

Interview with: Nestor Dessy & Mrs. Dessy
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Side 1,

40+ years
sec. Local
235

This is Pat Pilling. It's May 19, 1982. I am talking with Mr. Nestor Dessy, 22376 Firwood, East Detroit and Mrs. Dessy. Mr. Dessy was Recording Secretary ^{of} Local 235 for a great number of years. We are going to discuss a little bit about the history of the union particularly in relation to the ^PPolish workers in the union. Before we start Mr. Dessy what I would like to find out from you is how long you yourself worked in the plant?

ND: I started in 1927.

PP: What kind of position did you hold at that time, what kind of job?

ND: I was a clerk, ^RReceiving & ^SShipping and than I transferred over to, not exactly transferred, than I did some Material Department work, than during the war I did some production work.

PP: When you started, how many plants made up Gear & Axle?

ND: In 1927 there was Plant 1, 2, and 3.

PP: When did Plant 4 come in?

ND: Plant 4 came in maybe 7 or 8 years ~~later~~. Plant 6 came in 5 or 6 years later, then Plant 8, that's the 23 that came about 10 or 15 years ago. That was Plant 7 rather than, they had ^PPlant 8 which they changed over, used to be the experimental plant they made that Plant 8.

PP: Can you tell me a little about what the plant was like in 1927?

ND: You went into work, you did your job, you didn't talk to the person working next to you, no smiles on the face, no laughing or cutting up or nothing. You just went in did your

NS: work, stopped and went home. You didn't know who the guy was on the other side of the plant you didn't know anybody you just went there to work and that was it.

PP: What happened when you had lunch did you eat lunch with somebody else?

JS: Lunch room you can talk. They let you talk in the lunchroom.

PP: Oh, I see, they didn't let you talk, so that's why you didn't talk.

ND: I was told once to get that grin off your face.

PP: Because I'm interested in the ^PPolish workers of the plant do you remember when you started out, were there any Polish workers, there?

ND: Yes. there ^{alot of} were ~~in~~ Polish workers and alot of southern workers, ^{People} that they call 38 ^{the Hillbillies} we call them southern workers.

* Alot of mid-western people like myself where I come from

PP: About what percentage of the plant was ^PPolish at that time?

ND: Well, judging from the officers that were elected in 1937 of the 10, ^{re} there were 6 out of 10 that were ^PPolish. That's pretty good. ^{parameter}

PP: So, you think that was about the amount. Were most of these second generation? Or were some of them first generation?

ND: Second generation. There was a few like Karl Glovak who spoke with ~~a~~ broken english, but he wasn't born in this country.

PP: Do you know if many of them had come from families who have settled for a while in the mine fields in Pennsylvania?

ND: Yes. There ~~was~~ Pennsylvania from the coal mines. Penn. and West Virginia, that's where they came from.

PP: Did the ^PPolish workers pretty much stick together at lunch or when they went home?

ND: Not exactly but they voted together. ^{Pure Polish} If you were Polish ^A a little clannish, but which is reasonable to assume, because they figured well, I'm militant, he's ^PPolish, he must be militant.

PP: Tell me a little bit about when the plant was organized,

Polish Workers

Polish 10

PP: When was it organized?

NK: The plant was organized before February of 1937. The reason I say that is because in February of 1937 is when the Flint Sit-Down strike was settled. Prior to that time, we use to meet at the place of 8944 Jos. Campau, upstairs, and there were international representatives there. Some from the C.I.O. ~~A.~~ and they were trying to organize ^{us} ~~this~~ then. They would take our dues, then we would get a button and naturally we would conceal that and go back to the plant

PP: Tell me, what did the men, how did they feel about being organized at that time? Were they very keen to it?

ND: Very keen and militant. Those that wanted to join, and believe me there were very many.

PP: Were there any that didn't want to join at the time?

ND: It didn't come to a matter of ^{wanting to} joining until after the contract. After we got the contract, yes, there were number. And that's when you have to have a little educational sessions to teach you about unions and why you should join. Sometimes you had to go a little beyond that.

PP: Can you tell me a little about the first election, you mentioned about a number of Polish officers was it because the Polish group was organized themselves, they belonged to various groups themselves outside the plant so they

ND: I wouldn't say they were clannish. But a Polish person, even now, I know a lot of people who would vote for another Polish person. It's the same way in other nationalities.

PP: Well, all groups tend to do that.

ND: As I say in this case, well they figured your Polish,

Polish
I.D.

History

ND: They trusted them a little bit more. I would say is one of the reasons. There were IItalians that did the same thing. We had southern folks who voted for a southern person, ^{for a} ~~for a~~ ^{Hellbally} Milliken. Like myself, I'm being from the mid-west I'd be between.

PP: When did you actually become an officer?

ND: I became an officer, I was appointed in the later part of 1937, and was elected in the February election of 1938.

PP: Actually, how long were you an officer?

ND: From 1938 with one year during the war that I wasn't ^{up} until 1979.

PP: So, how many years?

ND: 42 years.

PP: So you really know that union back and forth.

ND: My work was full-time officer, I worked as a Recording Secretary being that I knew how to take shorthand and type. ~~used to~~

PP: What system of shorthand did you do?

ND: Gregg.

PP: You did Gregg. When did you actually become a full-time officer, what year?

ND: I became a full-time officer, in 1938. ~~There~~ ^{There} was a little lay-off so they laid some of us off and I was a full-time officer then at \$22.00 a week. I stayed right through with it until one year I went into the service. We hadn't made nothing because everyone had the war but that was full-time all the way ^{up to} till the time I retired.

PP: Were there any strikes at Gear & Axle, I read that there were.

ND: There was one which was led by the International Union as a Wild Cat strike. I got fired in it.

PP: What year was that?

ND: That was around 1943 1944. I got reinstated about 10 years ago.

PP: When you got fired, you mean from your union position.

ND: No, fired from the plant, and I didn't get reinstated until about 10 years ago.

PP: So, how did that effect your union position?

ND: It didn't affect it at all. Just because they fire somebody doesn't mean their

PP: Right, doesn't make any difference to your position.

ND: I participated in negotiations and everything else.

PP: Well, I'm particularly interested though in what you can remember of some of these people, I'm assuming now, were Polish? Sowicki?

ND: Joe Sowicki, the president of our ^{local} union, nice fellow. He always said yes to everybody.

PP: Can you remember any particular, you might say reforms, or anything important?

ND: He was a good man to be president, because you had to have guts then. The company hated you, the police hated you.

PP: What year was he president.

ND: He was president in 1937, 1938.

PP: He was the first president, then.

ND: He was the first president. The company, police and some

ND: people hated you because they thought you were radicals.

PP: Is he still living?

ND: No. Then he became councilman for the city of Hamtramck and died after that.

PP: What about Joseph Papulka?

ND: Joseph Papulka was a financial secretary of ^{our} local. He was also one of the militant fellows, ~~he~~ helped organize. He was our first financial secretary.

PP: He became president, too didn't he?

ND: Joseph Papulka never was president. I have here a list of all the presidents, right here on this what I'm giving you right here. You don't have this.

PP: What about Alfred ?

ND: Oh, Edmund Bobowski, B-O-B-O-W-S-K-I?

PP: No, but tell me about him anyway.

ND: He was a trustee. He was also ~~Polish~~. He was rather militant. He went along with the group.

PP: There's a Ron Kamorski, do you remember him? I'm afraid these names I have down . .

ND: Ray Leminowski you mean don't you?

PP: Maybe that's the name. Why don't you tell me about some of the other ~~Polish~~ officers. I'm interested in some of the things that they did for the union.

ND: Let's start with Edward Bruce, he was a trustee. One of the first guys, first officers of our local. He was very much concerned in finance, in those days we worked for the cause. They ^{did not} get paid in other words for anything you did. He was very much concerned with if anybody did get paid for it, he made sure they earned it

ND: they deserved it. He tried to preserve our finances. Lawrence Davis, I know ^{the name} it doesn't sound Polish, but he is. He's deceased now. He was our Sargeant at Arms. He was also very militant. He made sure that everything was in order at the meetings. I told you about Joe Sowicki and Joseph Papulka and than we had a fellow by the name of Joe Kecha^howski, he was one of the early officers of our local, an appointed officer. He was also very militant. Stanley Minkwick^s, ~~he~~ was also very militant Polish persons. That's all the Polish we had there in those days that were executive officers.

PP: You mentioned about these people being in the early days, all of them I imagine, were really quite militant. can you tell me about the changes you see over the years because I'm interested in that too.

ND: In those days, it seemed like it was more 174 that's a broad way of saying it, but you went in, ^{"might was right"} ~~finding tables~~ ^{around the} and demanding this and that 176 ~~because there~~ were so darn many things that were wrong that there wasn't just a demand for it and they generally got it that way. Whereas today, you have to prepare position papers and show a reason why you should have it and the disadvantages, advantages of not having it, in other words today there must be a good logical reason. You bargain today over, across the table, whereas those days alot of them were shouting matches. I know because I experienced them. I was in all of them with them. Being secretary I took the minutes of all of those meetings I have a very good recollection, and sometimes they invite

ND: each other to go out on the street. It never happened ^{they did.}

PP: Well, now ~~there~~ ^{there} wasn't much relationship between your local and some of the locals from nearby plants, [?] Did you trade information back and forth, especially with other GM plants?

ND: Oh, very much so. In fact, we helped each other. When we needed a job done, when we needed pickets to strike somebody to do something for us from our flying squadron. Our flying squadron guys didn't do it but we would have someone from another local come over with their flying squadron, they would come help do the job for us, in other words get somebody to join the union or vice versa.

PP: One of the things I'm interested in because Local 3 was so heavily ^PPolish, Dodge Main, I wondered if your local ~~had~~ a ~~a~~ ^{had} 235, with a special relationship with local 3. I'm very interested in that.

Sit down strike ND: (Just before when we were on the sit-down strike, that was in February of 1937, Local 3 came over to our Local, led by a fellow named Richard Frankenstein who ran for Mayor of the city of Detroit. They marched through the lawns hollering Solidarity, given us support and for us to join them up. Local 3 did that. Did a lot of leading.

PP: Now did this sort of, ~~not say~~ relationship, help and support, did that continue on?

ND: Well, it's still open today. The only thing now is it's on a more broader basis and more intellectual basis. In fact our leaders know just about what all local unions are doing. They have the ^{also} pulse of the hands of all the various unions (?). They ^{assume} show if everything is done right

PP: Now, when you were organizing in '37 was there a regional office at that time?

ND: Not when we first organized because, no there wasn't, a little bit later there were. They were downtown, I forget what the numbers are downtown, in other words, the CIO was in there, they were the ones organizing this. 227 gang was in town ^{Davenport} 229 they were organizing this.

PP: You were actually in when Homer Martin was in.

ND: Homer Martin I knew ^{real} very well. He made me an International Representative then ^(Saginaw) commissioned to go to some of the local unions around here and take the minutes of the bargaining sessions so that he would know what was going on because at that time and ~~there~~ was already starting up a big fight between the left wings and the right wings in local unions. One of the things that helped organize our union alot was the influence of the left wing groups of government, the communistic group. The communist party did have organizers over there and they had some guys that were leading a lot of workers into their thinking, in other words left wing thinking. We had a lot of guys that were left wingers not necessarily communist, but they had left wing thinking because of the influence of these leaders sent over here at that time. ^{Altho} They did a great job in helping us organize if it wouldn't have been for them maybe a lot of us wouldn't have been as militant or as forward as we did to organize.

PP: About how many men were in the plants in 1937, in Gear & Axle when you were organized?

ND: 7,000, 6,000.

PP: Because I know it went up to over 9,000 lately, and it's ^{now} down again. One of the things I'm very interested in because I'm interested in is middle group of men who ^{are} ~~were~~ 40-55 years old. The people who have been working in the plant for quite a long time but are certainly a long way from retirement. I'm interested in education. I'm wondering if you could tell me a little about the education committee in the local.

ND: After we were organized and had our charters and various local unions, one of the first things that the U.A.W. did is have educational classes, in fact I attended them, I even have diplomas on them where they taught us the principles of unionism. In fact I think I have one of the books here, The Principles of Unionism, revised back in 1937. The questions and answers about ^{it} ~~them~~. There they taught us why we should organize and about various local unions and why we should organize an industrial union. If you recall, you probably read this where prior to '37 all they had was craft meetings. And now the C.I.O., that's when John L. Lewis, the guy that wanted to come in and organize the industrial work ^{was} ~~in~~, that's why they split from the A.F. of L. When they were successful they brought in the people to teach us about the principles of unionism and that we learned about why we should organize and why we should be together. They taught us about parliament^{ary} procedure how to run the local, how to run the meetings, public speaking

Work / +
Educ

PP: Since that time have they included other types of educational classes?

ND: Yes, ~~and~~ the years progress they have knowledge. You see in those days when you couldn't sell anything you ~~were~~ ^{struck} stuck. After a many of years we found out that after the orderly bargaining procedure came in, where you try to set up things around the conference table and in place of striking where you would have an impartial man who would settle a dispute for you, which is known as an umpire. If you couldn't settle your cases around the conference table than you would send it to the umpire and that is a supplement for a strike. In place of striking all the time on every issue we sent the cases that couldn't be resolved to the umpire. And as the result of that it required a lot of educational work teaching our representatives how to prepare cases, prepare briefs and contractual language and what have you. You have that today on a very broad scale and along with that came, we all sort of realized that maybe we can fight like heck and win alot of things but with one stroke of the pen Congress can wipe (it) all out for us therefore we became interested in political action and that was our second thing. ^{Unless} We ~~must be~~ well organized not only in economic conditions but we also must be well organized ^{in the legislative field} for 31A and that is where we are today.

PP: I would like to talk a little now about this middle age group, the group that now is between 40 and 55 and that the number of men that are laid-off, I mean, ~~are there~~ a lot in that age group that you know of that are laid-off?

ND: There wouldn't be as many in that group as there would in the younger group because that group ^{should} can have seniority to hold their jobs unless their plant run away from them.

PP: Meaning what, you mean the plant closed?

ND: A plant went down south or west or moved out on them, that's happened in a number of places where ^{there are} long seniority employees

PP: Do you know a number of people who have moved down to the Sun Belt?

ND: Yes. See how they were able to counteract that, like in the General Motors plants, [?] weren't able to put up with economic pressure, okay, move your plant down south but you're going to give us recognition over there. And that's what's happening, like General Motors moves to Oklahoma, we got a local over there. That's an example of all our others. But then you get the plants that are small plants who you can't put pressure on that way, they say go ahead we'll just claim bankruptcy, that's another story.

PP: Among all the people that may have moved to the Sun Belt and some of the western states, do you know of any Polish workers that have moved?

ND: Not too many. Because where you come set-up a lot of people like to go home. They come from that way. That's close to my neighborhood. Although some of them that did that they found out that they weren't as well off when they got over there as when they were here, and some came back.

PP: But you don't know of any Polish people?

ND: Not just off ^{hand}. They wouldn't be as proud of it as they were years ago.

PP: Tell me, I understand that before, just preretirement that in some cases some of the plants encouraged some workers to take course work education, to give them new interests and so forth, and some nowadays in some places, I don't say the auto plant, they are trying to help people that might be you might say, removed from the job simply because of automation, you know robots and so forth. I just wondered if in the past few years, say five or ten years whether in your particular knowledge of the plant, your plant or others, if you've come across any type of encouragement or courses or anything like that.

ND: Yes, ~~there~~ is encouragement along that line.

PP: Well, can you tell me something about it? I heard about this TRA and I know some men have taken advantage of that.

ND: You have to apply for it. You see, they have courses for that.

PP: How do you apply for it?

ND: It's on a very limited basis, very few people can make use of it. I'm talking contract wise.

PP: Why is that? Why only a few people?

ND: That costs money.

PP: What type person can make use of it?

ND: You take for instance, skilled tradesmen ^{can} who make use of it.

PP: They can make use of it. ~~Well, is~~

ND: And the production man can make use of it by becoming, now they have like an apprentice training program, we have that now. The corporation does pay for that and than sending the various person that they want to make an apprentice jouorney-

ND: man out of to school. We have that.

PP: What I'm interested in here than, if you say the skilled people can take advantage of it, the skilled people already have a trade, they already have a skill, and yet are they allowed to take training and change those ^{their} skills to go on?

ND: Where they have automated classes, But than you take the nonskilled people they have ^{enough} when they go up in these apprentice programs.

PP: So in other words, they are providing some training for production workers and nonskilled.

ND: If you notice now in the political field the people ^{that} are talking about some of the things they want to do here in the state of Michigan because alot of our jobs are disappearing. ^{is to} Retrain ~~re~~ people for different kind of work than the auto industries ~~is~~ here in Michigan.

PP: How do you feel about this retraining? Say you were 45 or 50 for instance, and the writing was on the wall that looked like your job would be eliminated, you might say, how do you think you might feel?

ND: I wouldn't like it because after all if I know that in this world ~~if~~ I have to make my own living, somebody's not going to make it for me, as long as I'm healthy and if the meaning of making a living is no longer there, there is other means of work, where I can make a living, I'd be enthused to get into it.

PP: But what about the person's who's been used to a certain job and likes his job

PP: Well I'm particularly interested in this age group though, I mean what you know, and particularly if anyone you know who is Polish ^{that is} and is in this age group, because I'm very interested to know how the person who say is 40 who has been working for 20 years or so in the plant with a particular job, likes it, and suddenly is laid-off and this is the group that I'm interested in.

ND: Well, there is some that are not too happy. They had it good all their life and those people about 40 years of age, when they came into the work force everything was laid out for them on a platter. All that they have now they just about had ~~the~~ except increase they had on a limited basis. Now suddenly find the bottom is falling and they say what are you going to do about that, some of them say that there are others ^{who} that say, the people of about 40 years of age, look what we've got, we know how hard you guys fought to get it, and once you give it up it's hard to get it back, we're going to try to keep what we got. Those are the working, ready to fight to keep what we got. In office, like I told you, to them it's a sense of pride because they weren't prepared for this, everything was given to them on a silver platter, shall we say, when they came into the work force ^alot of them just keep working and they became, they just didn't care, they just came in did their work and got their pay and thought things were going to last forever and now the bottom's dropping out.

PP: What do you think is going to happen, do you think that people for example, ^{who} are younger, are going to see the writing on the wall and their going to get perhaps training in some kind of different work, in case it happens to them?

ND: With the help of older, wiser heads, yes, I think they will teach them, that's one thing at the U.A.W., they are letting the younger people know, they know it already but try to help them and relocate them. One of things is trying to find, to prepare them for different jobs.

PP: About how big is the ^PPolish membership in the local, now, do you have any idea? Let's start with the retirees, ~~because~~ ~~I know you had~~

ND: That's a question that wouldn't be, as you say right now, right now our local, first let's go way back. Many years ago there ~~is~~ were very few black people in our local union, ^Jthey were all janitors, 200, 300 of them, and that was a lot. Then after we were able to get, to break the race barrier ⁱⁿ the plants ~~we~~ were able to put the ^{cleaned folks} ~~black people~~ on a machine then the population of blacks increased and at the present time at the local 235, I can safely say blacks are in the majority. The black race is in majority. That has reduced the ^PPolish element a great deal. There are still quite a few in other words, ^{Saw a} the older timer's sons ~~and~~ the father has been able to get them a job in Chevrolet, but we still have a number of black and ^PPolish, but not in comparison to what you had many years ago.

PP: About what percentage do you think of the active worker's

(History)
of Poles in
Unani.

DESSY 18

PP: are P polish?

ND: 20 % P polish. Many years ago it was more.

PP: I imagine in your retirees group it must be heavily P polish?

ND: It's mixed. We have quite a bit.

PP: I'm interested now in, did you know any of the laid-off workers who happen to be P polish?

ND: Not off hand, I don't. I could get the list and find out.

PP: Tell me, on a different note, because of the early days you had such a large P polish membership in your local were there any particular celebrations that were held.

ND: We use to have dances.

PP: That we're predominantly, P polish, you would have lots of polkas.

ND: At the dances they had polkas. Mix it but they would have, Carl Romak, an old, he came from Poland, short guy, he could dance the polka's in every different direction.

PP: What about P polish food?

ND: Right next to our local union there was a veterans hall they called it, and there they served beer and whiskey and they also had kielbasa sandwiches.

PP: This was a P polish hall?

ND: A P polish Veteran's hall. On Christmas they used to send, now, I mean not before, they used to send in boxes of P polish sausage, they were good to eat.

PP: Sounds delicious.

Mrs. D: Kowalski's is right near there.

ND: Kowalski sausage is right next to it.

PP: I went to a nice Polish wedding about a month ago, actually in Melvindale, among the food they served was kielbasa.

NO, App is Polish.

PP: I'm very interested in, maybe I could ask Mrs. Dessy than from the people that you know, cause you would be talking to wives, mothers and so on. Have you had any reactions from the Polish people you know now, toward the worker's being laid-off other than people maybe worried about their financial, have you ever heard anyone say an interest in leaving the state of Michigan and going elsewhere?

Mrs. D: No. No, I really haven't.

PP: Trying to get a different job; at all?

Mrs. D: No, I really haven't talked to any of them that left or any intention of leaving.

PP: Why do you think that is?

Mrs. D: Well, if they are younger people, if they leave they have nothing to go forward with. You can't buy a home, and living quarters are so high that they couldn't very well leave, so they stay with what they have here.

PP: What happens when their benefits run out if they're laid-off?

ND: They go on welfare.

PP: Are there a number on welfare, have benefits run out with some of these men from your own local?

ND: Yes, they have 89 I would assume recently, that there

Blacks

were some on welfare. A lot of them were able to relocate elsewhere. Some of them went home.

PP: I know that historically from my reading that there has been a great feeling on the Polish people in the United States about not going on welfare, if they could possibly help it, have you any comments on that, either of you?

ND: I would say that's right amongst the Polish people.

PP: They're quite independent.

ND: They're quite independent, they help each other out much as possible. They try to earn another work for a living.

PP: Would a person get another kind of job just as sort of a makeshift just in order to, even though it might mean less pay, or would they just try to get a job in their own fields.

ND: In our local union of Chevrolet Gear & Axle, we have been very fortunate, there were lay-offs in the past but they didn't last long. They always called the people back. It's only been recently, now that there have been lay-offs they haven't called them back, whether they will or not we don't know. It depends on the economic conditions. We've always been pretty fortunate here, a lot of jobs, they do call some people back, that's one thing about the Gear & Axle employees. For many, many years they got a job there they can count on always being able to make a living. Between if they got laid-off, unemployment insurance I was able to get by. Welfare wasn't much of a problem as far as Chevrolet Gear & Axle was concerned, except for those less fortunate who had probably become ill or accident, then they were still taken care of through workmen's compensation and

ND: If they are ill they have the insurance from the company. We were always in, we would never starve, not since the union came in. But as of today, like I say, it could be a different story where everybody's unemployment is running out, sub is running out and TRA has been eliminated. If you don't get back to work pretty soon you could be somebody forced on welfare.

PP: How do you think, Mrs. Dessy, this will affect the ~~P~~ Polish families if they have to go on welfare and they don't want to?

ND: They have to swallow their pride.

PP: What about young people, I mean are they being able to find jobs, are they hired at all in auto plants to do you think?

Mrs. D: No, I don't think there is any hiring in the auto plants

ND: They're not hiring. Chevrolet is pretty well set, as the retiree fellows were retiring a lot of the fellows sons and daughters, they hire male and female, haven't been able to get a job in Chevrolet's. The same way with ^{a lot of} the black folks, and as for quite a few months now, I'd say for several years now they haven't been doing any new hiring because they have those that they hired and they hire from all the various groups, ^{they} are waiting to come back to be called.

PP: So basically then, their last major hirings were sons and daughters, in other words, you had to be related pretty close to a worker.

ND: Come back again.

PP: Most of the hirings that did take place some years ago were mostly sons and daughters of employees.

ND: Not exactly, but alot of them got in that way. They could do the work available

PP: Let me ask you, are there any things that you would like to say about the union, because I think with your permission when I've done my work, I would like to be able to give this tape to the Reuther Library, would that be alright with you?

ND: Yes.

PP: I would like you to include anything on the union you feel any particular aspects of ^{your} the local, I know you can go on forever in talking about it, ^{but any} are there any particular aspects you feel are important that are unique to Local 235?

ND: 235, the main thing, what the workers should do, take a key from what we did years ago, we were one for all and all for one, we stuck together, we didn't give a darn about race color, or creed. The records will show that when blacks were very much in minority we always would try to see that they got their fair share. I even seen one as a delegate, ^{when} but he wouldn't even have a chance of getting elected at all. Today, it's mostly black and white, mixed, they should learn, I believe that they will, ^{to} ~~that they~~ should work together, fight together and try to share together the fruits that they have there at Chevrolet Gear & Axle because it's a plant that, the key plant of General Motors, same rules, work like we did years ago and be able to ~~out do~~

Solidarity of Workers

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ND: out bid ~~the~~ other places and be able to keep some of the jobs here and still be able to do the work in a very easy manner, in other words, they won't be hard on them at all.

PP: What do you mean a key plant? What is produced?

ND: Gears and axles that they manufactured

PP: They do gears and axles.

ND: Key plant of ~~the~~ General Motors.

PP: All automobiles and trucks have to have gears and axles.

ND: That's one thing, especially like you get among the foreigners, ^{gangs.}

Work [They did their job and] they didn't want to do more than their

job, but they did their job. That's one thing today, some

of our fellows sometimes forget that they have a little job to do, and if they all do their job, which isn't asking too

much, and they can't force them to do more than a ^{fair} ~~third-~~

day's work. If they do that, and do it right, in other

words produce quality material, they'd be protecting their

job ^{here} at Chevrolet Gear & Axle.

PP: What about these quality of work life cycles?

ND: That's exactly what I am talking about. You could start right there. But they didn't take them serious enough.

PP: On part of management or labor?

ND: On part of the employees.

PP: Really?

ND: We got a good number of men ^{in there}, but you got to get them all.

PP: Why do you think their not interested, it's too

ND: Being friendly with the company, I don't know about that.

Their ^{peic} going to get something on me, put something ^{over on you} ~~on me~~.

ND: And some of them just don't care. They're in there, draw their pay and that's it. They do some work, some of them as little as possible, some of them are very conscientious. Those that are very conscientious have to make up for the others.

PP: Were these Circles in when you were still working?

ND: That's right. It started, in fact I sat in on some of the meetings.

PP: You retired in 1979?

ND: December, '79.

PP: So, now you are on full retirement?

ND: Full retirement. Now, the only thing is I haven't forgotten, I told you before, you must not only be strong in making money, economic conditions, unionism and also the political conditions. Now I do a little work for the Macomb County Democratic committee, ^{Being a precinct delegate} Alot of it's for the cause.

PP: You are really one of the old-time union people, who went through the struggle, and things are a little bit different now.

ND: Right now you got Joe Elliott.

PP: Joe Elliott, that's who?

ND: When I had my retirement party. I didn't retire till the end of December. (gives Pk P booklet on 235)

PP: Your wife wanted to know if I was interested in Local 3, and I am because,

ND: They were organized before we were. In fact,

PP: Are they disbanded, completely or what?

ND: No, there is no more ~~one~~

PP: No. There must be a retiree local?

ND: There's a retiree group. Joe Elliott ^{is one} ~~won~~. But there is no more Local 3. ~~Money has all been.~~

Mrs. D: Maybe she can talk with Joe Elliott.

PP: I was wondering if there ~~is~~ was really, primarily I'm interested ~~in~~

ND: Joe Elliott would be a good guy ~~for~~ Local 3 to talk to. I could get you his telephone number.

PP: The thing is this, I would be very interested to talk to him, if he ~~is~~ Polish?

ND: Joe, no.

PP: Really what I am primarily interested in is people who are ~~is~~ Polish who are members of Local 235. and I would greatly appreciate it if you could give me the names of even one or two people

ND: To talk to over at 235, Polish?

PP: Polish, yes.

ND: I was thinking about Chester ^{manaltanski} Mekakowski (225)?

PP: Chester is what, is he retired or is he still working?

ND: Chester is retired also.

PP: See the thing is I ^{do} want to try and get some people who are working too, at a younger age level, but I would like to ~~talk~~ talk to Chester.

ND: In this book here, you start out, these are the officers in 1937 these are the officers in 1977. ~~Do~~ Do, I look a little different there? Now, Chester, he was one of our president's

PP: He would be very interesting to talk to. May I use your name and give him a call?

ND: Oh, certainly.

PP: Do you happen to know his telephone number by any chance?

ND: Let me check a minute.

Mrs. D: What's that young fella?

PP: That's what I want, some young fellas.

Mrs. D: His dad worked in the shop and than he went in. He's on the committee or something.

PP: On the shop committee.

Stan Ginski

Mrs. D: Yes.

PP: He would be a very good person is he were younger, a younger person.

Mrs. D: He was well-dressed at the, we went with him to California. They were in California together, him and his wife. I can't think of his dad. He's on the shop comittee, he's on something at the local right now. Do you know who I'm thinking of?

ND: I'm trying to think of him.

PP: Is their anyone else besides Chester ~~Mekakowski~~ that you can suggest that I talk to.

ND: While your looking at that, I'll try to think .