DE - Dennis East
HS - Helen Starr
MS - Mark Starr

DE: Today is June 6, 1974. We're at the home of Mark and Helen Starr to interview them regarding their experiences at Brookwood Labor College and other related events.

DE: Will you please tell us a little bit about your early life, your family background, this sort of thing.

HS: I come of pre-revolutionary stock. Both my mother's and father's families gravitated to Kansas after the Civil War. My father's family homesteaded out in Pawnee County. My mother's family lived around Agra which was settled much earlier. We lived, during my early childhood, at Frankfort, Kansas. My father was a railway machinist for the Santa Fe Railroad, and moved later to Chanute which was then the division point for the Southern Kansas Division. My sister was a ticket clerk for the Santa Fe. I worked for a period in the Santa Fe offices. And during the war, when unions were allowed on the Santa Fe, was a member of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks. I worked my way through Kansas State Agricultural College at Manhattan, Kansas and graduated from there in 1925. During my senior year a letter came to the journalism department from a peculiar institution in New York State called Brookwood Labor College asking for possible candidates for teacher of labor journalism. I heard about this almost by accident and inquired about it and eventually wrote a letter of application setting forth my qualifications and so forth and occasionally afterward when I became discouraged about my own accomplishments I would go back and read this letter. I set forth

in convincing terms my labor connections, journalistic qualifications and so forth. And Clinton Golden, who was business manager for Brookwood had been out to Denver and was instructed to stop at Manhattan on his way back and interview this creature. Clint and I hit it off very well indeed. He recommended me and consequence was that I went to Brookwood in the Fall of 1925 and taught journalism there and did publicity for the school for the next ten years until my husband Mark Starr was appointed as education director for the International Ladies Garment Workers Union in 1935. After which we moved to New York. And thereafter my participation was pretty much acting as copy and proof reader for the publications of the education department. And I think that's about all.

DE: Let me ask you a question. Would you say you came from a strong union family? Were you conscious of unions at that time? You were a member of a union, of course, but would you say it's a strong influence?

HS: Yes, I've sometimes wondered, for example, why I was much more attracted to labor than I was to women's suffrage, for example, which came into being just then. I suppose in a way I was, I assumed that women were the equal of men and would solve their own problems. Also partly because the women's movement was very much a source of upper middle class, a fad. But my instinctive sympathies were on the side of labor. I had the advantage when I went to college of being a special student which meant that I could pick and choose among the topics. And I think the first semester that I was there I took social problems, labor problems and there is still extant a paper that I wrote commenting on an anti-labor publication of the National Association of Manufacturers, which while relatively naive I would still stand by for the greater part.

DE: Was you father a union official or just rank and file in terms of membership? Was that an influence on your labor thinking?

HS: Well, in his early years as a machinist, he served his apprenticeship as a railway machinist, which was at that time a seven year apprenticeship, with the Santa Fe at Ottawa and then lived in Kansas City and a couple of suburbs of Kansas City for several years. During the time that he was there he was active. Now I couldn't tell you whether it was the Knights of Labor or whether it was more or less a local union. But he was active then. But the Santa Fe was very anti-union and except for the locomotive engineers and firemen which they had to deal with, didn't encourage unionism. The machinists were organized and the railway clerks during the interval of government control of the railroads during the war. And then I think he held some local office and my mother was secretary or treasurer or something of the Women's Auxiliary. But like a great many American workers and especially in the middle west, this matter of unionism was not doctrinaire. You couldn't ~~of~~ have sold him up on socialism or communism or anything of that sort. It was pure and simple trade union.

DE: What do you remember about your early impressions of Brookwood when you first got there in 1925? Anything...

HS: My first impression was that I had never heard of any of the people or topics that were discussed. As a matter of fact I should have paid Brookwood for my labor education instead of being paid for teaching there. But it was a wonderful place to teach. Especially since I had done some country school teaching after I got out of high school. Because the students were all enthusiastic, they all had the drive to get as much information as they could possibly get in the time that they were there. You had to chase them out of the library

at midnight and there were no, there was no such thing as giving grades. So that as a teacher you were not inhibited by the necessity of seeing to it that they could pass examinations. It was a very varied student body and the students educated one another. You had quite a group of needle trades workers, the Women's Garment Workers, the Men's Garment Workers, the Millinary Workers and then related to that, the Textile Workers. And as a matter of fact, we could have filled the school every year with applicants from those unions, because they were socially conscious and had the European-Jewish tradition too, of attaining knowledge. Then there were miners, mostly from Illinois, some from Pennsylvania and some of the Illinois miners wanted to know what these needle trades workers were doing there. Because they had never heard of needle trades unions any more than the needle trades had heard of the miners unions. I remember one chap we had, he was a railway clerk from Covington, Kentucky, who came and looked around and saw that we had Negro students and announced that he wasn't going to associate with niggers. So he was told that, well, if he didn't wish to he could go home, but they were staying. Then at the end of his period at Brookwood he went back to his railway local, Railway Clerks local in Covington and tried to convert the union in the course of one evening to all the things that he had learned during two years at Brookwood.

DE: Was there much, oh, I don't know, tension or antagonism or anything, between these union members from the different union? I mean the, was it a problem at Brookwood?

HS: In the sense that the needle trades workers were much more sophisticated, if I may use the ~~work~~ WORD, much more accustomed to abstract argument which made the building trades and miners feel somewhat baffled. Because they

believed. They were emotionally attached to their sort of unionism, their outlook on labor, but were incapable of meeting the arguments of the needle trades workers. And...

DE: Politically, was there in a political, ideological sense of the needle trades normally coming out of the European, Socialist, Jewish, German, whatever background and confronting these miners from the midwest sort of thing - was there political nuances at work?

HS: Well, there were and as a matter of fact that was in part the basis for the break which eventually took place between Brookwood and the Workers Education Bureau which was the educational arm of the American Federation of Labor. And that rose in rather odd circumstances. We had a group of railway car men there, this must have been 1928 I should think, probably the school year of '27, '28. And they were a mixed crowd in themselves because we had from Canada a couple of boys who were Catholic. Then we had one railway car man from Staten Island, I think, who was a, who belonged to some primitive protestant sect. But they were united in their objection to what they regarded as the godlessness of the needle trades, some of the needle trades workers. And one of the, I think probably the man was on the Board of Directors of the Railway Car Men from Canada, came to the graduation exercises and was greatly offended at a play which was put on along with R.U.R. in which a man who was assumed by some very primitive group of people to be a god and paid great deference to was exposed as a human being when pepper was blown under his nose so that he sneezed. And this railway car man chap took this as a reflection on religion in general so that he gave adverse report.

DE: He subsequently reported that to the...

HS: Yes, to his union.

DE: _____Elder or to William Green or somebody.

HS: Well, it was Matthew Wall who was, let me see, he would have been Photo Engravers, I think, but occupied a position of considerable importance in the AF of L Executive Committee. And some complaints evidently were sent to him and he invited more and was sort of the, I don't know whether self-appointed or officially appointed chap to investigate Brookwood. One of the points on which Brookwood was accused was that of celebrating May Day. Now the matter became somewhat distorted because eventually the accusation was celebrating May Day inself and that was done - rather than Labor Day - that was done chiefly because the school year didn't begin until after Labor Day and after the fall convention of the AF of L. But the actual complaint was that in the decorations that were put up for the day, which included red crepe paper festoons, red being very significant color, pictures of Gompers and Lenin appeared on the wall. It was not their juxtaposition that was objected to but the fact that Lenin's picture was larger than Gomper's picture. Now that came about because the Lenin picture came off a poster and the Gomper's picture came out of Gomper's autobiography, Seventy Years of Life and Labor. Brookwood was accused of being un-American, atheistic and Red. And we felt that the atheistic charge was particularly inappropriate because A.J. Muste who was chairman of the faculty and the real spirit of the school was a minister himself. But also because the, on Sundays, students who wished to attend church were always transported down to the little village of Katonah with the official Brookwood stationwagon. And then that was, it must have been in 1928, '29 I guess, Brookwood was reported on at the AF of L convention and one of the difficulties reported was the fact that in one of the publications the revolution was referred to and the AF of L

man maintained that America had already had its revolution and therefore any further comments on the subject were inappropriate. The first result of this was a rallying of interest and an increase in contributions on the part of liberals and so forth who felt that the school was under attack and there was a very impressive list of names drawn up of supporters of Brookwood and this was before such lists became so common as they were later. Some of the unions which had given scholarships to the school continued to do so but there was a definite falling off in the scholarships, although we continued to get students from these industries. But the Depression caught up with the school so that the students who came were not able to take care even of their own medical and dental expenses. That became something that the school had to assume and at the same time the liberals and Christian Socialists and proponents of the new social order who had previously contributed to the school from unearned income found that the value of their stocks and bonds and whatever was falling to the point that they could no longer make contributions. Brookwood had relied in considerable part for its financing on the so called Garland Fund which had another name that I can't recall at the moment.

DE: American Fund for Public Service or something like that.

HS: Yes. American Fund for Public Service. This was a ten-year grant, in diminishing sums each year. And the theory behind this being that by the end of the ten years the school should have established itself sufficiently to draw support, income from the trade union movement itself. And this, let me see that must have run until '33 or something of that sort. Meanwhile, the school lost its tax exempt state because it took summer boarders, summer guests as means of finance and ran summer institutes and so forth. And the Village of Katonah or the township,

whichever was the taxing body, insisted that the school should begin to pay real estate taxes taking as the precedent a ruling a great many years before that some Baptist seminary which got money by a somewhat similar means was taxed. This was sort of the straw that broke the camel's back as far as the financing of the school was concerned and it did not in fact last much beyond the imposition of the real estate tax because land in that area was quite valuable, the taxes were high and Brookwood had quite a large plot of land.

DE: You hear a lot, you read about Brookwood and there are a lot of issues that have came up beginning in 1928 and then proceeding on through the '30s that caused, you know, that contributed to the demise of Brookwood. One, being the formation of the CPLA, Conference of Progressive Labor Action, the preaching of industrial unionism and this sort of thing. I'm sure you're familiar with most of the arguments. In your own mind, to which one would you lend the highest priority or would say was a major factor in the demise of Brookwood? The withdrawal of AF of L support and endorsement, or one particular issue that more than any other...

HS: The Depression.

DE: The Depression.

HS: Yes.

DE: Do you think Brookwood could have survived had the Depression not come along?

HS: Yes, I think so. Because during the early days of the NLRA when union organization picked up after a long period of the doldrums following the war, when Mr. Green had attempted to blunt the open shop drive by

being exceedingly respectable. During the early period of the, well the formation of the Auto Workers, the Steel Workers and so forth, there was a great demand for Brookwood graduates as organizers and a good many of them were so employed. And I think if this school could have maintained itself during those very early years until the unions could have, the CIO unions, the industrial unions, could have started contributing to the school that it could have very well survived. But...

DE: Was there much, was there much outward preaching, shall we say, by the faculty members, criticism of the AF of L and calling upon the AF of L to organize the industrial workers or organize the unorganized?

HS: Yes, although one couldn't really call it criticism so much as pointing the finger and saying - shame, shame. Because the AF of L unions still tended to think in terms of an aristocracy of workers through the skilled unions. And they couldn't conceive of industrial unionism apart from the IWW idea of one big union. And the feeling was that the lower paid workers in mass industry were just not organizable, that it would constitute a terrific financial drain. And it was very difficult to get across the idea that industrial unionism, as I said, didn't mean one big union. That you could have your sub groupings of workers, ranging from the very highly skilled on down and that they wouldn't all get the same rate of pay, for example. One incident involving the AF of L, which to my mind was responsible for the actual break and which I have felt in various accounts of the period has not been given sufficient attention, was an institute which was held, it must have been during the summer of '28, I may be off a year or two, at which the topic of discussion was to be the Mitten-Mahon Agreement - my I haven't dredged that up out of memory for a long time. This involved the street car

railway workers in Philadelphia and the Mitten Management Company which managed street cars in other cities. The gist of the agreement was that Mitten Management would recognize the Street-Railway Union in Philadelphia, provided the union would not insist on such an arrangement in other cities, specifically in Boston. And Mr. Mahon, who was the union president, was invited to Brookwood to discuss the matter at a summer institute and he turned it down. There was some warning on the part of the two labor members of the Executive Committee of Brookwood, Fania Cohn of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union Education Department and ~~Dave Leskowitz~~ ABE LEFKOWITZ, the Legislative Representative of the American Federation of Teachers in New York, that perhaps it was unwise to hold the institute under those circumstances. But it was held. And this, the idea that an upstart educational institution should publicly criticize one of the AF of L unions, was quite an offense in the eyes of the AF of L. But there was a period, particularly after the formation of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, which was started really to give Brookwood support as it lost support in the trade union movement, in which A.J. Muste would get as much newspaper space as William Green would when it came to information and opinion about the state of the labor movement. This was no doubt partly because A.J. was more quotable than Mr. Green, but nevertheless...

DE: Anybody else would be.

HS: He did have to consider the school, he and therefore the school had considerable prestige in the public press and in the matter of labor opinion and particularly, of course, on such things as industrial unionism, social insurance, which was another ~~crive~~ crime in the eye of the AF of L which was still holding to the simple Gompers philosophy of more and more.

DE: Do you think - let me interrupt you a minute here - do you think

that the controversy, or the growth of the controversy with the AF of L, was as much centering around perhaps differing personalities of say a Green and a Muste, personality rivalry here or leadership rivalry or something like this, as much a factor in it as some of the issues which were talked about. On Green's part a bit of maybe jealousy or resentment toward Muste personally.

HS: There was resentment, but on the other hand A.J. was a wonderfully reasonable, and persuasive person and even at the AF of L convention which at/Brookwood was read out he was treated in a very friendly manner by some of the people who voted against him. But it was, this was a period in which industrial unionism was struggling to be born, so to speak, and the thing that some years later resulted in the formation of the CIO was certainly a factor here. Because what you would get was mass production which also involved masses of workers for which the old craft unionism was badly adapted. So that a smaller and smaller per cent of the workers were actually organized.

DE: I'm going to back up a little bit in time to the beginnings of the controversy with the AF of L a little bit. Some of the secondary accounts that you read indicate that in teaching of sociology that Mr. Calhoun was anti-religious and anarchistic and that social economics was too abstract, and this sort of thing, for students. On labor journalism, one guy wrote that the purpose of the labor journalism courses was to spread radical propaganda. As the one who taught labor journalism, how would you respond to that charge, shall we say?

HS: I was certainly not a radical myself and those quotations, which you've probably have had access to were more or less drummed up at the time of the break as criticism of the whole of the faculty and that was

about the only thing that they could say, I presume. I must say that the students enjoyed the journalism course as much as I did, I think. And partly because it was one of the few "how to" courses. The criticism of Calhoun arose in part because of the fact that Dave Sepas, who taught trade union methods and trade unionism and so forth, took a years leave of ~~absence~~ absence and went to France and wrote a book on the French labor movement, which meant a redistribution of classes. And so Arthur Calhoun took over some of the courses which A.J. had previously taught. Arthur was a very provocative teacher, but a disturbing one to the pure and simple trade unionists. He was discussing various labor philosophies. So one day he would set forth the precepts of say anarchism and make it sound wonderfully reasonable. And the next day he would set forth the precepts of socialism, Marxism, and so forth, and make that sound equally attractive and this was very baffling to the railway car men and building trades workers who had never thought in abstract terms before. And emotionally they were disturbed and "agin" the things that Calhoun was setting forth and yet could not produce arguments. We were criticized not so much by the students as by one of our labor executive committee members for having Lawrence Dennis, who was the equivalent of "American facism" up to the school to talk. And it was a very good thing we did because the faculty was quite aghast at the poor way in which even the sophisticated students handled themselves, opposing him. I mean he, they fell into all the traps that he set from an argumentative point of view. And Miss ~~Cohen~~ COHN felt that under no circumstances should Brookwood give a platform to Mr. Dennis. It was ~~Ed~~ ~~DAVE~~ ABE Leskowitz, of the American Federation of Teachers, who supported the faculty and agreed that all points of view ought to be presented and that the students should have experience in dealing with

End of Tape 1, Side 1.

Tape 1, Side 2

DE: What, another one of the criticisms are comments that have been made about Brookwood's relationship with the W.E.B., Workers Education Bureau and AF of L and so on, was that Muste ran things in such a way that they did not cooperate with the W.E.B. It is my understanding that the W.E.B. more or less controlled Brookwood, had a board of directors or this sort of thing that oversaw the curriculum or had some hand in the curriculum and teaching at Brookwood but Muste circumvented them.

HS: No, they had...

DE: Tell us a little bit about how it worked, so to speak.

HS: Well, there was no direct connection with the AF of L. And as a matter of fact the Workers Education Bureau was not officially designated as the educational arm of the AF of L until after the break with Brookwood. More or less the same group formed the Workers Education Bureau which formed Brookwood. They sort of met at Katonah, at Brookwood one day and set that up. And then the next day went to New York and with some alterations, but not too many in the personnel, established the Workers Education Bureau as a sort of clearing house for labor education in general. Because while Brookwood was the only residential labor college, excusing Commonwealth which was not primarily intended as a labor school, it was more for general education of adults, there was a very lively local labor college movement. There were labor schools, these were evening classes, of course, in Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Seattle, Portland, Boston, Chicago, New Haven and a lot of smaller places. And the informal meeting place for these, which grew

more and more valuable and accepted as time went on, was what was called the Washington's Birthday Conference on Workers Education which Local 189 of the American Federation of Teachers, which was the Brookwood faculty with another hat on, ran from, I believe it was 1922 on. And even after Brookwood closed this was continued by the Affiliated Schools for Workers for several years after that.

MS: Women workers, at first. Schools for women workers.

HS: Well, yes, I've forgotten to mention the summer schools for womem workers which gathered students from a wide territory starting out with the Bryn Mawr summer school. There was a very lively one which took both men and women at the University of Wisconsin. There was one of the Southern Labor School. And for a time one at Barnard College in New York. And then there were, as I say, the smaller local places with a program of evening classes and one or two teachers for those. But I would say so far as any suggestion that A.J. was running a one man operation that that was quite unjustified. Because we had weekly faculty meetings at which questions of policy and so forth were thrashed out. So far as the running of Brookwood locally went, there were student representatives and a student run work's committee which assigned the jobs of road mending and fire keeping and dish washing and things of that sort. But Brookwood itself had a well structured government. And it was not at all a faculty proposition exclusively. There was a Board of Directors upon which trade unions were represented. In part these were the trade union representatives who were in on the formation of the school, which included people like Miss Cohn and Mr. Lefkowitz, ~~that~~ do I've already mentioned, Rose Schneiderman of the Women's Trade Union League and...

MS: Jim Maur.

HS: Jim Maur who was president of the Pennsylvania Federation of

Labor. And then any trade union which gave a scholarship to the school was entitled to representation on the Board of Directors. Then there were faculty members of the Board, there were student members, I think two, and two representing the graduates. And the votes in this were weighted in such a way that the trade union members of the Board could always out vote all of the others, granting that they all voted as a unit. So that it was not at all a matter of the faculty versus the world, let alone A.J. versus the world.

DE: I think some of the secondary accounts have attempted to read in the fact that Muste was a very strong, central...

HS: He was a very charismatic and very practical person in a great many ways. It was he who raised the money. He was the faculty chairman.

MS. And he was Brookwood in the eyes of the public.

HS. Yes. Although that was not entirely true. For instance, on the New York Central Trades and Labor Council, Josephine Colby, our English teacher, was the representative and she ran classes for the Central Trades.

MS. And both A.J. and Colby took an active part in the FORMATION of the American Federation of Labor when the American Federation of Teachers I think

HS. As a matter of fact Miss Colby had been a field organizer for the American Federation of Teachers before she came to Brookwood.

DE: Would you say that the faculty viewed the controversy with the AF of L and that period and those developments as one of academic freedom versus central control by the various unions? I mean that's basically the way it's been told.

HS. Yes. Well...

DE: Would you say was the faculty united in its ~~vies~~ views on that?

HS: Oh, Yes, ~~These are~~ Vis-a-vis the AF of L, certainly. The internal controversy, which was also a part of the, partly responsible for the eventual demise of the school, was something else again, in that, there the faculty was divided. And it was a particularly painful thing. In the first place, this was a residential school quite remote from New York and well removed from the small village which was its post office so that personal relations were very close and very inevitable. You couldn't avoid contact even if you wanted to. And those who opposed A.J.'s views so far as the Conference for Progressive Labor Action was concerned, nevertheless, were attached to him as an individual. So that it was a very painful period to live through.

DE: When you say internal controversy you mean the formation of CPLA and Muste's support for it?

HS: Well, not actually the formation of it. I think the faculty was pretty well united on that. There were some warnings at the organizing meeting of the CPLA that almost inevitably such a body would become political. And a good many people who supported the idea of worker education would not support the idea of political action, and political opposition.

MS. I think Helen is leaping ahead a little because it wasn't so much the CPLA as it was the American Labor Party, the ALP, in its formation. And the decision of A.J. that having been robbed of, apparently, of a chance of developing, expanding, growing which _____ because the AF of L had sort of forbidden their unions to help and assist. But now the question was could he find, set up a Bolshvik Party, sort of, or an American Labor Party for which Brookwood would serve as the "seminary of the sect," that is to quote the phrase of Calhoun. To put all the eggs into the basket of this one political party along with Louie

Budenz and some of the other people who were his workers in the field at that time. That I think is subsequent. If you look at the chronological sequence, you'll find that really comes later. That was the main purpose of the internal division because some of the members of the faculty, the majority of them, decided that that way disaster lay, and that with all its faults and even with the rebukes and reproaches, which it got from the official bureaucracy of the AF of L, it had to continue to try to serve the unions, the labor movement as a whole rather than starting a new rival political party.

HS: Wouldn't you agree, Mark, that there was an intervening period? The American Workers Party was a sort of a result of the isolation of the CPLA. But the gist of the argument originally was the idea put forth by Budenz and Matthews, and what was the other chap's name, the real pain in the neck? I can't think of it at the moment, it will come to me. Well, in which the idea was that Brookwood, as it had existed up to that time, should be pretty well abandoned in favor of taking a location, I think Passaic, New Jersey, was one that was suggested and that the education of the students should become almost secondary to organizing activities on their part. And most of the faculty felt that this would be a dissipation of energies. The school had already been reduced from a two year course to a one year course because it was found that two years was just too long for local leaders to be away from their local situation. That in that period the role it had occupied had closed up, in a sense. And that there was so much to be conveyed that if you had the distraction of actual organizing work going on at the same time you would destroy the educational atmosphere. I think that it would be fair to say, wouldn't it, that A.J. was sort of euchred into a support of this idea. That he was pressed

so hard by Budenz and Matthews and, what was that chap's name, Mark?

DE: Let me ask you this. I was going to ask the question - to what do you attribute this change of tactics that, perhaps even philosophy, in Muste, in going to the smaller sectarian type of organization or outlook? Is there any one particular event or people that you see as influencing him?

HS: Well, it was the world situation, in a way. Brookwood was started in the afterglow of the Russian Revolution when people could still be romantic about the Russian Revolution and its accomplishments. Then came, and the phrase that was widely used was - "a new social order" - which was to be brought about naturally, miraculously out of this new atmosphere. Then came the Depression and all the turmoil in Europe too. And I think A.J. felt that it was quite possible that there would be a revolutionary situation in the United States. That is, that industry, the government broke down to the point where you might have spontaneous worker takeover in industry and so forth. And I used to feel, occasionally, looking back on it, that he rather saw himself as the American Lenin. That is, as the leader of this revolutionary movement. And really, when you looked at the amount of unemployment and hunger, actual starvation in some cases, in the country, the breakdown of industry, it looked as if anything could happen, right.

DE: You mentioned, both of you mentioned the name of Louie Budenz. Did Budenz have a decided impact on Muste or how does he plug into this situation?

MS: Well, Budenz was an organizing genius, in a way, ran several strikes successfully.

DE: Did he teach at Brookwood?

HS: No. No, he never was directly connected with the school. But he was, was he editor of Labor Age? He was active at any rate.

MS: That was somebody else. Mufson.

DE: Israel Mufson.

HS: But later than that.

MS: Louie won his reputation as an organizer for the Midwest, at least as far out as Milwaukee. And then later came...

HS: Kenosha.

MS: ...through here. Kenosha. And then came here with that reputation. And I think it was people like Roger Baldwin who was working to help him here. And then he became a freelance organizer, if one can use that term. And A.J. got more and more committed and implicated ~~to him~~ into, financial responsibility for the organizing efforts which Budenz ran in certain areas, particularly in the textile areas and so forth.

DE: How did Muste get involved in that?

MS: Because he was involved in anywhere where there was action going on and where the textile workers were there. And don't forget the Brookwood Extension Department, through Tippett particularly, had gone far from, what shall I say, holding classes in Parliamentary Law, or training of shop stewards, because it was done in ~~the~~ a situation where if you talked to the people they would come out on strike. They would come out on strike because they were such, they were in such _____ and they ran into tough opposition. And you had attempts on part of the Communists to organize them. And then you had the Marion thing which is best known, in which the workers came out, but you...

HS: This is Marion, North Carolina.

MS: Yes, Marion, North Carolina. So that was the problem, that was your problem, I think. And I think more and more, as perhaps Helen

suggests, that A.J. had illusions of grandeur and thought that he was born to play a bigger role, or he aspired to play a bigger role, let's put it that way. And nothing was happening. And here was a situation that was getting worse. And you couldn't, sort of, stay in mere study things, you had to go into action.

DE: You say, perhaps your wife is right. You don't necessarily agree?

MS: Yes, I think she's right. I think A.J.'s judgement on that particular issue failed and hindsight tries to suggest...

DE: That he did.

MS: ...that he made a mistake in that way. He became more interested in finding financial representatives than looking after the Brookwood budget. And in some cases it was a case of, it was a difficult assignment in either case.

DE: What period are we talking about here? The 30's?

MS: Yes, we're talking about the early 30's, when the Depression was just beginning to be. Because I don't come into this anyway until the end of '28 when I did go down to...

DE: Let's go back to that period when you first came to Brookwood.

MS: ...West Virginia.

DE: What prompted you to come to Brookwood or how did you come to Brookwood?

MS: Well, don't forget I came as a mature adult, born in 1894, that would be six years and 28, I would be 34 years of age, with a record of activity in workers' education in the trade union movement and labor politics in Britain. I came here in 1928 not without some difficulty because I could not get a passport at first as an accredited professor in the American interpretation of the term. I had gone through the Workers _____ Organization to spend a month in Soviet Russia.

This was the year of the General Strike and I went there to participate in the Workers _____ Congress in Leningrad. And then went on to Moscow and elsewhere getting support for the united organizations selling the little model Humphrey-Davery lamps and I got frightfully interested in Soviet Russia seeing what they had done. At that time, in 1926, Lenin had died, Stalin and Trotsky were already beginning to go into a fight to decide who was going to be the number one man whose policy was going to prevail. And so having seen Soviet Russia, I wanted, where the revolution had been made by revolutionary means and where they still had to keep armies and still had to keep the _____ against their traitors and so forth, I wanted to see how it was in the other side of the globe, where, so we were told, people had sense enough to settle their disputes peaceably, amicably. Where the economy of high wages was literally applied, workers sat on the escalator and the wages went up and even the ordinary workers in Ford's factory had five dollars a day, which sounded very, very good. And I was just curious about this. So I had no money to drop my job in the National Council Labor Colleges but I could write to Muste, which I did, and said - Look, I'm curious about the United States, let me come and teach some courses about British labor and meanwhile let me sit in as an observor to the classes. He agreed to give me room and board and let me carry through this.

DE: How'd you get in touch with Muste? How did you know?

MS. Oh, please, there are books about workers' education written by Hudgens, and Hanson and the Plebs Movement in England had been in touch with Muste and with Brookwood. We knew about Brookwood Labor College on that score. As a matter of fact, people like Scott Nearing, people like Arthur Gleason of the Workers Education Association were often in Great Britain. There was quite an...

DE: Interchange.

MS: ...interchange of opinion. We roughly knew what we were doing and the Plebs was mostly in touch with the New Masses and the radical wing, all the American labor movement. And so I wrote to Muste and that was how I came. As I say, at first there was some delay and in my voluminous papers you will find a post card from George Barnard Shaw who was enlisted to protest my exclusion, my refusal of a visa to come to the United States. He says it just shows how stupid the United States can be to repute a man like Mister Starr. That was the tone of it in that way, you know, it was Shavian. But then one of my friends, American friends, Jack Carney, who worked with Jim Orken and represented Ireland on the Third International when I was in Russia in 1926, he wrote to Senator Borah who was then in the House. And so Borah took this matter up with the Foreign Office. And after turning me down they began to ring my phone and say please, will you come out and get your papers, we want this case settled. And so it was. And as I came with open eyes. And A.J. was very helpful, very sympathetic. Brookwood was often called upon to supply speakers to colleges and things of that sort and he would give me the opportunity some times of pinch hitting for him when he couldn't go or arranging trips and tours. And I got, I think, a unique opportunity of quickly understanding the labor movement of the United States. One, trying to talk in a way which was intelligible to the students in the college itself, who came from quite a number of the states and from various backgrounds and various dialects. I used to ask them to pick up any anglicisms that were, you know, still sticking in my vocabulary. And then going out to teach classes of unemployed for the Extension Department. And going out on visits and

talking to colleges about workers education and the labor movement, I did get an opportunity of, I didn't go into every state of the Union but since that time I have done that. But Brookwood gave me really a fine start. And so I was there in '28, you see. And then, even then the trouble was beginning to mount up. In '29, and I sat in the conference where the Workers Education Bureau made the decision to deny affiliation to the Brookwood Labor College because the general tender was, and Spencer Miller was a person for whom I had very little regard. I thought he was a big noise, a big show front that quoted Greek in his speeches to the workers on workers' education at the AF of L conventions that really did very, very little. And it was the labor colleges which met on Washington's Birthday and Brookwood that were really being the sort of live hope of renaissance, of expansion in the labor movement. I don't know how Spencer Miller finished but if he had any guts he could have defended Brookwood more than what he did. And it was sort of tragic to see the relatively small forces on the, of labor education sort of being split and divided. And with the AF of L saying that please don't support Brookwood. Of course, some of the unions did, Abe Lefkowitz, American Federation of Teachers, Fania Cohn of the ILGWU,...

HS: The Machinists.

MS: ... the Machinists, the Railway Clerks, a man named Ziegler out in Cincinnati. They followed through and, of course, Maur, Jim Maur followed through too, as long as he could there. But there it was.

DE: One thing that was always curious to me, as to why Fitzpatrick from Chicago was not more vocal in his support. I always thought of him as a very principled and a strong leader.

MS: Perhaps he had other things on his plate at the present time. But relatively speaking, when the showdown came, the AF of L machine could easily steamroller such criticism or such opposition to their decision on Brookwood involved.

DE: When you were with the Extension Division and traveling out to teach classes of the unemployed, what were you teaching? What types of things were you doing?

MS: Well, why are you unemployed? I imagine a conservative would say I was talking socialism. I was merely saying that this matter could not be settled without specific government action. That the government helped the employers, etc,, etc. And why had the Depression taken place - the workers weren't getting the wages to buy back the production, the production that they had made and so forth and thence the Depression was inevitable under capitalism. And you had under the present system so forth, and you had to have government planning, a minimum wage, stronger organizations, higher wages, and the protection of the consumer and of the producer interest rather than of the rich guys that had run and dominated the government. I, and of course, at that time you didn't need to tell people there was a problem in unemployment, it was sticking out all over. And at one time you just wondered what was really going to happen until the New Deal came along. Because you felt that workers would not stop hungry if there was bread in the baker's shops. That the farmers would not allow their farms to be sold up and they sent to the poor house if they could get on and intimidate the judge who came out to make the sale...

HS: To foreclose.

MS: to foreclose. And they just would stand at the back with a rope hung suggestively over their shoulders, you know, that sort of thing. And at that time you thought anything very well might happen because one

of the things that I very soon realized, that instead of all this wonderful plateau of prosperity that we talked about in Europe, that the United Stated was enjoying, that there was nowhere in the world it was harder to be poor and out of work than in the United States. First of all, people expected to be rich here which was a psycological frustration. And secondly, we had to wait for the shock of the New Deal, for the shock of the Depression to produce the New Deal, to produce the social security which will forever take the edge off a depression. I mean nobody will starve in the United States without saying to the government - look, I'm out of work through no fault of my own. It is the responsibility of the government to get me a job and if you can't get me a job you have to give me food. I mean, that is now written into the folkway of the United States. But it took the Depression to do it. And I saw that folkway being made, I saw the procedure, I saw that being set up. And, of course, we talked about that in classes. And I learned a lot, of course, about the United States in talking to the students. My way was particularly up in towns like Allentown and Bethlehem and then on up into the hard coal anthracite places like Pottsville and Shenandoah, places like, the names slip from me now, but they were in the mining towns. And it was the unemployed leagues that were forming, you see, because even among the unemployed there was a split and division. The Communists tried to organize them. And then I suppose the CPLA was trying to organize them under non-communist auspices, in that way. And in some cases the classes would be for the unemployed. Take Reading, we ran a week of classes up there. And there would be meetings, there would be addresses. We would get people talking. But the theme was - why should there be hunger and starvation in a country as rich as the United States? Why should

we with all the wonderful potential productivity of the United States be faced with full barns and empty bellys sort of business? Why should the government who serves the government, serves business in every possible way by regulation and subsidies...

HS: And the farmers.

MS: ...and the farmers, why shouldn't the workers come into this? Aren't they citizens too. And that was the way. I have no...but of course I came in with a, I was probably more to the left and more near to a specific acceptance of democratic socialism and the inevitability of change in the social system, than I think Brookwood publicly was committed to at that time. Because, you see, I had worked for the National Council of Labor Colleges and the Plebs College and our slogan was "education for emancipation." Not education to improve trade unions, not education to train shop stewards, but education for emancipation. And soaked through and through with a Marxian implications and so forth. Soaked through and through with the philosophy of Joseph Dietzgen (?) and his sort of positive outcome of philosophy, the relativity of all things. And soaked through and through with the belief in the class struggle that was sort of evident in our own bodies and in our own experiences.

HS: Tempered somewhat by Methodist Chapel drawing(?).

MS: Possibly, possibly. But, when you asked what I taught the unemployed, I was probably starting them on some way to change the social system and make people come first, and profit second. And that the trade unions had got organized with that in mind, as well as immediate benefits and reforms.

DE: When you, when the CPLA is formed in this controversy, and I don't know if you overheard what we were talking about, is there anything you

~~you~~ would like to add to that or perspective you would like to contribute?

MS: Well, I would like to do that. I think, I'm/not sure that Helen's remark on the fact that the CPLA was formed primarily to give Brookwood a constituency, if that is what she meant to say, is entirely true. Because there were a lot of people who were in the Conference for Progressive Labor Action because they had seen what the Conference for Progressive Political Action had done, back in the days of LaFollette, you see, When the socialists and all the progressives got together and ran a third candidate for president. Of course, the trouble was that all those, all that coalition was let go to pieces after that because after all LaFollette didn't make a bad show. And Debs didn't make a bad show when he ran for, as a Socialist candidate. And you have to remember there was a time when you didn't merely think of nationalization as the extremist thing down at the bottom of the barrel, that you reach for if you had too. But when the railways, for example, had the experts in, and they had the, was it called the Plumb Plan for nationalizing the railroads? Now this is in the United States. This is in the post war euphoria that Helen talked about just now. And so it wasn't so, I think, the CPLA was, not only for Brookwood, Brookwood is an integral part of it, Brookwood was the educational yeast in the bread. But the bread was there in the fact that it gathered a lot of labor union leaders, some of them socialists, some not so committed, but linking together to make an alliance in industry and to revise the sort of challenge which the Conference for Political Action, Progressive Political Action had set up a little earlier. What was LaFollette's, what was the time when he ran for president,/when there was a third party movement here, a nationwide third party movement, I mean? Now I don't mean the Liberal Party here or other attempts somewhere else.

DE: It was in the 20's,'24.

HS: Yes, it was before I came to Brookwood.

MS: Yes, it was part of that.

DE: You personally then, from your standpoint at being at Brookwood, favored the formation of CPLA?

MS: Oh yes, I felt the unions had to get together. I was a convinced industrial unionist, you see, from my industrial background. Because the coal miners union to which, in which I worked, coal diggers union was an industrial union. That the railroad, the railway unions, the National Union of Railway Men was an industrial union and the Miners Federation was an industrial union. And they were the people that set up the labor college that, from which I got, way back 1913-14, my first initiation into what might be called the theory of the labor movement as such. Because they were the supporters of the labor college which in turn grew out of the students strike against their professors way back in Ruskin College in 1909. Incidentally, I don't know if you want this on your roll, but Charles Beard's daughter is busily collecting material about his participation in the Ruskin College in Oxford. And I was afraid I could only tell her the bad side that he should have stayed on and kept serving the workers instead of being used to smooth them down. What was their phrase - sandpaper, that's right - the students said they were being sandpapered into conformity with the present system. That they were being given Marshall economics instead of Marx and so forth. And then it centered around the dismissal of a popular principal, Dennis Herd, who came out boldly for evolution, you see, as an explanation of the human race, who wrote a book, A Christian with Two Wives and defrocked from his, because as he said a Christian with two breweries - ok, a Christian with two coal mines - ok, but a Christian with two wives in those days sounded slightly heterodox -

at least in England. It wouldn't have done it of course with our Muslim fraternity brothers in other places. But at any rate, that was a sordid (?) story.

DE: What was the student reaction to CPLA? Or was there any?

MS. Oh yes, I think most of them, I would say that most of them were very active and interested to see something happening. And knowing that, and we looked upon them as when they went back to their home towns and home places to sort of set up a branch and keep in touch and distribute Labor Age and go and help any striking bunch of workers with any knowledge that Brookwood had given them or any power to talk or any power to organize. This was, I think Brookwood was certainly committed to not a knowledge for the sake of knowledge, but knowledge for the sake of a more effective, active, imaginative labor movement. Don't forget, after that revolutionary upsurge after the world war, after the defeat of the League of Nations and things of that sort, Wilson unable to carry America into the league, there was a period of so called prosperity. It affected only a very few people but at one time, William Green and the rest of the people, when they wanted to organize they would go down and have a meeting with the head of the Employers Federation or the head of the big corporation and try to persuade him that they could really work it out nicely in that way. And of course the Mahone-Mitten, what was that name?

HS: The Mitten-Mahon.

MS. The Mitten-Mahon Agreement in textile was nothing but cooperation with labor doing most of the cooperation. And of course Muste and the rest of the group (?) came out and attacked that fiercely and that made them obnoxious to the bureaucrats of the textile unions and the AF of L in turn.

End Tape 1, Side 2

MS: . . . and looking back over the years I think it is a cause of regret that the Brookwood split and the departure of A.J. from Brookwood came before the setting up of the CIO-AFL. A.J.'s successor, Tucker Smith, did his best, but he did not have the charisma of A.J. either as a leader or policy former and his access to radicals, to the Garland Fund, and othersimilar associations, and liberals generally, liberals with money, that made Brookwood's life possible. So comes the AFL-CIO, comes Brookwood there as an institution pledged to train people for organization. This should have been the great opportunity for the CIO to set up its own West Point, so to speak, and to equip itself with some of the brilliant young men and women that had grown up naturally in the labor movement, but who had the feel of labor. They didn't have to be, you know, TAUGHT IT. They had labor experience. They had organizing experience. They'd been in the shop chairman and things of that sort. And so Tucker, with Dubinski's blessing, because Dubinski said that the ILG as a single, one single union couldn't maintain Brookwood. It was more than they could do. But with Dubinski's blessing he wanted Tucker to get John Elder. You see he wanted Hillman of the amalgamated who was then the big driving force of the CIO to come in and take it over and run it as a training institute for the new movement that was coming along. Well, Louis took the view that if he wanted help he could get it from, not only merely from the _____ but the communists would volunteer to help. So, you probably know the apocryphal story of Laski (sp?) asking Mr. Louis 'what would happen if the communists refuse to get out.' Washn't he endangering the permanancy of his organization if he used communists as organizers. Wouldn't they stay in control and influence the movement. Mr. John Elder was supposed to have wisely said to Mr. Laski, 'Who gets the bird, the hunter or the dog that retrieves

MS: it.' And, of course, anybody who knew the strength of the teeth of the retriever of the communist party when they got their teeth into anything, thehunter would have a job to get things back. And the CIO had quite a job in getting it back for quite a number of years before....it went through a lot of painful periods. Hillman's view was different. I can hire intellectuals, three a penny; get them from the colleges. They'll come running. Why should we set up training institutions of our own. He had no basic understanding of the potentiality. And so Brookwood went, you see. The mortgage was taken over and disappeared. And so a splended opportunity was lost. To me it remains one of the what-might-have-beens in the history of labor because we could have had a labo rmovement with more imagination, more insight, more foresight. I hope it would not have been a victim of the anti-communist bogie which has made it closer to the CIA than to the ICFTU in recent years and so forth. And a lot of trouble might have been saved. But that is, as I say, my own personal prejudice for which I think there is a certain amount of facts and hypotheses which are worthwhile considering.

DE: Would you subscribe to any interpretation that Brookwood, being the oldest residential labor college existing from the early 20's into the late 30's, or mid-30's, did make its contribution to the formation of the CIO and the labor movement.

MS: Oh yes, please, yes, I was only thinking of what it might have been later had it been properly utilized.

DE: I understand that, but I want to get your perspective....

MS: Oh yes, I think someday, somebody will go down the record and find out the work of a lot of people that has been lost out in the small towns and in the widely distributed ares. But the Brookwood graduates for the insight,

MS: for the inspiration which A.J. was capable of giving, he was a scholar, but he was also, as I say, a charismatic leader and an inspirer, that never got lost and they have been back in their organization some in relatively high capacities, serving and giving back what Brookwood gave them in that way. If you could check off each of the graduates, one by one, and sort of get their story I think that would fully substitute such an ascertion.

DE: One point that Morris makes in the book, The Conflict in the AFofL, he talks about trade union intellectuals and he distinguishes between trade union intellectuals who were, what he calls, trade union intellectuals at Brookwood and the rank and file type students that came there. He even quotes, I think, a statement by William Green about that the people who taught at Brookwood and who were involved in workers' education at this time were intellectuals. They were apart from the main body of the labor movement, and so on. How would you respond to a statement like that.

MS: I'd respond to this that when people accuse me of being a member of the intellegensia , or being an intellectual I always say I prefer that to being a member of the unintellegentsia or the unintellectuals. And I think that's one of the things which has hindered or did hinder for a good long while the idea that the man of ideas and the man at the workbench could not work and cooperate with each other. As a matter of fact the intellectuals in the United States as a whole are much less from being a sort of caste, a separated part, than they are in Great Britain because there you had the caste system still hanging over in a way. I warned most of the teachers at Brookwood, take Helen as a case in point, take me as another case in point, we earned our living from the time we left school, you know.

DE: They say _____'s father was a peddler.

MS: Exactly. And I'm sure that Calhoun, during the days of his studies, knew what work was in that way. I think that was sort of an idea which has always existed that the horny handed, now you've confused me, the horny handed son of toil, not the horny....can be reconciled and that workers by hand and by brain are still going to work. And that, of course, is more than justified by the fact that which is the growing section of the labor movement to the present time, the teachers and the social workers who certainly don't swing picks and shovels, you see.

HS: I would, I would grant the title of _____ to Arthur Calhoun who chronically wore a hair shirt anyhow, but he wasn't really practical. But for the rest of them, they were not really very separate. You had the same sort of tendency among the students. Some of them came out of very, very proletarian backgrounds and had to be sort of shewed off too much intellectual indulgence and be reminded every now and then that they were expected to go back to their own locations and work. But for every one of those you had six who regarded Brookwood as a remarkable opportunity as a place to learn things. Some of them were uncouth in their learning, naive, and so forth. We often laugh about a coal-miner from Illinois who was absolutely fascinated by words and by the accessibility of material that he had never even imagined before so that he would dash out of the library with his finger marking the spot in one of those dismal Department of Labor compilations of statistics. 'Helen, did you know that bla number of women were organized in unions...' something of that sort and in his process of acquiring a vocabulary once he was reporting on what Tom Tiffet had said, and Tony said, 'For obvious reasons which I do not know, so-and-so....' It's the truth.

HS: But it was such a pleasure as teachers to work with people who were so anxiousto widen their knowledge & their vocabulary and they certainly didn't feel that they had a group of remote intellectuals as teachers.

MS: I would expect that Brookwood would have its share of, as all movements do what we would call the perennial intellectuals who would read books and get drunk with ideas and would live happily in a monestary in the middle ages illuminating a manuscript....

HS: Meanwhile letting the fire go out.

MS: Exactly. And studying how many angels could dance on the point of a pin and things of that sort. That, indeed, is inevitable and possibly some of those people are. . . Well it just shows that there are such realms of thought in which you could have intellectual gymnastics and do not look very useful. But I wouldn't say that goes for the majority of the Brookwood students. They were really raring to go and they had gone out and done things. And maybe they've sobered down and gone slower, I think of Tom Tibbell who was active in the textile workers, as a case in point.

HS: He's amalgamated, dear, amalgamated clothing workers.

MS: Yes, I beg your pardon, he's amalgamated clothing workers. But he's a district manager. There's a Pete Slaboda, who's amalgamated somewhere up in the anthracite, and a lot of other folks. . .

HS: ~~The work with~~ Look at the auto workers.

MS: The auto workers. There were the Reuther brothers, Roy particularly because Roy stayed there most of the time, you see. And then the miners. Some of the people, if you read John Brophy's book I'm sure you'll have mention of the fact that a lot of the healthy elements that really tried to break the bureaucracy of John L. Lewis when the days before he relented and took in Boyle and who was the other agitator--I'm thinking of the

MS: man whose father had a soap factory out in Indianapolis--

HS: Hapgood.

MS: Hapgood, yes, Norman. Norman?

DE: Harrison

MS: Norman Hapgood. Norman Hapgood was the lawyer. That was his brother. Yes, that's right. But that's the sort of person

DE: You mentioned a couple of times here the name of Calhoun. There was an incident at Brookwood surrounding Calhoun. Could you briefly summarize that.

MS: Well, I better talk about that, from my own point of view, I use to find Arthur an exceedingly stimulating guy. He use to return the compliment and say that I was the most nonnationalist, socialist he'd ever met. He thought I had weeded out nationalism quite a bit more than anybody else that he knew. But Arthur would be a monk. Arthur was intellectually in extreme as it seems to me because, and he always wore a hairshirt. He was never happy with any partner or movement. He always had to go poke holes in it in that way. Now his teaching at Brookwood. . . He didn't teach Marx. He took a book. What was the name of that?

HS: Edie.

MS: Edie. E-D-I-E which tries to make a rational explanation of the economic system and Arthur could, as Helen was telling you earlier on, he could pick out a problem and start more rabbits chasing out of that problem, you know, until the students just didn't know which rabbit they were going to go after. Then the next day the rabbits would run in another direction and so forth. But the question that,I don't think anybody questioned Arthur's methods of teaching and his skill in the Socratic method of stimulating his students and things of that sort. That wasn't in question. And we didn't mind when he wanted to vote for Foster, for the communist party.

MS: But we thought it wasn't very tactful, or it showed a lack of responsibility when not only did he vote for Foster, I think that was the communist candidate in question, but at any rate, he writes to the Daily Worker and says that he's going to do it just at the time when Brookwood is being attacked as a communist institution run by _____. In other words, there was no censorship. He had been confident. And we thought that he was acting more or less as an anarchist without any idea of his responsibilities to the rest of his people. But that, I think....I think that Arthur is the sort of intellectual who, perhaps he's got too old now, that he had to move on from one situation to another. He wore out his welcome. People got tired of the extent, and the variety, and the uncertainty of the particular arguments he was going to use. I don't know how his sons have turned out. One of them has picked up his History of the American Family and carried it on a few volumes more. But I've never read that. One of this sons has died, I think. Didn't somebody tell us that Donald....It was Robert and Donald, his two sons. And Arthur was quite spartan in his living. If there was any fat in food or any rigor that could be applied, you know, I'm sure he could live on two straws a day. That sort of thing. But he was the intellectuality, as I say, carried to the furthest point. But his log book was on the situations of that sort that we felt, I think the majority of the faculty felt, that he was being in a disloyal way to his own particular group and really giving the enemy shot and shell when the battle was on. Perhaps Helen has other angles to that. We use to get along with Arthur and his family. I met him at Brookwood teaching a long time afterward and of all his notions you never quite knew where he was going to turn up. But he could ask more questions in

MS: a class and make a class go to class _____ to try to answer them. If that's good teaching, Arthur was magnificant.

HS: Yes, but that didn't enter in at all to....

MS: To the quarrel. No.

HS: No. It was in part his assertions which may have been not really in earnest about his intentions at voting. But at a time when, I believe this was the railway car, some pure and simple trade union leader on a high level had been interested in workers' education in Brookwood and also in M_____ which was a school for workers' children, chiefly, started by the people who had given their own property to Brookwood for the school and this was not too far away. And A.J. was nursing this chap along to become a supporter of these two institutions. And I don't know whether Arthur said anything to the man himself, but, at any rate, he accused A.J. of being dishonest, of misrepresentation in his dealings with this chap. And it was a number of incidents like that that in a closeknit group such as the faculty was made for very uncomfortable relationships and when the attempt was made then to patch things up, Arthur was quite adament. He wouldn't budge at all from his position. But he and A.J. were, I think, probably the two true scholars on the faculty. They use to enjoy conversations with one another on a loftier level than most of the faculty people aspired to.

DE: We took this position of voting for Foster just on principle?

MS: Oh, yes. We didn't. . . . If he didn't think the socialist guy was radical enough he had a perfect right to go and vote for him . As I say, when you become a member of the faculty and your bread and butter and your future and all of your work prospects depend on your, what shall I say, loyalty, loyalty to the institution to which you are professionally attached, then to sort of go out and try to throw a splinter in the

MS: works wasn't exactly a good thing. Now possibly he thought he just had to show....

DE: You think it had a negative effect? You think that that was....

MS: Oh, I think they used it. A.J. would say Brookwood is not a communist institution. Brookwood and not promote propaganda for communism in its teaching. We are a, as a matter of fact, we use to talk about the open mind which use to grip me a little when I went there, because I use to say the open mind is the empty mind, that the open mind is only a place where wind blows through and you've got to have some....

DE: We are not taught what to think, but how to think.

MS: How to think. I use to ridicule him and say 'if you were to say drink, drink, drink. The man would say, what beer? whiskey?' You know, you had to have a content in that sort of arguement. So that was what we were trying to prove that Brookwood was a genuine labor education institution and here was Green saying no you have communists on your faculty. And we could very definitely say there is no communist member on our faculty and he would pick up the Daily Worker and say this is a note signed by Arthur Calhoun of the Brookwood faculty. Now what, so what. If it quacks like a duck, and it walks like a duck, it's a duck, you know.

HS: Now this is the interesting sort of conflicts that they had about Calhoun. Calhoun was a teacher at the workers' school which is to say he went down one evening a week and taught class. He voted the communist ticket in the elections of 1924 and 1928 and although he denied membership in the workers' party, the Brookwood board of directors eventually released him from the staff because he contended, according to the board, that the college "should adopt a policy of communism." One of the other instances

HS: of friction that grew up was the fact that at the Washington's birthday conference on workers' education following the open challenge by the AF of L which was accompanied by the denounciation of the communist party as well as it was a capitalistic institution and therefore not worthy support, the Local 189 voted not to invite either Spencer Miller or, I've forgotten the chap's name now, the man who was ordinarily invited from the communist's group, to the conference. Arthur disagreed with that. He felt we should invite the communists and refused to attend the meetings. I believe he refused to I think perhaps he did feel awkward. And since he was the man who ordinarily kept the proceedings of the conferences which were eventually published. I, of course, remember because I had to take the notes and had the job writing it up months after. But once you got that friction going it was a situation impossible of solution. I remember the summer that they were getting ready to leave, his wife who taught english at this school and was a very conscientious sort of person, I had her in for tea before they left and she sighed and said 'Oh dear, I do hope arthur won't feel called upon to assert his principles at Sterling, which was the denominational school where he was to go to teach.' And curiously enough, he, despite the fact that that was just a dreadfully reactionary...

MS: Fundamentalist.

HS: He stayed there for years and years and years.

MS: Perhaps he thought he'd been moved around enough.

HS: No, I think he was. . . .

MS: He wore the hairshirt and at certain times it would boil up within him that he had to stand, declare, sort of thing, come what may. That was part of his make-up in a way and that, I think, shows why or explains why a man with his tremendous orientation as shown in his american family

MS: studies and things of that sort. He wrote so little relatively, and influenced idealogical life of the United States. Well, not half as much as he could have, and let's put it that way. I think that's a safe guess. It was that irascibility, that hairshirt mentality that... because he could make fundamentalism plausible. He could argue from any point in the compass in order to put a student on his toes, you know. And we were all very sad about it. But you've got to think of the 4-5 people working together, a bunch of 40 students, 40-50 students, everything you know, it was a family rout. One member of the family started kicking over the traces in a small family of that sort, well, that creates complications.

HS: Well, anybody who knew anything about the principles of communism could never accuse Arthur of being a communist because he would never have submitted to the necessary discipline.

MS: And if he tried he wouldn't be there long. He'd be like _____ like any guy with a sense of humor. Eventually the discipline would get under his skin and either he would get out or they'd ~~would~~ throw him out. I mean that sort of thing.

DE: I'm going to change the subject here ~~for~~ a minute. When you went to Brookwood, did you automatically become a member of 189?

HS: You were expected to.
MS: You were expected to pay dues.
DE: And the AFT did support Brookwood in its fight.

MS: Oh yes, radically, and when Brookwood, in fact don't forget the AFT and John Dewey, George Garlands, and educators of that sort came through and protested against the wrongness, the injustice of ~~how~~ the AF of L effort when we had support. And in the fight of the, and this isn't probably Brookwood, but at any rate, I was working as, that was after 1935, it wasn't really too long, but after 1935, after I went working for the TVA and in

MS: the days prior to that when the WPA workers in education were organized Joe Sideman was voted as our member on the executive board but that was the time when the teachers' union had to sort out, carry through, a ballot in order to decide on the expulsion of the communists. Those were hard and difficult times.

DE: Was that the time that you were on, vice pressident to the AFT.

MS: Yes, I was there in what they call the time of trouble. I think that was '41, '42, somewhere around about there.

DE: I was going to ask you how you came to be a candidate for the office of....What were the politics involved at that time.

MS: Well, I think, it was workers' education wanted somebody who would strengthen the George Garland ticket in this, what was to be a knock down, drag out fight because we did it point on point. We took all the charges and so forth, and at that time Bella Dodd, who later, like Louie Budenz, switched over and became an informer, a reactionary, and things of that sort, was the head of Local 5 which was a very, very well-run and organized local quite active with all the communists, everybody else helping them tremendously and a lot of people who weren't communists had said they were doing a good job with the teachers. And Abe Lefkowitz and the Counts and the Deweys and the Bindouins, and so forth, having to set up the teachers guild, of course, which is the predecessor of the UHT at the present time. But, in fact, Joe Sideman, Abe Lefkowitz, other names that one could mention there, they were the sort of right wing as it were and Local was carrying through the communist policy. We had had instances of that at the conference where, obviously, the 3rd international and Soviet Russia had decided that Soviet Russia's interests would be served by such-and-such a line and they would vote accordingly in conference. I can't give you things of that sort, but sending

MS: destroyers as a case in point, you know, this would come off in conferences. They were obviously taking the anti-war line until, of course, Russia was invaded and then the Yanks were not coming and then they added on the Yanks are not coming too late, that the communists switched over night, (too late) on the end of their slogan. I don't know how objectively one is recording this because it's very funny the things that stick in your subconscious mind in a disproportionate way, I mean the job of sort of getting things into proportion, getting an overall view, but one thing can becertain, the AFL-CIO had got to drop this anti-communism. What is communism anyway? And not be dictated to by Harold's Stone according to the head of the ~~education~~ international department and getting money from the state department for various funds of its educational activity as well as spending a lot on its own. As I said just now, I repeat, that they are closer to the CIA and to the foreign office of the state department than they are to the ICFTU, where we would, says, suspect to be soft on communism and actually contemplating possibly cooperating with, possibly taking in, making a European alliance for the European community which will include the unions of the communist countries involved or the communist unions in the countries involved , and so forth. I noticed they just had a conference recently in which Whitick who has always been a rather burr under the saddle in the UAW and elsewhere and is now retired to the heights of Columbia as a professor, but is still very much the critic, very much praises the UAW. He says no other union would have let in talks so far, so wide as they did, and so forth. Didn't he write a book about Reuther?

DE: Yes.

MS: I think so. Or about the UAW. Well they had a policy about this and

MS: one college professor, a little journalist chap that use to be on the Times was advocating, you know, be suspicious as hell of anything the Soviets and China do. They're going to unite again someday and, ... anti-communism. You've gotta....you can't trust them sort of business. And Whittick saying that the influence of the AFL-CIO on the European movement and on the world trade union movement has been regretably small in coming out and stating what is the situation . With Irving Brown and the AF of L-CIO running its own foreign aid tradeunion department out in Africa, who the hell's at the state department.

DE: I've been here before and you've told me many anecdotes about people at Brookwood and there's one I can't recall the circumstances, I can just remember it had something to do with a black and white cow giving white milk.

MS: You better tell that, that's your story, Helen. That's why you were outraged with the athiests, of the needle pushers. They thought they were very well, they could....

HS: Well, his argument which this needle pusher pointed out, & is quite unanswerable, if there isn't a god how do you account for the fact that a white cow eats....

MS: No, no.

HS: A black cow....

MS: Milk is white, and a brown cow....

HS: Alright, a brown cow eats green grass, gives white milk and you get yellow butter. And Brufkin who would have been unlikeable even if he had been a Wasp(?) was quite floored by this. If I may tell a couple of other anecdotes about this poor guy Martin. He was a big, the word would be pussy (pes-ē), I think, flooded, flabbily stout chap, a member of some

HS: primitive methodist sect, came from Arkansas originally I think and was unbearably irritated by the smartness and sophistication and rudeness of the needle trades students. He came out of the friday night student meeting one night just as I came into the outer hall his face flushed and his lips quivering and he said, 'I suppose the good lord will never forgive me the way I feel about these Jews.' and I said, 'No, I don't suppose he will, seeing he was one himself.' And his jaw dropped and his eyes popped and he avoided me for weeks after that. That was the first time, I think, it had ever really occurred to him that Jesus was Jewish. And there was one other incident in which Brookwood came nearer to violence than at any other time in my recollection. This was an evening program, I think a debate between Martin and a railway worker from Covington, Kentucky whose name was Stanley Guest. I don't know what the general topic was, but Sacco and Vensetti had been mentioned by Guest and he had also quoted from a book by W. T. Collier who a British radical who had been in this country and been arrested for something or other, I've forgotten what. And Martin got up in rebuttal and he said, "As for Sacco and Vensetti, they ought to have been hung." There was this sort of gasp from the whole audience and the only thing that saved the situation was that he went on to say, "And as for Collier, I wouldn't believe a word that was written in that sca_'s magazine" which betrayed the depth of his ignorance to the point where everybody just broke into laughter and let the thing go.

MS: I think_____ wanted_____to Brookwood that somebody ought to keep on record, whatever, to write up a history, is the fact that Brookwood didn't merely attend to facts and figures. Didn't merely attend merely_____didn't and concentrate on tool

MS: subjects: How to write; how to talk; how to run public meetings and things of that sort; how to understand economics, read a balance sheet, and all that. But it also tried to show that there was a cultural thing in the labormovement. And this would come out in the saturday evening student meetings. Poetry would be recited. Plays would be presented; radical plays would be presented, and so forth. And at one time Brookwood would just put its players into a station wagon and sort of sent them around on tour. Sometimes it would just be sort of vaudeville, you know, three or four little single acts. Then, gosh, I'm sure during the Depression Brookwood taught more people how to sing than the soupsongs , you know, give me a bowl of soup, than any other agency in the United States. Then, of course, when the time came after the M_____ massacre, and so forth, _____ produced and out of its own limited resources Brookwood put a company on the road to produce something which only a labor organization would do. In other words, it showed the repercussion of labor feeling that labor had it's own, labor wasn't just a copy of, you know, the normal recreational activities that had something of its own experience to give and enrich American culture with. Something which in England, even in Cedar Paul, use to call it a poet cult, following the Russian example. But we talked about labor culture. And J.B. _____ had the same idea. You'll find that in the amalgamated. But Brookwood did actually put groups of _____ on the road, going out, getting labor unions to devote a night to labor songs, labor skits, getting the audience to sing, ~~getting~~ audience participation and things of that sort. And to me that had made so much more sense than the so called folk music that gets around today, sort of endless repitition, unlimited _____ until you have to carry

MS: along ear stoppers in order to save your ears from real damage, and so forth.

HS: Mark,dear, your age is showing.

MS: Is that right? But anyway, if you look and see the labor songbooks which later the unions purloined and adapted their own purpose, and I speak at least of the amalgamated and the ILG on that score. They Actually made up some good songs and some good music and made good adaptations. And Polly Colby would train a labor choir for the graduation exercise and things of that sort. In other words, it wasn't merely facts, figures, economics, and union tactics, and union methods, it was also that labor had an emotional content that could be identified with the sort of highest aspirations of mankind and sold itself part of a very human, pulsating, warmhearted movement. You know, your _____'s, the _____'s ideal labormovement was there. And that's another pet theory of mine, that a movement can't last unless it has got a dose of that. Alright you talk about bread and butter, yes. That can't be neglected. But on top of that there's got to be some recreation and fun and culture provided for the oncoming generation or else they're going to find it elsewhere and not come into the labor movement for it. It's just too bad that they

End Side #1
Tape #2

HS: One group that needs to be recognized as a factor in organization in the period when the AF of L was in the doldrums is the industrial department at the Young Women's Christian Association. They dealt almost entirely, of course, with non-union, not anti-union, but non-union girls and viewed them with organization ideas and often they were called upon to make recommendations and we got some of our most valuable, potential organizers through that group. Numerous YW secretaries use to come to the Washington's birthday meetings and it was partly on their account that the membership of Local 189 of the American Federation of Teachers, which had been originally confined just to the Brookwood faculty, was opened to outside people who either had no other local of the teachers' union to join or else felt that the existing locals in their cities were so occupied with public school problems, and so forth, that there was no room, really, for anyone else. A good many of the Local 189 members for that NRA period, in particular, were industrial department, YW, secretaries.

MS: Don't forget that in many of those cities the board ruled the rules of the YWCA were the only thing that either an organizer could stay or a class could meet, you see. And also the risk that some of those industrial secretaries faced,because if the local people knew that she was harboring a trade union organizer or encouraging the girl members of her industrial department to think in terms of unionism, the YWCA didn't stand much chance of being left in the community appeal fund at the end of the quarter. So many of them were really, took chances. I mean they....and I thought they showed real stamina in many instances. I know when I taught unemployed, I use to run in and ask for their help. This was as late as the early 30's. you know, when the unemployed were there. They would guide me to the right people and help. They would help us put on the Brookwood talk shows and

MS: things of that sort, and in many instances tell us about meetings in places and all that minutia that is necessary for success....

DE: It wasn't an official YWCA policy?

MS Well, they were given more liberty than the male section, the YM, always _____ because the YM had, at that time, a reputation for _____ as the industrial department were thought to be radical in many respects and I don't know how it

HS: It didn't divide the YMCA/YWCA as a whole.

MS: The whole , no. But many members of the board knew what they were doing and backed them, but others didn't. They took a chance.

DE: You two met at Brookwood. Got married there?

MS: A.J. married us.

HS: As a matter of fact we met in England. I was there in the summer of 1928 and looked up this odd creature who was suppose to come over later in the fall and he was running a worker education saturday conference.

MS: It was the eastern region of the amalgamated union of building trade workers educational work which do not play it down.

HS: I can tell you that they had the oddest dialect. I understood about one word in five.

MS: You thought that was good east-anglian english. Too bad you didn't get it.

HS: Then he came over that fall, a little late on account of his passport business of which he's spoken. That might have been 1928. Then, you went back in--was it '30 or '31?--to come out of the quota.

MS: They gave me a visa for two years. So that would be....

HS: '28 to '30.

MS: '28 to '30. It might have topped over into '31. I had no difficulty

MS: in renewing my....I merely had to report and ask for a renewal extension of the passport. I, more or less,went back with the idea of coming in under the visa.

HS: Under the quota.

MS: Under the quota to stay, you see,

HS: He came back in '31 and we were married when the spring session of 1932 was out and remained there until January of 1935 when Mark took the job as educational director with the International Ladies' Garment Workers.

MS: But you stayed on after I did, didn't you? You had the opportunity of seeing some of the new members of the faculty working with Tucker that I didn't get. There was a Tepper whom I later recommended to the research department of the ILG. Joe Sideman who later went to teach at Chicago. They both came out of Baltimore. Then there were one or two other folk that I never had th- chance of teaching with because before '35 I was very much concerned with, I took Tom Tiffet's place when Tom went out with A.J. You remember, I sort of became formally the extension director and our job was to try to _____ someone could run from Brookwood, others you sort of go out and ride a circuit, in that way.

DE: After A.J. left things were pretty tough in terms of raising money and...

MS: Yes. Because a lot of people didn't so much believe in Brookwood but they believed in A.J.

HS: Well, as I _____ the process that I have already spoken of, of the diminishing contributions because people's unearned income was diminishing itself.

MS: Yes, the liberals with pocketbooks that would give to Brookwood, you know, were putting it undoubtedly on themselves.

HS: Some probably continued to support A.J. as an individual. See he had been a minister up in Lawrence, Mass., New England towns up there before he came to Brookwood.

MS: 'Cause A.J. reverted to _____ as it were, because he started out as a religious pacifist. He was attracted to the labor struggle. He set up a hard union with the help of Sidney Hillman. It was going to be the amalgamated union of the textile workers to match the amalgamated union of the clothing workers and then he was persuaded to come and take charge of Brookwood. For a long while, I say, I think he was working out his own ideas and gelled when he saw what was happening in the twenties with the neglect for the unorganized of the AF of L that seemed to be sitting pretty and things of that sort, became its unofficial critic. He became the loyal opposition in the AF of L and went around like that until either psychologically he couldn't take it anymore or he felt that a new step was really there. So after he had set up the American workers party and to some of us, the radical movement in the United States needed an additional party like a hole in the head. You know, we felt that the job was to get the various sects, groups, and sections rather than to make another one. But he thought he had the right thing. Then he went....

HS: He was shut out.

MS: He went to europe and I think he talked to Trotsky over in Sweden and so forth, and he got the feeling that Armageddon was on the way. How right he was. Then, under that pressure, he sort of switched around and said peace is the most important thing. We had a nonviolent protest against the system and against war. Then he became worldwide, literally worldwide known as a pacifist in that way. I still think he carried on I know from personal contacts, he carried on his sympathies and his

MS: interests in labor and felt keenly about it as ever, but pacifism was his main job. Of course, he trained most _____.

HS: _____

MS: _____. That's right. He was in that_____ of reconciliation. He was in the various CORE groups, CORE that began, the non-resistence, the boys going down and sitting in the bus, you know.

HS: Martin Luther King, too, was....

MS: Martin Luther King would sort of trail on and came along under....I'm sure Martin Luther Kind was one of his _____. But it's sad from the point of view that all that idealism, all that energy, all that capacity, all that cultural enrichment and good human being, should have been in the AF of L. The AF of L...it makes my heart break. I'm turning up things down in the basement, by the way do you want anymore, come down and look. If you think you helped us out, you better come organize a relief committee yet. We're waiting for a man to come in and stick up a steel cupboard so we can introduce some law and order down there.

DE: But I helped to pave the way there.

MS: You did.

HS: Oh, you did?

MS: Well, we'll give you an illuminated certificate to attest that he said what he just said. Well, let me see, what was the point that I was trying to make....

DE: That you turned up something in the basement.

MS: When I'm_____ the organ of the AF of L workers' education department and I see a 24 page magazine all illustrated and all_____. When I think of what the AF of L, CIO, was doing in education since that time, how long they've been playing around with the idea of setting up a

MS: training institute which is suppose to be starting off now. Finally a training institute, after all these years of talking about it whereas the labor movements abroad have had training institutes for 50 or 60 years, many of them in that way, we've finally gotten around to one.

DE: Finally going to move into those facilities.

HS: Finally going to move into those facilities according to a boy who was lecturing on multinational corporations which makes me interested and pleased too, down there, ~~Because of~~ _____Stover, ____ Stover. You probably know him. WEll, that's what makes me sad. To think that the labor colleges that were there, that use to meet at Washington, the activities that the various state federations carried on, educationally, and the way in which it's partly gone off into the colleges and become industrial relations departments, labor management, and so forth, and become professionalized....

DE: and even more conservative.

MS: and even more conservative. There are still individual unions that carry on and do a good job. But there is nothing like, what you might call on this continent, a drive, a push for workers' education, workers' culture, workers' identity, workers' dreams, workers' hopes, and workers' means of making them come true. Now, maybe that's just a feeling of frustration that comes with hardened arteries, but I do think that there is something to be said.

DE: Maybe we ought to stop there and let me have an opportunity to get this transcribed and see what we need to plug in, fill in some gaps, maybe.

HS: May I identify the the name of the person I was unable to think of in CPLA.

MS: Mendell.

HS: Bert, wasn't it. Bert Mendell.

MS: I always attribute him to the fact that when we wanted to go to Great Britain in, what was it, '56 the passport shows when the photograph was taken, the state department said, 'we refuse to give you a visa because you are a communist, you have been a communist, and remain so at the present time.' I had to get one of our very good, smart people, DAniels, Wilbur Daniels, in the ILB to help me phrase a statement which Lehman could present and get the whole thing reversed. But I have to thank Mendell for that. He was paying off his old scores to somebody in Brookwood that frustrated his dream of taking over Brookwood's resources in the event