we're the offshoot of the Pacific Coast. We're the first stopping place away from San Francisco and Los Angeles and Seattle.

So, we are no longer an even white city. Denver, Colorado is 40 percent ethnic minority but is not 40 percent black. Some of the great industrial centers are 40 percent black. So it's easy for Minneapolis-Saint Paul and others to lead the charge for the integration of our locals, and they were the ones doing it at the time, because they were the great progressive farmer labor states, and it was reflected in those who came to the conventions to speak. Whether it was the old timers like a Mary McGuff, or whether it was the new young leaders who came particularly out of the Wisconsin locals.

I tell you that only in the sense of the civil rights issue before Brown versus the Board of

Education had begun to come to the floor of the AFT. It had come from those who were disturbed on an ethical base, if nothing else, about the fact that Veronica Hill was getting considerably less than her white counterpart. That she primarily was leading a group of disenfranchised black women who were in the elementary blackness of New Orleans, and there's plenty of blackness in New Orleans. She was on that side of the street, on the other side of the street over in the St. Charles District where the white men teachers had a local. And we began to question that, because one of them was in our caucus.

The other southern locals were afraid to be in our caucus except in the case of Chattanooga, and again the black local came into the caucus. And so that immediately differentiated us. So it became a caucus issue.

Then when we got to the point we were going to declare before the AFL-CIO decided it would recognize the new civil rights laws of the land in the late '50s and the early '60s, we decided we're going to clarify the situation in the AFT, we were

going to be the first ones to integrate the locals. And our plan was to integrate, not to drive them out of the AFT.

But it became apparent that the caucuses themselves could never unite within their own caucuses on this issue and, therefore, the National Caucus was constantly saying to the Progressive Caucus, you're driving members out of the AFT. And they were doing it because their constituents were from the white locals. And our constituents were from the black locals.

And the McGees out of Chattanooga and the Hills out of New Orleans were our driving force. But when the chips were down and the pressure was on them, they weren't even sure they could go back home and live with their white local, and that made them kind of retreat. Therefore, we got into the philosophical debate without knowing that they really could stand their own ground.

I think our first integrated local in the South was one where we only had one local anyway, and they, the white local, agreed to bring in the blacks. I for one on the AFT Executive Council was

put on a special committee and finally went and did the speaking at Mobile, Alabama in one of their high schools, the first integrated meeting of teachers, under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. But Mobile, in a sense, is more cosmopolitan than anything else in Alabama. It's more cosmopolitan than even the Florida side of that coast until you get over there past Tallahassee. And it was an unusual situation. We could integrate there, we couldn't integrate there in New York where the poverty blacks were just outside the French Quarter. If anybody were to walk any farther, they'd see what I was talking about. And if you rode the St. Charles streetcar line out on the other side of the city back toward the airport and up past Tulane University, you were looking at a very different kind of community. So, we didn't get them integrated, we meant to.

I should say at that time the Progressive Caucus weakened its position on the AFT Executive Council, and I was still on it and took a very special dislike to two vice presidents. I got elected the next time, but my colleague didn't,

Earl McGinnis from Wilmington, but I still got elected to the Executive Council for one more term after this all came to a real head in 1970. The head was that we insisted that the committee, chaired by Rebecca Simonson, who had gone to New Orleans, we had made that our target city to show we could integrate an existing white and an existing black local. She went, she met with Veronica Hill. She could sense, as we could not, we were not there, that it could not happen. And she came back to the Executive Council and said it doesn't appear that we can integrate unless we simply do not what our resolution says but declare Local 542 be an integrated local by declaration.

What this meant was we were declaring the black local, which is the larger local, as the integrated local, and the white men just simply weren't going to move to that local. And the National Caucus made it its point, and Carl Megel made it his point as a matter of fact, no matter what he says about it today. That was one place where he kind of stood against us. And when the Executive Council voted on it, because Rebecca is a

tried and true soldier, so to speak, who could oppose Rebecca Simonson. Well, Earl McGinnis and Herrick Roth did.

END OF TAPE 2

BEGINNING OF TAPE 3

MS. RENE EPSTEIN: This is Rene Epstein. My interview with Herrick Roth is continuing on February 16th, 1987 in New York.

MR. HERRICK ROTH: In terms of time -- I trust somebody will check out the records on this because we had a lot of things going on simultaneously after our collective bargaining victories early on, first New York and then other cities that followed. But, it took us a long time to work in the integration of locals because it was very difficult to say to anybody you have to get out of the American Federation of Teachers. It was quite evident, though, that our southern locals who were not preceding to the bargaining table, whether they were large like Atlanta and Fulton County, or small like Chattanooga and Mobile, or split and more predominantly black than white in New Orleans, it was obvious they were not going to head for the bargaining table. They had to solve their own problems in the integration of their school systems first. And there were too many other things going on in their communities that distracted them.

And to have the AFT add to the distraction, simply meant we were inviting them to leave, which in due time did happen, they left.

But as we were hanging onto our last hope, the two New Orleans locals were still there, the Mobile local was fluctuating and maybe willing to bring blacks into an otherwise single local that was all white. That's all we had left in the South to work with, other than the Chattanooga black local. And Chattanooga decided it would profit by what New Orleans did, namely, the black locals declared the integrated local and whites may join it and, therefore, we have integrated. Well, we hadn't integrated at all, and that's all Earl and I were saying to Rebecca. Normally, in this kind of a situation where you have a great leader, probably as brilliant a mind as I will ever remember in my 40 years of activity in the AFT and the trade union movement, when you have a Rebecca Simonson, you'd normally pay careful attention to her. But simultaneously, I must say in Rebecca's behalf, if other people uttered things that made real sense, she was always one of the first to support and

could synthesize all the arguments made in such a beautiful way, that you'd win your argument by letting her close the debate, even if it were not her idea to begin with.

But in this case it was very difficult to stand against a Veronica Hill, the McGees of Chattanooga who were on the Executive Council and say that we were not sympathetic with what they were doing, but were saying it was unrealistic and impractical, we should abolish both locals and both communities, have it done with, and let whoever wanted to bring a new charter application into the AFT, do it. Because that's what our resolution we'd passed at the convention said. The locals may be integrated if we can work out the arrangement between the locals, just like the AFL-CIO had to get the old AFL and the old CIO in 50 states and in 177 cities of the country into one common central body, we used exactly the same resolution as the AFL-CIO. We applied it, though, to the white/black issue. And it didn't work.

So, we said fine, abolish the unions. We didn't have to abolish them in Atlanta and Fulton

County, they left. But we had to do something with Chattanooga and the long time black survivors of the Progressive Caucus, who were lovely people from those two cities.

So that was one that didn't resolve to our satisfaction. And Earl McGinnis had been in the legislature in Delaware, I'd been in the legislature in Colorado. We'd fought these issues in the political public issue level because Colorado and Delaware were two of the first fair housing states. And Earl McGinnis was leading his assembly in Delaware when I was leading the Senate in Colorado to do the same thing. And, therefore, we said it could be done. We were from the political halls.

But we also were from states that were not, except in the case of Delaware where you have a south county and a north county, literally, and the Dupont family is overriding everything, a smaller state, a first state, Colorado a more mixed wide open state, maybe it was easier for us to do these things. Because we weren't thinking of Hispanics when we were doing it, we weren't thinking of the

Chicanos as we now know them. We weren't thinking about the crusaders from the state that was half Mexican land grant and half Louisiana Purchase, which indeed it was. We could repeal miscegenation laws and get away with it and say it was all right on the north side of the Arkansas as well as the South side to intermarry. We could get fair housing outside of Connecticut, the first state in the country to do it, now by votes without a lot of blacks up there in the general assembly to do it for us.

And we were carrying that same kind of political savvy of our integrating within our political systems of our respective states to the AFT and saying you can't do it this way, and that's why we voted against it. But that was the end of the issue. It was not the end of the fight.

The fight came right here in the middle of New York City in a place called Ocean Hill and Brownsville. Here the battle became one that the AFT set the tone at a time that Al Shanker was the president, Dave Seldon himself out of New York -- out of New York in the sense of how he got to be

president of the AFT, not where he came from, because he came as a staffer from Detroit to a staffer in New York City. I came from the teaching classroom and taught while I was still an executive secretary of the Colorado Federation of Teachers. My background was somewhat different and, therefore, I didn't really lose the flavor of who a teacher was.

But when he got to Ocean Hill/Brownsville, here was Dick Parish, black, sitting on our Executive Council from the United Federation of Teachers. Here is Rebecca sitting on the Executive Council from the United Federation of Teachers. And in the mid '60s here was the UFT saying tenure is more important than the integration of the faculties of two schools. The history is clear enough. Al can speak to it. Dave Seldon can speak to it. Everybody can speak to it with greater intimacy.

But here we were meeting in New York City, Herrick Roth from Denver, Colorado, you know, carrying the banner of saying, and why can't we integrate, why can't we negotiate this. Why should

the tenure law of the state of New York which we said we wanted to get away from as we bargain collectively for the security of teachers as opposed to being in a tenure system and a bargaining table situation, why can't we bargain for a manner in which teachers who do not seem to relate to the school community known as students to what the problems are, because that apparently is what this report says.

Well, we were told the report was fallacious, it was not well put together. We were told in no uncertain terms by effective, articulate leadership of the United Federation of Teachers that we were wrong. We had a very divided Executive Council on that issue.

Let me relate to the black on the Executive Council, a very warm human being, maybe not as meticulous about detail as the Al Shankers and others would have wanted him to have been, whose total attention was diverted to the civil rights movement, particularly as it hit the United Federation of Teachers, and therefore reflected in the Executive Council. And then in the Progressive

Caucus section of the Executive Council, which all the time I was on it from 1972 on would always be anywhere from two-thirds to three-fourths of the total membership, therefore, it was very predominant. Dick had been in the Progressive Caucus from shortly after the Glenwood Springs convention and had great admiration and respect obviously for Royce Forsythe, who chaired the caucus after I left the caucus to go on the Executive Council of the AFT from Denver, and myself.

Dick always confided constantly in me, and I came to like Dick very much. I can't judge in this history whether Dick Parish was right about how you solve the black problems in a less than black faculty, New York City, as opposed to the schools in this city, still serve primarily black communities or Spanish Harlem. And Ocean Hill/Brownsville became just simply the case example of this little debate.

And Dick obviously was standing against the position of his union. Now, the thing is hard to be objective about, particularly myself, is here

you have two ethnic groups opposing each other, the Jewish community that struggled to make its way in America, certainly symbolized by the great city of New York. The black community, which had not been part until after the second world war of this part of the country. Because in the second war the blacks couldn't pass the physical exams, so they came to the industrial cities to run the plants, while the rest of us who could pass the exams went off to work. This was a classic conflict.

Dick was called all kinds of names by people who had been his greatest friend in New York. This is the confusing thing to me. This is the tough thing for me to deal with as a member of the Executive Council. Because I couldn't believe everything they wanted to say about him, whether or not he was a conspirator, whether or not he had joined this unholy alliance of an ultra left wing group that was trying to unseat things. I'd heard Dick too many times in his career, like I heard the only black state senator in Colorado. And I had served as his campaign chairman when he refused, he, George Brown now here in New York in a

corporate capacity, but once our lieutenant governor and in the state senate with me in Colorado, the first black to be there. I'd chaired his campaign, and George was afraid to have his picture be shown in the papers for fear that people would see he's black and, therefore, why would they vote for a black to get to the state senate.

George Brown outlined what fair housing was all about so eloquently to the people of Colorado and the state senate, but it took a white leadership to get it. We had to go through machinations like you never saw to get fair housing in the state of Colorado. So I led it. Well, George Brown would hug me any day he sees me in the street ever since as if Herrick Roth did it for him. I didn't at all, it was a matter of conscience.

And yet, Dick Parish was literally mutilated by the United Federation of Teachers in that dispute. Dick Parish was actually caught among forces. But there's one thing that would always distinguish him, he was black. I can walk down the street, and nobody knows whether I'm on the

business side of the street, the union side of the street, out of work or what as long as I have a shirt and tie and a coat on, people just don't look too much. But it's difficult to put yourself in somebody else shoes. I tried many times to put myself in Dick Parish's shoes and then help him interpret for the Executive Council why it seemed to me he was right instead of the UFT leadership and the AFT's position on the support of UFT.

The reason I felt that way about it is I thought his blackness was overriding. We had long, long talks when we started projects in the AFT about black history and black artistry and who's Ozzie Davis. I'd never heard of Ozzie Davis. He really could tell you who A. Philip Randolph was, not just the one black figure on the AFL-CIO Executive Council who on a precise moment, when needed, George Meany could turn to and say, after all, Mr. Randolph here does in fact represent our great black trade union community, and then Mr. Randolph in all of his eloquence would arise and go to the microphone, and in his own direct and subtle way diminish entirely what George Meany had just

said. Which Dick Parish sitting there as an AFT delegate on one occasion turned to me and poked me, and as I recall, said to me, you see, he regrets the fact that he had to bring an all black union into this comradery of labor. He had to amalgamate the dining car waiters and the pullman car porters into one to keep both of them alive enough so he could sit on that stage. Because the only way he can make his impact in this community is to let them know he's still here, and they have not solved the problems as long as they're segregated. And he's there as a segregated person on the council, and that's all he was saying to the convention, if you listen carefully what he said.

But he also talked about the ability of labor to pull people out of poverty. That was A. Philip Randolph's theme. That was Dick Parish's real theme. Then all of a sudden you get the poverty of the Harlems, the violence of the Harlems, the street gangs of the Harlems that are here in this community. And Dick Parish in a sense was caught as being the upper middle class teaching black, the A. Philip Randolph Institute black versus the

blackness of the Black Panthers and the crusaders of the radicals who suddenly began to raise their voices and do damage physically and in other ways to a community saying we're tired of what you haven't done for us. Or which they're really saying was, we're tired of the fact we have not had equal opportunity. That's all they were saying. That's all Dick Parish would ever say. Dick just spoke so beautifully to the Executive Council, you almost could hardly see how you could turn him off.

But he got to the point finally where he got so cynical about the UFT leadership, the white leadership of the UFT, that his cynicism I think more than -- he had certain physical ailments -- he was over working himself against what his physical being could take. He got to the point where he was so cynical, I used to remember when I'd call him to see if he's coming to the next Executive Council meeting, and sometimes I wouldn't even get a call back. Some people would say, that's just like Dick, you can't depend on him. And that was their excuse as you then read the white leadership of this part of the country. But to me it was the

fact that here's a man who's taken all he could take. And he's done his best and he stayed more with the black community than anybody, but he's never said he was not a trade unionist. He's just like old A. Philip Randolph. The only way the blacks and the browns and the yellows and the American society are going to get ahead is to be given a chance to get out of poverty and to compete equally in the world. And that was his theme, regardless of what else. Now, I heard all kinds of stories. There's no sense repeating any of the stories, some from people I respected very much, about what Dick wasn't doing or how Dick was out there being disloyal to them or how Dick was having his own little private meetings, those were the stories I heard from the other side.

When I talked to Dick about them, he said they just don't know what's going on. They refuse to let me have my forum in the openness of even the delegate assembly of UFT. I've gotten to the point where I know I can't make my point, so why should I come. Of course I have to meet out with other people to determine other ways to go. But to his

dying day, he was more of a supporter of A. Philip Randolph than A. Philip Randolph himself. And all kinds of things have been done in his name since.

And then the people who would conform who were blacks, and they're very, very charming and very intellectual people, like the Hills who came along in the AFT and who later through the AFL-CIO went into the A. Philip Randolph Institute, they were on Dick's side at a point, but it became more convenient to be on the other side. In other words, your strategy is do you stick with the white leadership and hope that the day comes when you have penetrated that leadership, as opposed to the point I've waited -- Dick Parish got to the point where he could wait no longer. That's all he was saying to the Herrick Roths and the Earl McGinnises on the Executive Council, I can't wait any longer. My impatience is at an end.

I think that accounted for the fact that he moved away from the UFT leadership and could never have again gotten back on the Executive Council. I served there one term after he was there, and I just have to tell you I missed him, I missed him as

a person, I missed the opportunity to talk to him to try to get a sense of what is it, Dick, that I'm not feeling that you know about that I need to know about. Because I don't live here in this city. I can go visit schools, so what. I can bring you to Denver, Colorado, and you can visit my schools and you'll see some things that you want to see or can see on the surface. But you have to live with it. Well, what are you living with?

And he got to the point where he was so cynical the last two years he was on the Executive Council he could not have been a hopeful part of a new kind of building. But he was just past his time at that point. He just felt like because he'd always been in a minority in the leadership by virtue of his being black, because most of the teachers in New York, unlike the population were black, they were not black. He suffered in that dilemma of a northern, free city that had done so many things to free the world of America. That's my assessment. I hope it's an accurate one, although that's my best recollection of Richard Parish.

I guess what I'm saying in all of this is it is true the issue of decentralization, the Mayor Lindsey time in New York City that Al Shanker in particular totally abhorred. Some people said he abhorred it because he and Lindsey didn't know how to make book with each other. I guess what I'm saying about politics at any stage of the American life is that the people who are predominant in the institutions, whether they do it consciously or unconsciously, also are looking at their own continuance in office. And if they liked what they're doing, if you don't like what you're doing or you say to yourself this office only belongs to the people who I represent, that's a hard position to take. I feel like at this age of my life I can say it because I have often run for an office after having been there and been defeated, and people say, well, if you'd done this and this and this, Herrick, you'd be there. And I said, absolutely, I'd still be there. But my purpose has not been to be electable. My purpose has been to say, well, what's this institution all about, what am I supposed to do about it. Whether it's the

legislature in Colorado, whether it's the U.S. Senate, whatever it is that I seek to do, as well as to be an officer in the AFT.

When you are in a community known as a black community and you have been in fact disenfranchised practically all your life because of custom, it is very difficult to suddenly become as sophisticated in running an institution that people say we have decentralized at the community level. Therefore, we don't seem to have the smarts to know how to put our power structure together now that we have the opportunity for power. And we don't put it together in terms of how power has been defined by those who have been there before. I'd like to use an analogy. I'm still strong on this, and only for the last ten years of our 46 years of married life has my wife really felt liberated. And she kind of laughs about it every now and then when she gets a little severe with me about I've heard everything you've said on this, and this is really the answer. Then she kind of laughs and says to her friends, isn't it funny, Herrick is the one who said to me you're as smart as I am and you ought to do your

own thing when you want to do your own thing, and you've got to consider yourself an equal. I can't bear children, you can. But you wouldn't have had any in our family if I hadn't been around. So, we have an equivalency in life, even though we have a biologically different status, we have an equivalency.

I'm just telling you that the women in this society of ours have had to become almost macho to get into positions of leadership, even though I've always said -- and then people remind me of Indira Gandhi and Margaret Thatcher and say they're tougher than the men -- that if the women were at the heads of all the great governments of the world, we wouldn't have war any more. Then they say not so. And I say yes, so. The difference is the people who get there have had to become so much like men that they themselves have lost whatever that compassion was in the process to get to the final result. And blacks in this world of ours are better off than they used to be in terms of beginning to be decision makers. But I want to tell you, look at the United States Congress, look

at the gubernatorial positions, look at the heads of big corporations. Outside of women who have built their own businesses in this country or who have become owners of their own businesses by virtue of some kind of inheritance and have shown that they could run them better than the men, they have not broken out of the macho society. So there's an institutional society that the blacks have had to contend with, and not necessarily ready for it in decentralization. Maybe that's the trap that Dick Parish got caught in.

I'm not trying to blame anybody in the process. You don't blame people, you try to analyze, well, how come it happened. I've seen too many people who were broken. I haven't had to be broken, because when I walk down the street I'm still blue eyed and too tan. And, therefore, I don't have to worry about what people think about me, whether I wear a bow tie or no tie. But unfortunately, Dick Parish got to the point of knowing he was marked, he was marked by his black community. He was smarter than many of those who needed to be the leaders in the community. He

could not devise anything except what other people had already devised, that the blacks themselves had not devised for how this society should be run. It was a very difficult transition, and New York City got caught in the middle of it and the United Federation of Teachers got caught in the middle of it, and Dick Parish was among the several blacks who were leaders. But he was not in the predominance or the majority. He could or could not have been the most bright, I don't know, it's hard to judge people when you know they've come from a position of bottom up and fought their way to where they are. Dick was such a compassionate loving sort of guy. It was easy for the Rebecca Simonsons of the New York Teachers Guild to know that Dick Parish was one of them. But there came to be a point in life when he was not one of them.

Let's talk about the Vietnamese issue, because the AFT didn't even match what the Colorado AFL-CIO and the international typographical union were doing, and that was the oldest union in the country, now just demised and becoming a part of CWA by merger in the last couple of months. But at

least some unions had enough guts to stand up and ask what we were doing in Vietnam. We were told we weren't supposed to. We had battles in the AFT before I left my last convention in 1972 that were six years behind the Colorado Labor Council, AFL-CIO, where in '66 we passed resolutions imploring the President of the United States and our Colorado congressional delegation and the AFL-CIO itself to suggest that we were not in a war to save the world for democracy in South Vietnam. It was an entirely different kind of conflict. Whether it was or was not a Communist conspiracy, after all, could we point out that the Chinese Communists and the Soviet Communists were one of the same; that Hanoi and Saigon were in that kind of eternal conflict where we had to save and probably destroy lives and land and jungles.

Somehow or another in Colorado we seemed to sense that in '65, which seems kind of tardy as I recall, we couldn't get the AFT to move. Part of the reason was it was a Communist conspiracy, and this is where George Meany and Al Shanker really made book. It's where Jerry Worth wouldn't make

book. It's what separated the two unions and the two leaders from their respective positions within the AFL-CIO. But the AFT was certainly in no vanguard at that time of what they should have been on that issue.

The reason this was a union issue, it was a bread and butter issue. I know what Mr. Meany's response to all this was. Mr. Meany's response was that we have sufficient wealth in this country to deal with bread and butter issues simultaneously, to deal with the issues of military procurements and sending young men without the benefit of a war resolution off to war. I know he blamed me a lot, even for infiltrating these issues into not just the AFT conventions unsuccessfully, even though there were many locals in the United States sending in resolutions to the AFT simultaneously on this. In other words, this was not just a Colorado thrust, like collective bargaining had initially been. But he blamed me because a number of state bodies then started taking it up, and either Hank Brown of Texas or Herrick Roth of Colorado or this old crusty building tradesman or this intellectual

egg head teacher were getting their cohorts who belonged to international unions but in isolated instances to send in to the AFL-CIO these resolutions. Of course, they never got out of committee.

Now, the reason it was an issue was, war had become in the minds of many people who had been through the second world war who had been there fighting. In my case, I was never scratched. But the point is, 55 months of military service and in dealing with men who were sent back from overseas who were to be taught in rehabilitation centers as I did before I went overseas, and being fortunate in not being caught under the gunfire of the Mendenow (phonetics) campaign and, therefore, outside of being in broken down troop ships after the fact, and we talk about Pearl Harbor and that kind of stuff, I was lucky. So, some people would say, well, Herrick Roth, who are you to say that war is now obsolete. But the plain fact is, the atomic bomb made war obsolete. And this is what some of these issues said. Therefore, why invest good American wealth from union plants in machines

of war if war in fact were obsolete, particularly in nuclear warheads. Even though people weren't saying we were doing any nuclear, everybody seemed to sense, in spite of the fact it came out long after the fact, that chemical warfare was part of what was going on in Vietnam.

Lo and behold, after these resolutions failed, wouldn't you know Agent Orange became a known fact, just like radiation became a known fact two decades after Hiroshima. And some of yourself were speaking to this. And in the process of it, sensible union leaders, whether they're in tough trades like industrial plants in our state or the region or the West Coast, where most of this was coming from, or in the more established service trades, were beginning nonetheless to think well, it's my sons, my daughters of our generation who are going to go off to war, and for what. In other words, define the cause. We never declared war.

Let me differentiate right here, because I made this statement more than once on my 23 and a half years in the TV set. I even had George Meany on my TV set when the Plumbers and Fitters came to

Denver, Colorado to have their second time convention in 1968 in Denver, Colorado, and they only met every five years. Who's plumber number one, George Meany, Local 2, New York City. So he was there.

And I went over and said hello to George and said come over to the TV studio, I'd like to tape you for a Labor Day program, and indeed he came over and we taped the program In the Name of Labor's Language, later Herrick Roth's Roundup.

But for 23 and a half years I sit on this set, I talk about these things, I hear these things. And what I guess I have said over and over again, if war indeed is obsolete, let me tell you why I think it's obsolete and people would listen. And in the listening, I pointed out that nuclear war simply means the end of the world. The great movie that came out four or five years after the Vietnam conflict, or maybe even during the time, but it was before the Vietnam conflict, even after the second world war about on the beach down in Australia, how the city of San Francisco stood naked. The only thing that was unrealistic about

that, it showed the city was still standing there and it was vacated because everybody was dead. Well, the city wouldn't even have been standing. Nothing would have been standing with a nuclear war head.

And I was just trying to say, why spend money on this because it's a one way street. Once the building trades construct the silos, put the warheads in the ground, show me what wealth is being produced. And this then becomes an economic issue to the labor movement, if not a moral and ethical issue.

I think they're reflecting, they, Al Shanker for one and George Meany for another as union leaders in this country, and Al more intimately involved with the labor movement because he was on the firing line. George Meany was in the great public body of the Executive Council, and all he had to do was make sure that AFL-CIO unions on the Executive Council who represented eight million votes in the convention as they stood for their membership would continue to be president of the AFL-CIO. He didn't even have to stand before a

member by sight.

If I sense where it seems those who have been closely associated with the Roman Catholic position, not of the great bishops, but of the position that Communism is a conspiracy and is aimed at doing away with the religious reference to God, whether you're a Christian or a non-Christian, but the religious reference to God, atheism, atheism can never take over. I heard George Meany on more than one occasion talk in these terms, you can look at the AFL-CIO record and see what he said.

In Al Shanker's case, it was something different, but I think it may in Al's case it could have been excused at least is how a Soviet jury had been treated. Therefore, the conspiracy of this awful system, which really wasn't a Marxist system at all. This is not pure Marxism at all. This is Soviet Communism in the name of the creator of the idea, the Carl Marx. And Al was very good at differentiating -- I don't want to judge Al's motivation on this, because in his case as the leader of the AFT he was doing other things within

the AFT that secured his position to take just about any darned position he wanted to. And it also meant that he as a teacher could be on the Executive Council and be there along with a Jerry Worth and be a supporter of Mr. Meany's for whatever future reference. I've often said that I think Al could well be the president of the AFL-CIO.

On this kind of history, since somebody is going to listen to it some day, I must emphasize a point that I've believed long since, and the older I get the more I believe it. You say what you want to say, you perceive what you want to perceive. No matter how intellectual and how objective you profess yourself to be, there's no since professing it because it isn't true of the human being. So the imperfections that I leave here is not with the purpose -- I'm kind of like Will Rogers, I say I've never met a person -- and I've said it for 25 years before ERA became popular -- I never met a person I didn't like. I met some people in my time that I knew darn well I didn't want to have them in control of either the social system or my life.

But I can't say I didn't like them. And I believe this very thoroughly, if I diminish any other person, I am likewise diminished.

So anything I have said here as we go into this last kind of phase of the structure of how a union operates, particularly an unsophisticated one that was 40 years old, 30 years old when I joined it, whatever it was -- well, let's see, yes, it was 40 years old -- no, it was 30 years old, 1916 to 1946, January of '46, it was two months short of 30 years old. An unsophisticated group of people who had put themselves together around central labor bodies in the big cities of the country to get a better break for education, using the Horace Mann image of the background, the craft skills and the others who put together free public education in this country, who dared to access a property tax in Connecticut and Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania to start a public system. The greatest socialist system the world ever developed that did somehow or another succeed, but which changed in the 1910s to a capitalist kind of relationship to the social community, namely, it

was defined from then on as a public corporation in which the board of directors would be responsible to the elected stockholders, the people, but would never manage the institution. And, therefore, Mr. Kuberly in his great wisdom out of Stanford in 1918, 1919 devised a structure that was quickly latched on to across the country which made possible the advent of teachers unions because it only took teachers another 20 or 30 years to understand that we're in a corporate society, not for profit. The profit is for the community. And the nice part about it is -- and I say this before I get into the caucus structure of the AFT -- the nice part about it is its finances can be exactly defined because it does not pay dividends in terms of money. In other words, you set a budget, unlike a corporation you may or may not make the budget because you may not sell the service or the project, and you don't have to have investors with money, but you have to have investors of people who are going to vote so that they'll control the corporation properly in the community. But otherwise, you're not supposed to mess with

education. And superintendents and administrators took over.

I think it was part of the reason the caucus system developed in the AFT. I don't think it was because they learned in the Boston Central Labor Union or the New York Central Labor Council as they sent delegates from these teachers unions into those councils how the labor movement works. I learned something about labor two months after I joined the Denver Federation of Teachers. I wanted it to be the Denver Teachers Union, Mr. Kinsley came in and told us to change the name. So we changed the name so we'd be more mild. We were a federation.

So we went to the first Denver trades and labor assembly meeting one month after our chartering in June and I was one of five elected delegates. And an old operating engineer, stationary engineer who ran the downtown building establishment as to the maintenance of the big buildings of Denver -- which weren't that big and Denver wasn't that big -- and he stood up there in front of the assembly and looked at the five of us

before he gave us the oath of office and said, "I never thought I'd see the day when the educated idiots were in this hall." And that kind of gave me the impression of what the AFT was. We were educated, but to them who were in the labor movement, we were idiots.

I think it was such an honest statement it was devastating. It was the first time they'd had a woman in the hall because we didn't have the clothing workers out our way. We sent two women and three men to the hall. Even the symphony musicians, the musicians local were smart enough to send "only men."

So, we were breaking two traditions. Then I'd go to the AFT conventions and I'd see that there is a structure to a debate. But as the union began to enlarge itself, these little groups that met privately before the convention and during the convention to say how are we going to approach this issue on the floor so that Mary Wheeler gets her say and Jack Fuchs gets beat. And that's really what we were talking about, the personalities of the attitudes on issues that were beyond the union,

beyond teaching almost. We could all agree on we should have class size of not to exceed 25 in the academics and we could go through all that stuff forever. We should have salaries that begin at $4,000 a year, when probably none of us in the room were making 4,000 a year. Therefore, is this going to be a minimum salary and none of us were at a maximum of 4,000 a year. Those issues we could agree on.

It was the other issues we couldn't agree on. So the caucuses were built around the other issues. They were built around the issues as to whether or not we were going to be called Commies all the rest of our life by the big union, or at least by its spokespersons. Notice how I didn't say spokesmen, but it was the men who went up and down the aisle, not the women, from the Chicago Teachers Union. The Dorothy Herricks were great people and wanted to break out of the Chicago Teachers Union. And the reason I particularly remember her is because her family name came from my family name and we both came out of Wisconsin heritage, and maybe we were related, except I got a family name on the

front end. But see, within the locals you could begin to sense this. But at the convention you had to put together, you had to steel yourself to how you approach these big issues of whether or not we're going to even integrate the schools or whether or not we were going to work against the international issues that seem to be worrying our country. So we did.

But we had to get a lot of caucuses together. When we pulled them into a common position, we then began to get to the point where you had to go through not several caucuses to determine whether you could run for the AFT Executive Council but whether you just go to one and that one could become dominant.

And beginning in 1948, the Progressive Caucus took the attitude if we can amalgamate all the small caucuses in this union into one and take on the National Caucus, we can elect a full slate. And as we first began to go at it, we only would run 11 of 15, so that if we did win, the other side with the big locals would still have people on the council, and that's precisely what happened.

In this process, though, you see, you build a structure in which the structure is eventually controlled by leaders who are then elected to office, as opposed to the grass roots. As I chaired the Progressive Caucus, I made sure even when John Eckland was president that John Eckland was not going to run that caucus, and I told him that before I accepted the chairmanship. I said, John, you can come in and present yourself as a candidate for president again if you want to, we're going to sit and determine among ourselves in our own way who the vice president is going to be. You can make recommendations if you indeed become our candidate. But the idea is to get a rank and file sense of the people who come to this caucus. So they got so sophisticated in the third year, by 1950, that the Saturday and Sunday before the Monday opening of a convention was as big at the convention, because everybody came to the caucus. And the National Caucus was doing the same thing. And you could see friends beginning arriving Friday night after school was out, if you were close enough to the city where it was.

AFT obviously in electing delegates to conventions normally would say who can afford to go. And particularly if you lived west of the Mississippi River, because no convention was ever helped west of the Mississippi until they went to Glenwood Springs, and immediately they retreated to the East again, or Midwest. To us it was east. After all, Chicago is further from Denver than Chicago is from New York; therefore, it's considerably east.

But the only places that began to elect delegates is where they had divisions in their own locals. In other words, we knew in Detroit that when that Detroit delegation came to the Progressive Caucus, they came with a point of view because they had been in an election, a secret ballot election in their own local to even get a chance to come. But Detroit also paid for its delegates coming, or at least a modest fee, enough to entice them to run for the job. Certainly true in Chicago. Certainly true in the Twin Cities, Minneapolis and Saint Paul, and somewhat true in Boston and Washington. But otherwise, not much

true. In other words, whoever could make it from Philadelphia came. Whoever could make it from Pittsburgh came. If you see what I mean.

So you didn't have a reference back to the local, except in some instances. Now, if you go through the rest of the union movement, which I learned well between 1962 and 1973 when I was president of the state AFL-CIO, the same thing goes through every local union. It's hard until you've got a strike issue or an economic issue on the floor of a local union. And maybe a union hall not big enough to take care of all the people who work in that particular jurisdiction to expect anybody to come to union meetings unless you have a fine or assessment if you don't attend at least three a year or something like that. They could care less about the international union, as long as their pay check is all right, as long as their contract was all right, as long as their grievance procedure is being administered all right. It's the nature of the human being.

I keep reminding people, Valley Forge is close to New York City, read the history of the

city of Philadelphia. A great patriotic city until it was occupied by the Red Coats, and poor George Washington was sitting out in Valley Forge in what was it, three percent of the people dared to risk to get food out to Valley Forge up the Schuylkill 15 miles to save the starving soldiers, because suddenly it was more convenient to be a Red Coat. Well, I think that's the nature of how minorities penetrate eventually to a spot of winning on behalf of a majority.

Well, believe it or not, there was a time in the AFT, speaking of the caucuses, when the caucuses were open but the decisions were made by the individuals who were the delegates, not in reference to their union back home. It was almost assumed that it was a representative government, therefore, if you elected Dan Jackson to come from San Francisco, you didn't have to discuss the issues in advance, Dan would vote as Dan sees fit and it would have San Francisco in mind, if not the AFT in mind. It was a very open system, a very beautiful system.

And until Royce Forsythe relinquished the

chair in my opinion of the Progressive Caucus, it was ever thus. There was no single group of people ever in control of the caucus. There was no definition of slate. You had an honest secret ballot within the caucus, and sometimes up to 40 nominations for 15 seats on the Executive Council. And we counted votes later into the night than they did the next day for whoever won the election, the basic election of the AFT convention. That began to change I think partially by the nature of the system, partially by the fact that suddenly we had full-time presidents rather than part-time presidents. In other words, the system reacted to our getting rid after long years of labor, the Progressive Caucus finally confronting Irvin Kinsley, getting rid of Irvin Kinsley. It wasn't that he wasn't a nice guy, but he had built himself a position that was not the AFTs, it was Irvin Kinsleys, and we had to get rid of him, and so you have to have somebody who is in command.

Now, the caucus system then goes through a translation over a period of time. Remember, I have not been to the caucuses since even the 1974

convention. The caucus was already changing then. But I've been in touch constantly with people from all over the country who still write to me at this late time in my life from various spots, whether it's Philadelphia, New York or someplace else who try to relate to me isn't this awful what's going on in the AFT. I'm not to judge that because I'm not a participant in it. So, I guess what I'm saying to you at this point is that I know what happens in systems like that, just like in party politics, there gets to be a point where somebody gets to be predominant for the benefit of that person or his or her organization, which itself is large enough to be dominant.

I want anybody listening to this in due time to recognize -- and I question myself, you know, my value in the AFT Executive Council, particularly for the last six years of that life. Of the 15 years, I spent four years in the Executive Council, then ran for the state senate, got elected, didn't run again, left the caucus literally then, somehow or other was persuaded to come back. So I had 11 other years on the Executive Council after the

fact. But in relation to a teachers union position, only one of those years was I the head of the Colorado Federation of Teachers, and the rest of those 10 years I was president of the state labor body in Colorado. Therefore, I was closer and closer to what goes on either at the local union level or the international union level of the unions in this country.

I'd like to talk to that a little bit, because anybody who wants to can simply go to the Library of Congress and get one of the 20,000 hard bound copies no longer otherwise available except in libraries known as labor, "The Two Faced Movement," which was not my title but was the book I wrote after the McGovern election that relates to the labor movement and, as a matter of fact, the American Federation of Teachers position. I mention that here only because there you can read enough as to what I really think about labor as an ongoing surviving institution, the need to have it as long as we do not have a socialist system, as long as we don't have social democracy in the socialist sense of workers democracy. We have to

look at it is how do we deal with a capitalist economy versus the rights of workers within that economy. And I tried to define it as collective bargaining in the process of the bargaining table are one phase of the labor movement and still the important one because there would be no body politic without it. But, on the other hand, we are a body politic at a community level which is locally through local unions in terms of their own interests, whether it's a school board election for the AFT or whether it's a general election in a city or a county or a state for the total labor bodies with which the AFT associates itself or with a national body of the AFL-CIO. That's a different kind of a labor organization because we do not have a constitutional democracy. We do not have a representative form of government in the labor movement as, in my opinion, we should have and should have had a long time ago because it would have strengthened labor. What we've got is a loose federation which Mr. Meany loved, which Mr. Kirkland continues to obviously adhere to, and which anybody in the future, as long as the AFL-CIO

exists, will adhere to. But it is not a body that controls any bargaining table. It controls very little of the corporate society of this country. It acts as if all decision making is in the Congress of the United States, and they almost forget that there are 50 states out there to even worry about.

I want to speak to that in the sense of how does the AFT relate to all this. And Al Shanker can take a position concurrent with a George Meany of his time before his death on Vietnam and be identical. It does not disturb very many people in the American Federation of Teachers, because it's not a local union subject, it's not a state subject. It isn't a big ta-do in the conventions, because we're now a bargaining organization, we're more concerned about what do we get at the bargaining table, how do we redefine the quality of education, should we indeed have high tech and redesigned schools so that kids have a better chance to join the electronic society, but simultaneously have great teachers to come and deal with as opposed to the bureaucracy of teaching in

the typical high school or the typical middle or junior high school or the typical elementary or preschool of this country. We have to look at that. And I think Al Shanker is trying to begin to define that we better take a new look at our school system.

But, we're still a bargaining organization, and we would have no body politic in the AFT if it were not for the fact that we signed union contracts with school boards in this country. The reason we wouldn't is because we wouldn't have membership. We didn't have membership when we were not bargaining.

When I last went to an AFL-CIO convention as an AFT delegate, which was two years before I made a personal appeal on behalf of the Colorado Labor Council AFL-CIO to overturn the decision of George Meany that we had to be trusteed because we had dared to endorse George McGovern, even in that convention with Dave Seldon sitting there heading the delegation and being as friendly as possible, but being careful as to how they stand to vote for or against what I was talking on the floor of an

appeal, there were 175,000 members in the AFT. That, mind you, is 1974. Now it reached 650- or 700,000 -- or at least over 500,000. Look what's happened in the last 12 years that I do not relate to except by the statistic of knowing what's going on in the AFL-CIO.

Now, let me talk about this in the sense of there have only been three teachers that I know of who have ever headed state central bodies, two of them are in Colorado and one was in Tennessee. One was tapped to get out of Tennessee to become the director and coordinator of state and local central bodies who was then president of the Tennessee AFL-CIO, Stanton Smith of Nashville. George Cavender was kind of pushed into the position by some of us who were activists in the teacher union movement in Colorado in 1949, and we had to get rid of an inarticulate almost uncoordinated labor leader that neither the building trades nor -- at that time the building trades or the miscellaneous trades, because of his old AFL wanted, but they didn't know how to confront him themself because he was one of them. So we took them on and somehow or

other managed to get a George Cavender as president of a state federation; therefore, resigning from teaching at East High School in Denver.

I came along to take Cavender's place, not because I was a teacher, but I was the only person apparently who had been so active in all of the labor bodies of Colorado and who was well known because I'd been in the state legislature for a number of years in my life, both the House and the Senate, and had been a great advocate for the union shop on the floor of the Senate when no other good Democrat would dare defend it because they were afraid of getting tainted by the unions who had gotten them there -- which used to just horrify me -- saying, you deserve to get defeated next time if you can't support the constituents who put you here.

I came from a district that wasn't heavily labor, and I got there, and here I was defending the labor movement on the floor. So, these guys suddenly wanted me to be there when Cavender had to retire, not because I was a teacher.

So there were three teachers, and then I

became the protagonist of many things that Meany didn't liked because he knew that it wasn't Jack Fuchs of Chicago or Earl McGinnis of Wilmington or Carl Megel of Chicago or Herrick Roth the other delegate. It was Herrick that put the motion on the floor that declared the NEA a company union, which was AFT policy but which nobody had had the guts to put on the floor before. And we carried it on the floor debate in the old AFL-CIO in its second convention.

Well, Meany remembered me. I'll tell you one thing right now before I go any further, because what I'm going to tell you relates to this from here on. Here I was a teacher who was looked upon by the blue collar -- I always said the blue collar people adopted me because I understood where they came from and I related to the fact that they lost their lives in the Ludlow massacre. I went to every local union in Colorado, I went into the steel plants, I went into the rubber plants. I went to the symphony musicians when they were bargaining with the great Denver charitable leaders. I went up to the Climax molly mine, the

biggest molybdenum mine in the country, and solved disputes as a labor leader, as a mediator, because I found out I got some respect on the other side of the street. And part of it had come out of my legislative experience. So I suddenly was a very acceptable labor leader to everybody blue collar.

They were horrified when they themselves made the decision to support George McGovern, when the AFT couldn't even take that position. Because each union could go out and do its own thing. But an affiliate like the state labor bodies were told you can't do it. We weren't told that officially, you have to read the record to see what we were told. We were told we were an affiliate, we could also endorse.

So, here was Herrick Roth presiding at a convention, listen to these states, because these states had also by state bodies rather than separate political committees endorsed George McGovern. Massachusetts, I guess you'd expect it, he finally carried the state. Michigan, North Carolina, Florida, Oklahoma, Texas, California and Colorado.

What happened was, because I as an AFT leader had become a leader in the state central bodies grouping, people would start calling me and say, well, your own union is not as clear on this as you are, how did this happen. I said, it happened by our simply educating all the trade unionists in the state. I used a teaching technique. We sent out to everybody the whole history of Richard Nixon. Don't worry about Helen Gahagan Douglas, you have to look at who he did it to first, Jerry Vorhees and how he did it and how Pat Nixon would take the pictures of the known Communists in Los Angeles County and cut their pictures out, put them in a campaign pamphlet as if they were sitting on the stage supporting Vorhees in a safe Democratic district for him to go to the Congress.

So we educated our people on that and they related to that. So, they came to the convention and sustained it in what I call a pure democratic vote. Therefore, we didn't back off. Every other state called. Marshall called from Michigan, you know. Henning called from California. "Herrick, what are we supposed to be doing?" I got on

conference calls with people at their conventions from Denver, Colorado, of all places. "Well, you know, Herrick, we're hearing out here that you're this damn teacher radical that's doing this." I said, "Well, try it out in your convention. It says you're an affiliate, Mr. Meany said any affiliate may do as they like. We're an affiliate under the AFL-CIO constitution. We're clear in our position." Well, every state backed off but us, so Mr. Meany could easily go after us.

Part of the difficulty in this whole situation here -- and in the AFT had certainly always supported the AFL-CIO on this -- the AFL-CIO from the time it was formed in part of the merger agreement, if not in writing but in principle, Walter Ruether and George Meany had agreed they ought to have one political action committee, therefore, they did away with the PACS, which were the CIO's way of doing business. And we did away with our education leagues, which was the AFL way of doing business. And we set up a new one, Committee on Political Education, COPE, and defined how we could use union funds and educational

processes and how we had to get voluntary contributions to come under the Kreppas Act with full legality to go the other way. Then at a national board meeting at a board of the AFL-CIO, the international president of every union affiliate at the AFL-CIO, not state central bodies, international unions only. So the AFT was there among others.

The AFT did not obviously at either the board meeting or the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO support an endorsement of McGovern. Whatever happened, because the record is not clear on it, whatever happened was that at least Mr. Meany walked out of the meaning and said quite clearly under the circumstances we will not endorse for the presidency of the United States this year. Now, here's George McGovern with a 97 percent COPE record from a state like South Dakota where it's tough to have a COPE record that good. In fact, one unlike it anyplace in the country since. And two of them relating to the wheat shipments, even though on American transport, to Russia. And the wheat farmers of South Dakota were just as

important as the small labor union membership in the four towns with central bodies; namely, Huron, Aberdeen, Sioux Falls and Rapid City, four small communities. So that became the issue as to whether or not labor should support a candidate when they were still telling us through COPE we had to dump Nixon. With whom? And the AFT wasn't signing up to say with whom, my union, nor were a lot of other unions.

I'm trying to recall if I went to the 1972 convention. I did. It was in Minneapolis-Saint Paul. I think the resolution that passed that convention said that we should follow the lead of other international unions in joining with those international unions in supporting George McGovern. And, indeed, before the convention was out, Hubert Humphrey himself, since it was in Minneapolis, did bring George McGovern to our convention to be received.

But what happened was that there was no -- in other words, this was outside of the fact. In other words, the individual unions had to put themselves together on a national committee. And I

think only 25 or 26 unions did.

At the Minneapolis convention where Hubert Humphrey came and was a claimed, even though he was not the candidate that he wanted to be for that particular time, to introduce his friend George McGovern to the convention. Tell us how important it was, we recessed the convention to create the AFT committee on COPE to receive so that nobody could ever come back and say that we as a convention had endorsed. Now, as a COPE convention, I'm sure that our claim was without resolution that we were for George McGovern. The problem in this case at the AFL-CIO level, you have to understand the AFL-CIO structure, I'm sure everybody does who will ever listen to a tape like this, but you have to understand that when we lost the Congress of Industrial Organizations, we lost the chance to have a labor body that was in fact -- that did in fact elect to its own membership across the country from all of its members those who would indeed respond. Just like we elect members of the Congress of the United States, they have to respond to a constituency. In the old AFL and in the

AFL-CIO, you don't have to respond to anything except the international union officers of your union. You do not have to respond to membership. It's a loose federation.

The other thing is Mr. Meany was always very clear, as is the constitution of the AFL-CIO, we shall not interfere with the jurisdiction of any unless there is a dispute between jurisdictions, and we shall set up a procedure to deal with them. Which is the same as saying, we do not go to the bargaining table for the Steelworkers, we do not go there for the musicians, we don't go there for the barbers, now part of the United Food and Commercial Workers, we don't go there for the Retail Clerks, no longer existing. We don't go there for anybody. That's their business. We are the public voice of labor.

Mr. Meany's voice was the public voice of labor. Nobody ever interviewed anybody except George Meany. Incidentally, he was a guy of great intellect and wit, and nobody should demean George Meany as a person. The point is, he had an institution which he was the center of power. And

he was created in such a way that Walter Ruether thought that within ten years, because of George Meany's age, between 1955 and '65 he would succeed to the presidency. And by that time he would have cemented himself with the miscellaneous and building trades who were two-thirds of the membership of this new AFL-CIO in such a way that he indeed could become president. That's my interpretation. And I've been at national seminars with Roy Ruether and Walter Ruether in their time and my time, and I saw more of them than I did of others. And I always sense this. And we had Walter Ruether just as a personal favor to me when I was first year president of the Colorado AFL-CIO come to of all places the high school in Grand Junction, Colorado for the biggest labor convention we ever had in the state, in Grand Junction, of all places, but Walter Ruether came.

So I think I sense properly, even though Walter is long dead, and Roy too now, that Walter Ruether's position was he would become president of the AFL-CIO. Isn't it interesting between the 10th and the 11th year the UAW set down an agenda that

Mr. Meany and the Executive Council, let alone any convention of the AFL-CIO would never adhere to, sent this long resolution to the council, had not paid its per capita for six or seven months, and then never paid a penny of per capita again and therefore withdrew. You know, Dave Seldon or anybody in the AFT can say, well, we have to be loyal opposition. The AFT was still a small segment of the AFL-CIO in the middle '60s. It wasn't the idea and you see with Al Shanker since, we're not going to be a loyal opposition, we're going to be part of that team. That's where the power is. I think that's why Dave Seldon was graciously or ungraciously shoved aside, even though he was originally Al's special person to be president of the AFT in our caucus structure, and that's the way it went.

But what's happened in the long haul is that the AFT has adopted whatever the AFL-CIO status is as our means of getting there. As you now read the AFL-CIO Executive Council list, because all the other unions have suddenly had a change in presidencies, great hunks of that council have

disappeared, and Al Shanker has moved from the 29th to the fourth in seniority in a matter of several years. Al knew what he was doing. Dave can say what he wants to.

In the sophistication of the Progressive Caucus as it grew, and as I kind of moved in and out of it, although I was always a member, and as the Royce Forsythe's took over until eventually Royce decided that even a big local should be the chair of the caucus and, therefore, we really turned it over to Detroits leadership well after the fact, well after the Eckland Elder kind of dispute within the caucus. It was apparent that a friend of ours from Phoenix, Arizona, by the name of Bill Carnes who had been proposed as an AFT president and was the Progressive Caucus choice but would have been elected over Carl Megel, as a matter of fact --

END OF TAPE 3

BEGINNING OF TAPE 4

MS. RENE EPSTEIN: This is Rene Epstein. My interview with Herrick Roth is continuing on February 16th, 1987 in New York.

MR. HERRICK ROTH: Bill Carnes had been proposed to be president in a year of my absence from the convention I think in all this period of time from 1947, since I missed the first convention in '46, by virtue of our meeting with the Denver School Board, and two of us stayed home and the rest went to Minneapolis. The other convention I missed right up to 1974 was I think the year 1957 or '58. I'll have to check the records on it, but I was in the state senate, the governor had called a special session, he called it in short notice, it was for the week of the AFT convention. I obviously felt my obligation to stay, particularly since one of the programs that he called it on was the revision of the state school finance act of the state of Colorado, and I was chairman of the committee and, indeed, we needed to pass it, and we had to get votes on both sides of the aisle on both houses. I'm happy to say we got it, but in the

meantime I missed the AFT convention. That was the time when Royce Forsythe is then incoming chairman of the Progressive Caucus, as I recall, did agree. He'd come back to the caucus and did agree that we would try to find somebody who kind of crossed the party lines of the caucus, if agreeable with particularly the Michigan people who were the largest single segment in the caucus. And there were many locals in Michigan, including the Pat Dalys and others, who I think will be on this tape.

So, Royce called me and said, gee, we can't agree on a candidate, so we have Bill Carnes of Phoenix to run. Well, he's out of our area, Phoenix Union High School. Bill is a wonderful guy. He was five times wounded in the second war, he lost both legs, the happiest disposition alive and he still is alive. He's president of the Maricopa Federation of Teachers, which is Phoenix and environs. And Bill agreed to run until just at the last caucus session after he'd been nominated somebody asked him at the caucus, probably somebody planted from the National Caucus, "Mr. Carnes, would you agree to be a full-time president of the

AFT?" As a matter of fact, this had not happened before. We'd only had part-time or no-time presidents. Bill says, "Well, I think I'd have to consult Nell --" that was his wife" -- and she probably would want me to continue to live in Phoenix. But, yes, I'd be a full-time president." And he lost narrowly. Therefore, that was the beginning of the division of the caucus as to who was even going to run the caucus.

This led to the time then when Herrick suddenly came back from the end of the whole Progressive Caucus system, and somehow I was elected chairman for one additional year. Then the discussion said after the New York victory, well, you've had a lot to do with this, you mapped it out, why don't you be the candidate next time. So, the next time around I said okay, it was the Chicago convention, I'll consider being a candidate, and I won't pull a Carnes on you. This was after I was out of the state senate and becoming president of the Colorado AFL-CIO, almost simultaneously.

So in this little nuance, along comes a guy

named Myron Lieberman, who if he'd been around AFT conventions before, I had not remembered him. He ostensibly came from Rhode Island, but our Rhode Island people from Providence and Pawtucket who were in the caucus certainly didn't like Myron Lieberman. Frankly, he was a meandering philosopher, as far as I could tell. He was a nonpragmatic guy. He was writing important articles for which he was paid money on the process of what's wrong with education. He came into the caucus and became a candidate. And I really wasn't quite ready to be a candidate, but suddenly I was a candidate because nobody else was ready. In other words, Dave Seldon wasn't ready, Al Shanker wasn't ready, Charlie Cogan wasn't ready. So I finally consented to be a candidate to run against him in the caucus.

Then Carl Megel and all of the genius of the National Caucus had practically all the members of that caucus run over to the Progressive Caucus, sign up to be in the Progressive Caucus. And indeed, they had, outside of the Chicago Teachers Union, Gary and Cleveland, all other people related

to that caucus came in, and I lost by a narrow margin. I don't know what it was, you'd have to go back and look at the records, but by a handful of votes to Myron Lieberman.

Now, I never stopped to analyze votes after the fact. When you're confronted with the win or the loss, you take it where you are. So, Lieberman ran and half the people from the Progressive Caucus refused to vote for him. The National Caucus had won their point, and Megel continued to be president of the AFT.

Really what we were talking about, are you going to be a trade union or aren't you going to be a trade union. Are you going to join an organization that contested with us in New York and Philadelphia and got beat because we were smart enough to beat them and because trade unionism really could win over the NEA domination by those who managed our school systems and the NEA hadn't yet begun to kick out like they eventually did in Michigan, then later in Ohio and Colorado and other places so that they could become the bargaining agent by kicking out all the administrators from

their membership at the state levels and the local levels as far as that goes. But Lieberman was trying to say merger. We were trying to say, how can you merge the giant infant. You're going to lose the case for the bargaining table.

And Megel himself had not been a great proponent. See, this is the reason Megel got scared. He said to me after the convention, "Herrick, if you'd been running against me, I wouldn't be president." That was Carl's statement to me. He said, "I know that." He says, "I could trust the AFT to you, I couldn't trust it to Lieberman." And I said, "But you didn't want to trust it to me either, did you," I said to Carl, with a twinkle in my eye.

But it was a godsend to Dave Seldon who really wanted to be president of the AFT in terms of wherever Shanker was in those days. Remember, he was kind of the hireling moving up in the new structure of the UFT. After all, it was only a year after the first collective bargaining victory. Shanker was only there in terms of how he saw the future and his ability to help plan that future, as

compared to Dave who had been the architect as some people would say of the New York victory. Well, there were many people involved in the architectural structure. It was true, he was the manager on premise, and for the most part did a heck of a job with managing it. So, I'm just saying to you at this point, Lieberman versus Roth. Roth as the last minute candidate on the phone in Denver and saying to Marjorie Roth, "Well, we may have to move to Chicago and, eventually, if we can get it there to Washington, D.C." If I do it, we still have a happy home, unlike Bill Carnes. She said, "Well, I've always done what you want to do anyway." And I said, "Well, you always shouldn't do what I want to do." And I don't know that I wanted to do it, but it seems like this had been my life anyway. This will make this organization a true trade union, and she reminded me, well, you have only been the president of the state AFL-CIO for seven months.

Since I'd been the candidate, everybody had been supporting me. New York and Michigan particularly were supporting me in that caucus and

just couldn't believe that Lieberman had won. And then Lieberman went on and lost to Megel. It appeared that the proper thing for me to do was to wait out one year anyway, and so in everybody's mind as we left the caucus room at the end of that convention, that Herrick, maybe you can be the candidate next year. During the course of that year when I was in New York I think for other meetings of the AFL-CIO state and local central bodies, that was the time that Dave Seldon had called and said we need to meet with you while you're in New York. We went over to an east side restaurant here and sat down one noon hour for a couple of hours with Charlie Cogan, Dave and Al Shanker, and they indicated to me that they had come to a conclusion that Charlie -- Charlie didn't say anything -- that Charlie would be the next president of the AFT. Seldon was speaking it and Shanker was nodding his head affirmatively each time Seldon said it.

And I said, well, there's nothing wrong with that because in a technical sense you've got 40 or 50 percent of the caucus vote anyway. You have 30

percent of the convention vote, you're the power structure, I understand. I wouldn't cater to you as a union, but you know darned well I'd be on your side in every dispute. But if you're saying, Herrick, it's not for you, then that's fine, I know where my life is. But I said I'm going to continue running for the Executive Council. "Oh, we want you there," says Dave. Well, whether they wanted me there or not, Shanker opposed me the last time I ran and I won. I was the only one who won of those who he opposed in the caucus. I was the only one who came through the caucus primary the last time I ran in 1970 for the AFT Executive Council. It was the last time that I was elected to an AFT convention as an AFL-CIO delegate. We were still having secret ballots in the caucus and on the convention floor. I was the top candidate. I just barely got out of the caucus, because I knew New York opposed me, because by this time Shanker was in command of New York, and I understand that, and that's the realism, that's the pragmatics of life.

I didn't run again in '72 because we were going through the great dispute of the election of

George McGovern, and our state organization was told by Mr. Meany we're going to send a trustee out if you stay with the endorsement we sent. We stayed with the endorsement, he sent the trustee, we met him at the Federal Courthouse, and for 17 months we operated under a court injunction against Mr. Meany so the state AFL-CIO could be the state AFL-CIO. And in November of '73 that was overturned.

So, at the appeal that month of the AFL-CIO convention -- I'll just tell you this in concluding, only because I'm only in the labor movement because I was a teacher, because I was an AFT member -- I was escorted on the floor to a microphone and given ten minutes to speak before the AFL-CIO convention appealing the decision of June, July 1972 of the AFL-CIO president of sending a trustee to Colorado to take over the Colorado AFL-CIO and quoted the constitution, et cetera, of it. So I was escorted in, I was not a delegate to the convention. And the convention then was chaired by I.W. Abel. Mr. Meany says, of course, I'm one of the principals in this, I will turn this

over to I.W. Abel, president of the Steelworkers. Mr. Able got up, and I've had interviews with him, oral interviews with him subsequently on other matters relating to the history of the Steelworkers in Colorado at the nuclear weapons plant, Rocky Flats. I'm writing a history on that right now, very fascinating. He's in Phoenix, Arizona. And he said, "Herrick, you did win that vote?" He was in the chair, there was a voice vote, the vote was to overturn the decision of the president of the AFL-CIO to trustee the Colorado AFL-CIO. If you had a decibel meter, obviously we won the vote. And Mr. Able started to back away saying the motion is carried, which is the appeal. Mr. Meany stood up, was chomping on his cigar. Mr. Able turned around and looked at him, and then turned around again and he said, "I meant we sustained the decision of the president of the AFL-CIO." There was a hush over the audience, a lot of people booing and stuff, and I was escorted out. That was the end of my presidency of the Colorado AFL-CIO.

And the AFT certainly when asked to stand to vote on that issue, was not really standing one way

or the other. I well remember that.

One of the things I must leave anybody with, as you complete listening to this, on the assumption anybody listens other than those who speak, is that oral history is kind of a rampant thing in the last ten years in this country. Everybody had better have an oral history someplace. I had to really ask myself should I really come to New York or shall I take a day of my life in Denver for Rene to come out and professionally interview me, among others. Why was my name selected.

I guess if you really read what's at Wayne State University, if you really read the full transcript of what went on at AFT conventions, if you really read what would be assessments and floor debates -- because we used to print floor debates verbatim, who said what on what day. We got to the point where it was too expensive, therefore, it was easy to say we will not do that any more. You will really see what the lifeblood of any institution is where you print everything.

I give you an analogy. As a Master's thesis,

I decided not to do an educational Master's thesis, even though I was majoring in school administration of all things, for a Master's degree. I convinced people that I wanted to analyze the trends of democracy that may or may not relate to major issues in which the school systems of the country should be involved. So I convinced my major professor I'm going to take a history of the American proposal to create a League of Nations and then refusing to join it. And if there were not a Congressional record of complete debate, nobody would know who Senator Williams from Louisiana was at the time of the great debate where the vote was ordained to defeat Woodrow Wilson through the presence of a Henry Cabot Lodge on the floor of the United States Senate. But the debate and its logic was clearly defined by Williams from, of all places, Louisiana, who's not necessarily a Huey Long or a part of his regime, but who was intellectually perceptive of what turning over part of the jurisdiction to the world to all nations of the world meant against what it meant to remain isolationists. And the reason I did that was to

say what happened, and then I matched it with Elwood Kuberly's redescribing what the American school system should be. And I wove the two together.

But if I hadn't read that oral debate, I would have understood why the decision was made, what it was all about, or what an underdog is all about. Because what's happened to me most of my life is I have been willing to fight the underdog battle until I created literally for myself a role of an underdog. In this tape here, I think the Bob Porters, the Al Shankers and those who are in control of the AFT at this point certainly were respectful of and appreciative of somebody like a Herrick Roth who often was found on the opposite side of the street from them, even within their caucus, let alone on the floors of convention, and sometimes would be the only person who wanted to get up and speak about something. Not because I enjoyed hearing myself talk so much, as in trying to put into words what the issues seemed to be that we were trying to make a decision on, when I felt others had already preordained the decision, like

the League of Nation's decision had been made. And what I find over a period of time is that even your enemies respect you for calling their hand, even if you're going to lose. And I've done that all of my life, not with the idea I enjoy calling hands, because often I've been the winner, and I've always been respectful of the people who have been on the opposite side of the fence. And that's been my life style. And I'm always pleasant and affable after a fight. Not all people are. Most people are grousing and never come back to see their old enemies, their old friends.

First of all, I'm honored to have been asked to be a part of this because in a sense people with whom I have disputed where the union has gone since 1974 are nonetheless respectful. I've had Al Shanker twice on my television program in Denver, Colorado between 1974 and 1983, and people would say, Herrick, how can you do that to us when he's destroyed the democracy of the AFT, my AFT friends. To which I say, he happens to be the leader. He happens to be a great intellect. His IQ is off the map, and I respect Al Shanker. Besides, he has

provided some kind of stability for teachers while they've been to the bargaining table. Do I like what the teachers have done at the bargaining table? I'd have to look at every bargaining table, whether it was Boston or New York. Have we improved the quality of education? Well, who can say that we have not. But, yes, I'd bargain for other things at the bargaining table. I'd restructure the school system if I were at the bargaining table, I said so more than once. But I don't see any of our locals doing it, so I'd have to say, well, Al is a realist. He realizes until he gets his establishment well established, he is not going to talk about reform of the American educational system, but there will be a day when he does. And isn't it interesting that he literally internally as I read it convinced the Carnegie report on teaching as a profession, he convinced the people on the corporate side of the street to buy a new concept as to what we ought to do in public schools today.

So I take my hat off to the Al Shankers. And I understand I think why I can have him come and

even speak to the Colorado forum, which I do, when I bring the chief executive officers of the big businesses of Colorado to Washington, D.C., because he excites them with a critical point of view that they don't normally hear. And the AFT has made that possible for him. Even as some people would say, the democracy of the AFT has changed. But, on the other hand, that's been the story of history.

Let me just take that word democracy, small D democracy for a moment and apply it to education as it was being evolved in the concept in the early days before we were kind of hamstrung by the institution of the AFT as it grew, proposing to the AFT conventions. There were two concepts. One came out of Contra Costa County, California, which we took up and which was the master teacher concept. In other words, there should be no student teaching in the training of teachers that came out of the academic institutions of education. It should all be done in the classroom under the teachers who were already there, similar to the apprentice system in the building trades and the printing trades of old. Yet, in some cases of the

present. So that a teacher would have to be under the tutelage of a teacher before the teacher himself or herself could have the credential of saying I am now a teacher. That was the Contra Costa concept which we bought and which should be in all archives. Anyway, if you can find it, Ben Rust, the master teacher.

Now I wanted to go to the second concept. Incidentally, the master teacher concept was proposed by Ben Rust I would say in the middle 1950s, and he began to publish books that related to his experience in the California Federation of Teachers and the Contra Costa Federation of Teachers, which was the most highly democratic trade union in the AFT in the state of California and which the San Francisco local later began to try to emulate and having a better membership pretty swelled under Dan Jackson and later his wife to be, two laters, a man and a woman.

The Colorado position was that if teachers were going to be subject to the system of academic harassment by the bureaucracy of a school system, that teachers should free themselves of that, and

the first thing we ought to put on the bargaining table is not how much we're going to be paid but how do we control our own faculty relationships. Therefore, we would bargain in the areas of how you interchange among faculties in the school system, how you free up time in the system. Well, how do you do that? You do that by electing your own administrator. Who do you elect it from? You elect it from your peer group. We even developed the plans in such a sophisticated way that we would send resolutions to the AFT convention. They never got anyplace. And we were still pressing for bargaining, therefore, we had to put our priorities where our first interests were. But the idea in that case was if you were elected chairman of the faculty, namely, the principal of the school for the purpose of running the instructional program of the school, the relationship of students to teachers, the relationship of all the support services in the school, whether they're social services, health services, lunchroom services, the academic extracurricular programs, the sports extracurricular programs. We thought they should

all be run under the tutelage of teachers for one thing. We didn't want to just see always that the physical ed teachers and the coaches became the principals who could go into the management structure of the public schools. That was offensive to some people, including Carl Megel who came up that way into the AFT. But it was not offensive to us because everybody would say you can't trust democracy. How can you elect realistically a good faculty chairman? Well, you limit his term for one thing, or her term. You take them out of different academic disciplines from time to time if you're in the secondary schools. You don't have to in the elementary schools. You can cross-fertilize there, if you want to put it that way.

We might even have established preschools within the system since all of us believe that child psychology was kind of teaching us even in our days that the socialization of children should begin outside the family at a much younger time and that they could indeed read much earlier. The proof of the pudding these days is the electronic

media and how quickly the Sesame Streets and the others taught kids to read before they ever saw a teacher. We were saying these things teachers understood, these things teachers could define, these things teachers could work into the budget of a school. And then we bargained for the budget. We bargained for not only the price of the teacher and the price of the faculty chairman, and once elected chairman, to continue at that rate of pay for the rest of his or her life, but never serve too long. Because as soon as you get to become a faculty chairman administering a school program, you're outside the classroom, and you have to be close to the classroom. And you have to be close to it on the day that you get there, too, and you have to know that your responsibility is to the teachers, and the teacher's responsibility is to the kids.

I think if Denver had been the first local to bargain in the country, we had some men and women, old and young, who were cross-sectional as to where they came from in the United States of America, who were not heavily concentrated in a particular area

of either ethnicity or economics or anything else by virtue of how the frontier of the West grew; therefore, you would have brilliant men, brilliant women, different backgrounds, some from poverty, some who worked their way up through the Depression, some who came from very affluent families of the East but wanted to get out of the awful turmoil of the Manhattans and the Boston Commons and get out to the free and open spaces. We had people with great imagination who were kind of freed by the climate of the place. My guess is we could have devised a school system, not kindergarten, and we were one of the few systems when we came to the AFT that even had kindergarten, it was a public expense in the American public school system. So we had devised this kind of a plan and said we can democratically risk it by teachers voting. That's still my feeling. And I still think we have to trust democracy of the profession.

Considering my age, I guess you'd still think that was a naive statement. I pointed out, as you're thinking through what I just said, that our

first agenda had to be bargaining, that's very pragmatic. You see, the AFT itself wasn't pragmatic. We were the pragmatists from the West. But while we were at it, we were outlining what do you bring to the bargaining table. Well, you bring brand new ideas. You bring new creative strengths. When you are strong enough, once established is what we were saying, then you can bargain for the moon, because it's part of your working condition. If part of your working condition is how you administer your society, you trust the integrity of a faculty in a secret ballot vote to make a better decision than the school district and the superintendent is doing then who administers the school. And you learn quickly who in the faculty can and cannot manage and, therefore, you learn by your own errors. And experience is an awfully good teacher.

Not naive so much as the idea is if you don't have great ideas out in front of you while you're going for the pragmatic stuff, why be pragmatic, why have collective bargaining for nothing. Why have it for just economics alone. We don't live by

just bread alone. Teachers certainly know that. As a matter of fact, so do the brick masons and the steelworkers. There's always somebody in everybody's society who has a greater dream than what the assembly line gives them. And this gives everybody a chance to be creative. The school system is where we ought to have creativity, and a strong bargaining table will protect it. It will probably protect it better than a tenure any day, or any kind of a special law that says school systems shall not be attacked as the Joe McCarthys did attack all of America in the early '50s.

As I see the leadership that Al Shanker now portrays in the cross section of society through the Carnegie Report, as an example, or on the AFL-CIO Executive Council as being high in command on that council now, is he's not saying you don't bargain for these things. What he's saying is you need a reform in the system. We may have to reform some parts of our statutory requirements for the system to do what Al Shanker now says is necessary in having very well paid teachers who are highly devoted to their teaching, but who are free to

teach as a teacher would need to teach. Not all of us have the same style of teaching. Not everybody is the great philosopher at whose feet you sit.

Who deals with the electronic world, what kind of a science teacher do we want today. Well, you pay a good price for it, not for knowledge alone, but for how you communicate that knowledge and how you really relate to your student, whether the adult or the youngster. These are the things that I think he's talking about. But does he say this won't be happening at the bargaining table? Of course not. If teachers collectively are not involved in this process, what Al Shanker now dreams about or what you write into a Carnegie Report become meaningless, because they will not happen.

He's given us a new forum to which the teachers can address themselves and say this is what we now want to bargain for, this is a cross section of American opinion in a capitalist society and economy that can function, not just by its economics alone, but by the need of this country to have students who don't drop out of school and who

are able to be part of the culture as well as the job climate of America. And I think Al Shanker does represent that in what he's saying more than any educational leader I know.

END OF TAPE 4