

INTERVIEW WITH FRANK DZIUGIEWICZ

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*Mach.  
Rep.*

INTERVIEWER: Pat Filling

PP: This is Pat Filling. The date is September 29, 1982. I'm talking with Mr. Frank Dziugiewicz of 13757 Colpaert in Warren, Michigan. Mr. Dziugiewicz is a machine repairman at Chevvy Gear and Axle.

Mr. Dziugiewicz, perhaps you would start first by telling me the date of your birth.

FD: May 2nd, 19~~2~~1.

PP: And where were you born?

FD: In Poland.

PP: Whereabouts in Poland?

FD: It's southeast of Poland, the state Lvov.

PP: Is that L-V-O-V in English? What was the town or the place that you were born?

FD: Dovromoil.

PP: How many years did you spend in Poland?

FD: I came to United States 1965.

PP: So you spent all your growing-up years, your school years and your growing-up years ~~in~~ then in Poland.

FD: In Poland.

PP: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

FD: No more.

PP: How many did you have?

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FD: I had three sisters and one brother.

PP: Was your mother completely Polish, on both sides of the family?

FD: Yes.

PP: And what about your father?

FD: Yes, Polish.

PP: Did either of them ever come to the United States?

FD: Yes. In 1931. <sup>(him & father)</sup> Only for a visit in Canada, we have relatives. My mother's sister lives in London. So we was all together in 1931, eight months, in the United States and three months in Canada.

PP: So you were quite a small boy of about nine or ten at the time.

FD: Eleven.

PP: Eleven. What do you remember of that time? Do you remember anything about that trip?

FD: Oh, I remember lots of things. A trip by boat and I remember New York port, and I remember also the people I met first. They were my father's cousin. He was working in Philadelphia in a coal mine. So he came to meet us in New York and they took us, ~~you~~ ~~knew~~, to Philadelphia, and we stayed eight months visiting all over. So we are going to lots of cities to see. I don't remember exactly the cities, because I was interested more in toys . . . .

PP: Toys, and cars, and trains, that kind of thing. Oh, of course. Well, then you were actually from the, I believe, the part that's now part of Russia, is it? Or was, at the time?

FD: After Second World War, the part of Poland they are Russian now, because the agreement between England, United States, and France and Russia, the agreement in Potsdam, so they signed it

and they gave that part of Poland to Russia. Anyway, all the east part of <sup>Poland</sup> ~~Russia~~ they give to Russia. So Russia dominates it all.

PP: Do you still have relatives in that area?

FD: No, I don't have any relatives. My father and mother and sisters and brothers were taken by Russia in 1939. I escaped, because father told me I got to escape and go to my uncle, in another city in Poland that was Radom, and I jumped through the window and I avoided arrest, but they didn't and I never saw no more of my father and mother and no relatives.

PP: Why did the Russians arrest your family?

*Father - employer*  
 FD: Because the took before all the people they have employed <sup>(had)</sup> some people by the Russian. The Communists Russia believed the men who are employed another people he take advantage and he get rich, you know.

PP: Oh, you're father was a wealthy man, was he?

FD: Yes, my father was same, we have big shop, work-shop, we employ sometimes three hundred people.

PP: What kind of thing did you. . . .

FD: All kind of machine building, machine repair, and construction works. You know, my father was an engineer and he had a license, ~~you know~~, to do it, all the job, whatever he can get. And he did all the kind of jobs. They say, he was a "big shot" — the people no good for socialist and that's why they took all of them people, not just my father. Before they took my family, so they took a hundred, hundred family we knowed. We expected it.

PP: Where did they send them? To Siberia?

FD: Well, places, to Siberia camp, for hard work. And then I never saw my parents.

PP: Where were you during most of World War II? What were you doing then?

FD: Most of World War II I spent, from 1940 to 1942 I spent my time working in factory and I lived with uncle and aunt and cousins.

PP: What kind of work did you do?

FD: Oh, I did also mechanics work.

PP: What town were you living in.

FD: It was Radom (This is what he actually spells and this is the name of the town. The "ah" sound in Polish is "a", "aw" is "o".)

PP: R-O-D-O-M. So, in other words, was this a Polish town?

FD: It was a Polish town, but German occupation.

PP: Oh, that's what I was wondering, because I know that the borders changed many times and there was occupation troops of different. . .

FD: No, there was only one time.

PP: Only one time?

FD: Only one time. Russia agreed with German, 1939, there was an agreement between Molotov and Ribbontrop. They have signed it in Moscow the agreement to split Poland in between. So Poland was cut up by half, half Russia took it and half German took it.

PP: That's when Germany marched into Poland?

FD: Right.

PP: Yes, I remember that.

FD: But also same day German invade Poland, Russia did same day, from the east. That's why. . . .

PP: Beginning of World War II.

FD: Yes, that was start World War II.

PP: I remember. So now that you're here in the United States, do you attend <sup>a</sup>the Polish parish church?

FD: Yes.

PP: The one down in Hamtramck?

FD: No. This is Queen of Heaven.

PP: That's a Polish church in this area?

FD: Polish church, yes. I used to live there, about <sup>S</sup>Seven mile, Van Dycke on Queen Street. And we start there, you know, and I still belong to that parish. It's a church, Queen of Heaven, by ~~the~~ Holy Cross Hospital.

PP: When you were growing up did your parents own their own home in the town?

FD: Yes, we have workshops and we have our own house. There was a big house. It was right in the center of the city of Lvov. The building used to belong to Polish king, say it was 1800. The king lived there, so he \_\_\_\_\_ one in Kiev, you know. He lived, he bought that, he stayed there. It was, they called that building the Sovieskei building.

PP: How do you spell that?

FD: S O V I E S K E I. <sup>EV</sup>

PP: When you came here in <sup>(165)</sup>1955, what made you come here, what made you come here to the United States? What made you decide to come?

FD: Well, I been working for a European Energy Commission. I built power plants. It was the Marshall Plan. There was money from Marshall Plan and they rebuilt Europe, mostly in Germany. We used to work on all of their power plants, that was during World War II blow-up, so we put up new ones. My job was only setting up turbines, boilers and, naturally, start running you know, and put it on production. That was my job. And then Marshall Plan was over and <sup>there</sup> was no more money, so they told everybody "Go home." I didn't have no home, because fourteen years I have been going from place to place, from city to city, to work there, start it and finish. It sometimes took, you know, fifteen months, sometimes year-and-half, sometimes shorter; all depends what kind of big power plant we have to build. After that, I decide to go and look for some job. So, I have friends and they offered me, you know, United States, going to United States. So I did it. And so I came to the United States.

PP: Did you come right to Detroit?

FD: Yes. To New York.

PP: Oh, to New York first.

FD: New York. You have to, that's the port.

PP: Yes, but I mean, you really came to settle in Detroit, to work in Detroit?

FD: In Detroit, yes.

PP: Were you married at the time?

FD: Yes. I just came myself, because I didn't know do I can make money over here, don't know language and, you know.

PP: Your wife is Polish?

FD: Yes, my wife is also Polish.

PP: What year did you marry?

FD: What year? 1955.

PP: 1955. So then you sent for your wife. Do you have children?

FD: Yes. Two boys. And I sent my wife all the support papers she needs. She came with the kids.

PP: Now, when you came first, did you work at Chevvy Gear and Axle?

FD: No.

PP: No?

FD: No, first I've been working for Excello,

PP: Doing what kind of work?

FD: Machine-builder. Then I got laid off and I got the job over at Gear and Axle.

PP: Before we go on with questions about your work, I wanted to know, do you belong to any Polish organizations here?

FD: Yes. Polish-American Congress.

PP: Are you quite active in that?

FD: Oh, I'm just a member.

PP: Just a member.

FD: Yes. Well I am one of the directoral board of the credit union, the Polish-American Congress credit union.

PP: Oh, so you are active, yes. Do you belong to any other groups?

FD: No.

PP: Do you have anything like a boat or a cottage or anything like that?

FD: No. I don't own, no.

PP: You mentioned you had two boys. They're grown now, I suppose.

FD: Yes. They are out of home, yes.

PP: Are they living in this area?

FD: No. The oldest one lives in Denver and the younger one, he's in Boston.

PP: What kind of jobs do they do?

FD: The oldest one, he's working, like a mechanic. The youngest one, he's working in a shop, a workshop, you know. He <sup>Printing</sup> makes graver's job, that's this. . .

PP: Engraving?

FD: Engraving, yes.

PP: Tell me, did either of the boys ever work at Gear & Axle?

FD: No.

PP: Did you have any relatives that ever worked at Gear and Axle?

FD: No.

PP: No one whatever. How many years of school did you have in Poland?

FD: Altogether I had grade school, I had two years polytechnics and I have three years skill school and finally I make the master diploma.

PP: Where was that? In Radom?

FD: No. That was in Katowice, Poland.

PP: Would you spell that?

FD:       Katovice?                    Yes, I've got to write it out first, because. . . .

PP:       I think it's K-A-T-O-V-I-C-E, isn't it, or something like that?

FD:       Yes, right.

PP:       I think I've seen it written. I think I've seen that written. Well, what age actually did you learn your machine repair work?

FD:       Well, I'd been born on the shop. My father. . . .

PP:       Even when you were small?

FD:       Yes, my father had the shop and the shop was almost attached to the house and I used to play, as a boy, and the people working put me on the bench and they played with me and they showed me how they do this, how to run this. And so and so. That's why I . . . .

PP:       Well, how old were you when you got your master diploma then?

FD:       It was 1955.

PP:       How did you happen to get your first job at Gear and Axle? Through a friend, or did you. . . .

FD:       Yes, through a friend. Yes, I told a friend, "I don't have no job. I'm laid off." And he told me they needed somebody for machine repair and all I got to do is put an application. And I did it, I put application. I was hired the same day I put in application.

PP:       At what age do you think you might retire? Do you have any idea?

FD: I might retire next year.

PP: Oh, really? Even though you don't have that much. . . .

FD: Seniority, yes.

PP: But do you have to retire next year or would you have a choice of staying on if you wanted to for a while?

FD: Exactly I don't want to stay longer than I supposed to. For example, exactly I'm supposed to stay during the next year to the end of the year. But my birthday is May 2nd, next year I'm going to be sixty-two and I decided to go sooner, after May 2nd and as fast as I can, because I've got an idea that I want to write a book. . . .

PP: I see.

FD: I'm going to write a couple books. One's going to be my biography from 1939 till I came. . . It's going to be the time from 1939 all the time until I came to the United States. Then the second book I wanted to do it about the Gear and Axle plant.

PP: What about writing a book from the very beginning? Earlier than that, from your earliest memories?

FD: That's not much interesting, because I was working; I was going to the school; I didn't have much to say about it. My school days was more than ten hours a day, because we used to go, ~~you know~~, to school and I come home at 3:30. Start at 8:00 o'clock in the morning and finish school at 3:30. Then we have so much homework, you have to stay two-three hours to get done homework. And besides that I had to do some jobs for my family, between whatever father and mother tell me to do, I did it.

PP: So that's why you thought doing it from 1939 would be more interesting. So really what you're going to start doing when you retire is start writing.

FD: 1939 I was a full-grown man, you know, I was nineteen and I was already active and so and so. . . .

PP: So that <sup>then</sup> you're going to write a book on Gear and Axle as well?

FD: Also, yes. I'm interested in putting through the book the mostly the activity of the people, union, the people on the job I met, how we do work, how the management. . . .

PP: Are you taking notes all the time in preparation for it?

FD: Not exactly. I've got a good memory and I remember even sometime date what happened, some action happened.

PP: It will be a very interesting book, because it isn't often, at least I don't know of any book of a worker, actually writing a book on the plant in which he worked. It's usually someone from outside who comes in and writes a book on the plant. That should be very interesting.

FD: The book's going to help other people how to deal it, to coming in to a shop like that, a union shop.

PP: I wish it was written now, because then it would have been interesting background for me to interview the workers.

(Laughter) It would have been nice if you'd already written it and it had been published. Tell me, how many times have you been laid off? Many times?

FD: Once.

PP: Just once.

FD: Yes, that was in 1970.

PP: Did you actually start in machine repair?

FD: Right.

PP: And they counted all your experience and. . . .

FD: Well, I had to give all my titles, diploma.

PP: Yes.

FD: . . . What I got, and they check it, you know, and I had to translate from, ~~you know~~, to English and there was the basic document, what they believe me. . . .

PP: So they accepted your apprentice training, they accepted your work experience and everything?

FD: Yes.

PP: Tell me, did you ever consider at any time, changing to another kind of occupation? Or had you always wanted to work with machines? The reason I ask this is because so many people nowadays at the age of even thirty-five or forty sometimes decide to change to something else. Did you ever think about it, ever?

FD: No. I never want to change ~~my~~ skill, because I like it very much my skill. Like I say before I had to learn from little boy and from my father and people who would be working for my father. So that this is in my heart and I like it very much.

PP: You've always liked the type of work you're doing now.

FD: Right. Only I've been thinking if I was laid off, I've been thinking, you know, to open my own shop. But I came to the conclusion later that I am not able to hold the job, you know, my own. First thing, you need a lot of money on the first thing; I didn't have the money to open a shop. And you have to be first good with language in the country you came. So the time was 1971, the time I was short--I'm still short with English--but I was very short in 1970. That's why I forgot later about that stuff.

PP: If you were laid off at all, say, you know, you were laid off before you decided to retire, would you consider going to another state and working or would you try and get work here?

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE

PP: (mid-sentence). . . . whether or not you might relocate in another state.

FD: No, I never thought about another state, because what I know about the history in the book I read and paper I read, the radio, this is / the center, Detroit, Michigan, exactly that's the center where all the mechanical jobs are done, exactly. You know, lots of shops, workshops and so and so.

PP: If you did move to another state, what would you miss most of all, do you think?

FD: I will miss, probably, the weather first, the people, here, the wonderful people I met over here. And like I say, weather, weather it's like we have in Poland.

PP: Do you know of any Polish workers who have gone to another state to find work?

FD: No. I don't know people who have to leave the job here and they go to another state looking for job. All the people I know, most of them, say, Polish people or European people that came from Europe, like Yugoslavian, even German, Hungarian, Czechoslovaks people, you know, they came here to Detroit, they got the job and they stay on the job all the time, except they're laid off, today, because they didn't have no seniority and they are laid off.

PP: Tell me, does your wife work at all?

FD: No, no.

PP: Has she worked at all?

FD: No, she never been working here in the United States.

She been working in Poland. She was a store manager, shoe store manager.

PP: If you were laid off at all, which is unlikely, being in machine repair, I realize, would you ever consider any kind of retraining for another type of job or are you just so interested in machine work that that would be the only thing you'd want to do?

FD: I don't need another training for my future life, because like I mentioned before, next year I hope I retire. That's going to be for sure. I decided already and I'm going to start writing the book. That's going to be my job.

PP: What about the person who is laid off and decides to take early retirement? Do you think he should wait and try to get back to work? How do you feel about early retirement for other people?

FD: We talk with friends about that. Some friends told me they like to retire as soon as they can because they can get enough money to live, to have a good life, on this kind of money. For example, if a man has got twenty-five years he's working even on the production, his average money per month if he retires is going to be after twenty-five years almost \$900. If he doesn't have larger family to support, only man and wife, I think that is good enough money to live, if you've got your own house.

PP: And it's mostly paid for, too.

FD: Yes, if the house is paid for. But people, they don't have no house and they got to support somebody, so they don't think

*Future educ*

to go and retire. Rather they want to stay on the job as long as they can.

PP: Do you feel that affirmative action has had anything to do with job layoffs, or is it simply based on seniority?

FD: That is strictly based on seniority in our division of Chevrolet Gear and Axle. Our local union and the people, they work, committeemen, they're really doing a good job and most of them, that is committeemen we have, say sixty percent are Polish background and they like working and they work honestly and they keep an eye so that nobody will be not properly laid off, for, say, reverse seniority. That means they don't let them laid off, you know, only in the line. You've got to be in the line.

PP: Have you played any kind of an active role in your union local?

FD: In the local, not very much. Mostly I play a role in election time. We want to elect the best people we got for the job, so we are sure get the proper people in all the union positions, so they can lead people the good way and proper way and honestly say they are doing that way, whatever we elect them. So that's why I only decide to be active on election time.

PP: Tell me, have you been interested in the Solidarity movement in Poland?

FD: Yes. That Solidarity movement is on the basic solidarity movement in the United States. You know, they don't have a free union over in the communist countries. They never have. The unions are government-controlled and the first time <sup>with</sup> the Solidarity, Polish people have chance to organize union for people, because that kind of union

*Solidarity*

they have before, like I say, that was for government, not for people. I support Solidarity because there's only one way for to make people happy. If you dictate people what they got to do, what kind of union is that? That's a dictatorship, not a union. They have to listen. For example, in Russia, nobody can say "no." Whatever came from government that is executed from the top to the bottom, exactly what they decide. And the same thing was in Poland; that's why people didn't like that and that's why they have to turn it, you know, a different way. Not just this, that is more even, this has got to be a connection. You see, I have to say even that way, because that's true, the Polish people after the second World War, they never worked for themselves, for Poland. All the goods they make, the money, Russia sells it and Russia dictate where the product got to go. Even Polish government don't know how much Russia collects for the goods the Polish people or the Czechoslovak people make. So all the center is in Russia, in Moscow. They plan it for all of what they call the Warsaw Pact. They have a plan and the plan is going direct, you know, to this country, like Hungaria, like Rumania, Bulgaria, East Germany, Poland, Latvia, all the occupied countries. They say Poland, by me that much I know, which I see, that's all the signs Poland, but that is another republic of Russia. And the same thing East Germany, the same thing all the satelite, like Czechoslovakia, Hungaria, and so. That's why only all advantage from the job those people doing, the Russia took it, the money, all the dollars. Of course, they collect for these items on the western countries and Russia grab it.

PP: Let's come back now to something on your own life here. We were talking for a moment about your role in the union. I assume

you vote, do you, in all the elections? You vote, always vote?

FD: Yes. That means talking to the people: We've got this man, our proposition is elected, you know the man. I do it like an agitator job. For example, I explain people what he's been doing before, his position. . . .

PP: You campaign, in other words. You campaign for the person?

FD: Right. And I talk to the people, give the people idea, you know, about this man, because not every<sup>body</sup> know. For example, I cannot talk to people who know. Okay, I can have some kind of discussion, but somebody probably knows this guy better than me and he's got some kind words for the guy. But I usually support all of the guys I know, exactly, I work with him and I observe him for several years and I know he's going to be good; he's going to be honest. So I go to people, I talk to people.

PP: So, do you go to meetings as well at the union.

FD: Yes, in meetings, in private talk with people.

PP: What about education classes? Have you taken any of the classes that they give at the union? They give classes, I believe, in Pre-retirement; they give classes on grievance procedures, collective bargaining, different things like that. Have you been to any of these classes?

FD: No, I haven't been on these classes, because I'm not interested in take it in the union, no job.

PP: Do you think the union should give classes? I mean do you think it's a good idea?

FD: Sure, any kind classes.

PP: Any kind.

*Union classes*

FD: Any kind education that people want to learn, that they like to learn, we have to give them the opportunity to learn.

PP: Have you taken any classes in anything at all?

FD: Right now, no. I used to have to take English classes.

PP: English? Anything else besides English?

FD: Not something from the skills.

PP: No. I wondered about other kinds of classes, if you had any hobbies or interests, whether you'd taken any kind of classes.

FD: No. I didn't do it. No classes for something extra.

PP: How do you feel about Japanese and other foreign cars?

FD: I have to say I feel about the Japanese car not too honest as everything going on here in the United States. But then I never have Japanese car, but I know lots of people they got Japanese car and they bought it and they never complain on some defect they have. Even if they have, they took the car to the dealer and they have done right away. So that's the kind of sure that people got it from the company who sell Japanese car and they know if something happen they going to fix it. For example, I have bought a Chevrolet

*Japan Cars*

*(insurance)*

...

PP: Oh, you own a Chevrolet?

FD: I own a Buick right now, but that was 1969, and I have defect in the Chevrolet water pump and I took it to the dealer and he keep my car three days, so they called me ~~that~~ the car is done and I came, picked up the car and it wasn't done. I came home and water was leaking like before. That wasn't honest service and I took it several times to same dealer and even I had to call a representative

from our division and finally they changed it for me, but there was six weeks waiting time and all the trouble.

PP: How do you feel about the foreign cars? Do you have any strong feelings about the fact that they should or should not be imported into the United States?

FD: I think they shouldn't be imported, because we can make also good cars.

PP: What about if they were assembled in the United States like the Volkswagen now has an assembly plant, I believe, in Pennsylvania? Do you feel differently if they're assembled here?

FD: Only on one condition. (If we can do a good job, our assembly is good, the product is going to be good, the Japanese will stay here and we could have a job. But if we going to do same job what we're doing on our product, the Japanese will be broke; they will take all the business back to Japan.) That is true. We are not doing jobs with pride, most of the people today. Most of them young people, <sup>(do)</sup> negligent(?) job. That's why I can say we punish for that.

PP: How important do you think a job is to a man? I mean do you think he looks at it just as a job or do you think he looks at it at all with pride, from what you have seen?

FD: ( I have seen that you have to have a pride on the job, that's needed. You have to like the job, you know that you're doing the job, not just for yourself. But do it to build the strength of your country and working better economy and automatically if country's ~~weak~~ <sup>rich</sup> and economy growing and automatically I am richer also, because the kind of money we make and the product we can sell it, that's our money, so we can receive the money.) Even I can say if we work in

the way they work in Europe--they used to work, sorry--they used to work, today they are spoiled also in Europe too, but they used to work. So, if we work in <sup>that</sup> the way we can be more competitive than Japanese. We know a better way to do it. We got more equipment. We can make a bigger technology. We've got it, technology, but we can make it a better technology.

PP: Are you talking about robots now?

FD: Robot, and people. People who work indirectly on the job. And we can compete <sup>with</sup> the car, for example, the car costs today \$11,000 or \$12,000, American car. If we go and work properly, we come in every day to work, not going to be absentee, we can even have \$5.00 more per hour and we still can make it money, you can sell it, be more competitive than Japanese. Why? Because we can make more units per hour than Japanese.

PP: Well, do you think one of the problems, say, is absenteeism? That this costs money and that if the car was made more perfectly there would be less repairs to do at the end of the line, and so you would have more good cars coming off?

FD: Right. Each customer \_\_\_\_\_  
For example, if I got a good car and I don't have any no trouble with car during the three years and I got a steady job, each three years I probably will buy a new car, because we all know after three years in a car, the machinery, something gets wearing out. So they cost you money, they cost you trouble, they cost you time to take it for repair. So you'd rather buy another car and you're all set for another three years, you don't have to take it for repairs, spending time. That's why the economy will be moving more faster, because everybody will buy. But, you know, it's eighteen to twenty percent

people didn't come in to work every day, we cannot produce, because we are short. They're going be on the line. . . .

PP: Do you think the Quality of Work-Life Circles have helped at all? These small groups now that meet--I believe at Gear and Axle, too--between management and some of the workers. They call them Circles EPC, these circles that meet. . .

FD: Well, participation circle that only is designed for to make people understand what kind of hard job management's got. They have, for example, today, management they are only say a person, he only foreman, only person in a white shirt, but he don't have any power. You see, before we have old-fashioned, old-style foremen, general foremen, they have used, you know, a whip, what I have to say. That was bad and there was so much disagreement, you know, between those people and worker and supervisor. People disliked those guys. You see, we're supposed to be training a new supervisor a different way. The supervisor, he's supposed to be helper for the group, not the driver with the whip, because they have been like that. Right now, they decide in the participation circle, let the people manage the job, let them take the responsibility for them on job. Each group got manage on a platform they got whatever they got the job organized <sup>and</sup> have a headache, say like that, have a headache about it.

PP: Do you think it will have some kind of long-range. . .

FD: Affect? Yes, that will have pretty good affect because people learn more understanding on their responsibility on the job.

PP: What do you think is the future of the American auto industry from what you can see where you stand now?

FD: If everything will go this way which we got it right now, so if we put it on the rails, it will take it a long time to straighten up, but our industry nothing wrong with our automobile industry only it's got to be properly managed by good people and the people that understand that the job they're doing they're not doing for Chevrolet or Ford or for example, Mr. Leah. They're doing the job for themselves. That's the kind of feeling over the Europe people still got it, not everybody, but most of them, the oldest one people, because they've been learned this way. So if you're only working for yourself, for nobody else. . . . .

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO

PP: This is Pat Pilling, Tape #2, September 29, 1982. This is a continuation of my talk with Mr. Dziugiewicz.

We were talking about the future of the auto industry and you were talking about, really basically, pride in work ~~is what you were talking about~~. Maybe you'd like to continue with that because I think that's ~~extremely~~, not only interesting, but extremely important, possibly one of the basic problems in the American auto industry today.

FD: Yes. Everybody don't recognize the people they don't know, so we're supposed to let them know what the world is today, what the situation is today. For example, before we didn't have competitors; today, we got too many competitors. Because Japanese industry growing up fast. Those people, they've got pride on the job, discipline, because they was growing up in a boom, and their parents have been building pride on the job for their own kids.

Over here, I just go for example, parents don't transfer to the kids all the experience they have, because they have too many things to do, and most of them they have money and they use the money most for good times. I came over here to the United States, I couldn't agree with people I met when I was invited to those people for <sup>a</sup> party or for social talk, and I see how the kids was growing. The parents used to give one dollar and "go buy yourself hamburger", and the boy, he just took dollar and he went to MacDonald, and he didn't show up with that <sup>dollar</sup> for three hours. We been talking, and the parents didn't even mention, "Where did John going?" Nobody mention. And John came and the parents didn't ask him, did he have a hamburger or something else, where he been for three hours, you know. In Japan and Europe, they don't growing that way, the kids. That's why we got that results today. People, they don't learn from the parents discipline and they got a hard time learning discipline in the shop.

FP: What would you say were the main values that you learned as a child from your parents about life and work and this kind of thing? What were the main things that you felt were transmitted to you from your family?

FD: Most of them the parents transmit to me experience they got through the life. For example, they would give me some order to do it or show it homework. You know, all the time excuse I have not to do homework, so the parents put my brother supervising me and I couldn't go no out <sup>to play</sup> until the homework was finished. And I have to stay at home, and I learn the discipline. There no <sup>g</sup> pay for me if I not do the job. That's why I learn first do the job

Family  
Cohesion

then ask for pay. For example, if I behave myself and I did mine homework in school and some job for the parents order it, I did properly on time, then father or mother tell me, "You want to go see your friends?" Because they see I don't have nothing else to do, so I can spend time with the friends, play ball; we have, you know, like soccer, and then I play. I've been growing up the way, you know, I was eighteen even first time I have smoked cigarette, I was graduate and celebrate eighteenth birthday and my father came to me and said, "You know, I can't tell you that you got to smoke or you not supposed to smoke. You are eighteen now, but remember watch on your health, that's poison. If you decide that poisoning yourself, you're a man, a grown man, your responsibility. My business is to tell you." And that's it!

PP: Now, is that how you brought up your children? You gave them the same sort of training and so forth?

FD: That's right, that's right.

PP: Let's talk a little bit now about your actual type of work that you do at Gear & Axle.

FD: So I do all kind of . . . .

PP: Which plant do you work in?

FD: Right now I'm working at Central ~~(??)~~ Sentra ~~(??)~~

I do all kind of job, most of them, the hardest and most difficult, because I don't like easy jobs.

PP: What do you call the most difficult?

FD: The most difficult is the puzzle, job which puzzles. That's like trouble-shooting. *(* More difficult, the more I like to

*Work:*

do it. I go so deep, I got patience for it, and I'm satisfied and I find them the trouble. And I fix that machine, so I am happy, and that's the kind of pride that's more for me than money. If I cannot fix it, the job, the machine, I am even sometime upset about it. I could not do it today, but I told myself, okay, tomorrow I have to. And I come home and I sit down, I figure it out what I did wrong, why I couldn't find it, which way I supposed to go tomorrow to do it. And that's day after day, and right now I'm successful on each job and I don't have any no problem on my job. I never have during my fourteen years work, disagreement with foremen.)

PP: Do you work alone, or do you work in a team?

FD: I work alone.

PP: You work alone.

FD: All the time I work alone, myself. Only sometime, if it's bigger jobs, I get help.

PP: Is this because you do the most difficult jobs, so they let you have what they call free range to work with the problem?

FD: Right, Yes.

PP: Do you use any kind of computer knowledge in the work you're doing now to find the problems?

FD: Right, right. Mostly we're switching all the machines now for computers. I am familiar with electronics, you know.

PP: Did you have to go to any training to get this computer work?

FD: No, because I'm not doing electrical, site(?). Only I understand how this work on mechanical system. Exactly, my mechanical

system dictate computer what we needed. That's the kind of job, so I am not dependent. The computer is dependent on mechanical sites.

PP: What about the use of robots in Gear & Axle, such as in painting or anything else. Have you anything to do with maintenance of the robots?

FD: No. The robots is exactly a job with certain people supposed to work on it. Not much on the robot mechanical work. Most of them electronics and hydraulics and \_\_\_\_\_ sometime on a certain job. So (robots is very helpful I would say for people. All the robots we have they do precision work so man is not able to do it and he doing job for man, only we got a servant, well servant to give him what he need. He need oil we got to give him oil, he need power, we got to give him power. That's a helper.)

PP: But he doesn't need coffee!!

FD: No. <sup>hand</sup> Doesn't drink coffee, but that is real helper. ( I like have a robot, you know, he will take it from me, the part, heavy stuff, from machine, you know, and turn it on the bench, so I can work on it. He can take this stuff and put it back on the machine, so I just can go and bolt it, even he can bolt it for me so I don't have to work <sup>hand</sup> on it.)

PP: In other words you're using the robot to do some jobs for you?

FD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. That's, you know, a very good helper. I like it.

PP: Now when did this come in? When did this type of help start? How many years ago?

FD: Right now we don't have very many robot at Gear and Axle, no special robot like you think they have on assembly line where they show it. We got automation, but not hundred percent robot. We don't bring it in yet, because we doing the kind of job we don't need no full robot. We cannot use it for. . . .

PP: What's going to happen when Gear & Axle--I've heard from other workers that eventually all cars <sup>and</sup> trucks will be front-wheel drive--is that going to make a big difference? Will they then use robots to make these. . . .?

FD: No, that's not true. No, front-wheel drive is not on a basic thing. That is only switching driving from back to front and we didn't use a robot on the back. We only use automation.

PP: I see.

FD: Because we're doing just the gears and axles. Most of the robots they use on the assembly line.

PP: If you were explaining to someone that didn't know, how would you explain the difference between the use of robots and automation?

FD: Automation, that is a technology. Automation, if you put one piece--for example, gear--if you put it to the machine and he's gone through all of the heads until the gears get finished, so the man don't have to look at it after each operation. The operation all machines do it in the line. That is automation. Robot, he doesn't do automation job. Robot does certain operations, welding, take it stuff from here, put here. Painting cars, that's what the robot's doing. Or, on the assembly line, put wheel on <sup>a</sup> the car.

*Antony  
Roberts*

PP: Tell me, have you visited other plants?

FD: Oh, sure, I go on all the plants.

PP: I mean, you go because you're assigned there?

FD: Yes, assigned there.

PP: Not because you're a tourist just wanting to see what some of the other plants are like.

FD: That's right.

PP: Well, what other plants have you worked at?

FD: All the plants.

PP: Well, can you give me an example of some you've worked at? All within Gear & Axle?

FD: All Gear & Axle.

PP: Yes, but what I meant have you work in other plants besides Gear & Axle?

FD: No. We don't have any job assignment to another division.

PP: What shift do you work on?

FD: Day shift.

PP: Day shift. Have you worked on the other shifts as well?

FD: I used to work afternoons. Then 1977 I came on days.

PP: Do you think we will eventually all go to the smaller cars?

FD: No.

PP: No?

FD: No. We wouldn't go for a small car. Small car only is good for driving to work or to school or office, you know, for work. You need, if you want to travel, on a long distance, going once in a while, you need a better car than a small one. So we're going to use medium sized, we're going to use trucks, lots of trucks. So the small car we build them because of gas shortage. Right now we not have any of that shortage. Only why they decide small car is more economics; <sup>(economics)</sup> you don't have to spend a lot of money for gas and good for, say, young people, when they start work, they don't make much money to buy gas, because that small car doubling gas mileage. For example, if you got medium-sized car and your mileage is average 14/gallon, on the small car you've got 30-35 per gallon average.

PP: How do you feel about young people going into the auto industry now? Would you have wanted one of your sons, or both, to go into the automobile industry? Had you ever thought about that?

FD: Auto industry, there's nothing wrong with auto industry in who like it work, you see, in auto industry. That's interesting job and you can find all kind of interesting jobs, if you like working. That doesn't merit you have to exactly work in a division <sup>like</sup> of Chevrolet Gear & Axle, because lots of small shops they're doing parts for cars.

PP: Well, would you have wanted either of your sons to work in Gear & Axle?

FD: Well, they want. . . . if I have the age now, I will put them to work, sure, but today it's no use to put them, you know, they got a different skill.

PP: What do you think about the idea of young people today maybe not just training for one kind of job, which people used to do, but training for perhaps more than one kind of skill?

FD: That's a good idea and that's the way it's supposed to be. If you are able to manage two different skills, that's an active person, you know, and <sup>if</sup> he don't have any no hard time to learn he's supposed to go to school and learn, not just say only skill, but all the kind, there's going to be politics, there's going to be economy, there's going to be anything. That's some kind of education that we need and we can use. *(Everything which we learn we can use in our life for future.)*

PP: Let me ask you a question. You mentioned about the fact that you're going to be writing these two books. Have you done any writing before, ever?

FD: No, I haven't done books. But I have done a lot of papers work, on the job, you know, technology papers. . . .

PP: In English or in Polish?

FD: Over there in Polish, over here in English.

PP: In English. What I was wondering was whether you had . . . . are you going to write these books in Polish or in English?

FD: They're going to be basically Polish. Then I'm going to translate them.

PP: Translate them, yes.

FD: Because it's easy for me.

PP: Easy for you. This is what I was wondering about. It would be much easier for you to write in Polish and have it trans-

lated. But one of the things I was interested in, because you are going to be doing this, this is going to be a job for you, have you ever considered going to, say, a Community College or something like that to take a course in creative writing or anything like that.

FD: Oh, if I need them. If I need them, I will go and learn and some more and some more, even if I see I can use it.

PP: No, I wondered if you <sup>had</sup> considered that.

FD: Yes, Oh, sure, I will, if I need them for example, for any kind of education I will go. That make men more knowledgeable. He can go, you know, to the people. He can talk, he can be helpful, because he knows about that, about that, because life is very large subject, you know.

PP: Have you ever thought about going back to Poland for a visit sometime?

FD: No. I don't plan it especially and not at this time, because I don't have nobody over there. Only my wife's got relatives. But I don't have any and I know that country from west to east and from south to north, so I don't see, you know, no reason. But, if there will be some kind of change in Poland that means the way I look for, more democracy there, so that the communists are not going to dominate, ~~you know~~, the Polish people, ~~So~~ I'd like to go see how they're doing and how they live, exactly, and I'd like to talk to the people there. Because today there's nothing to talk over there, only wherever you go you have to be hungry first, because nothing to buy in the store, Stores empty. Not even you can buy socks. They don't have any in the store, socks, nothing.

PP: When you have finished your books, which will take some time, I realize, what do you plan on doing after that? Have you any plans?

FD: Well, yes, I think I'm going to travel. So I got in Australia my two good friends. They also own a business over there. They've got their own business and they asked me to come and visit. And to Brazil. The rest of the world I didn't see it, so they're going to be interesting to go there, you know, if I get a chance, naturally. If the money is going to be worth something, so I receive from pension.

PP: I think that's a very nice note to end on, thinking of the small boy learning about machines in a workshop in Poland many years ago in the 1920s, and your visiting Brazil, maybe, in the late 1980s--a long jump. But I'm sure you'll make it. Thank you very much.

FD: Thank you very much!

*Photo  
\* error  
on tape  
said 1880's  
not 1980's.*