

Tape 1, Side A  
Walter Dorosh  
January, 1984

R: [ The big, I don't remember [if you remember reading about the bloody Monday in 1934 Ford Hungar Strike, they call it the Ford Hungar Strike, it was actually the Ford Hungar March in March and he was an employee of the company and they discharged him and he was blacklisted. Thousands were blacklisted and they could never get a job anywhere.]<sup>2</sup> Finally went into business he had no other choice. He was very successful businessman of course. He could never get a job any time he got a job in another location they'd, after a week or so they would trace him down.

I: Was he in the skilled trades?

R: No just in the regular production.

I: And in what building did he work at Ford's?

R: I think he worked in the foundry.

I: [ And was he interested in the start of the union in the early union?

R: Oh most certainly. We used to have the Ford organizing committee meetings in our home.

I: And what years were they?

R: 1931-32.

I: That's when Bill Mckie's Auto Union?

R: Umm.

I: Auto Workers Union. Was that it?

R: No that wasn't it. I can't remember the name of it. It was a long time ago. It was more than auto workers' union.

I: So he was involved was organizing for them?

R: <sup>11</sup>[ Oh absolutely. <sup>3</sup>[ And when I was young, about 12 or 13 I used to stay  
<sup>5</sup> and act as a lookout <sup>4</sup>[ because the city of Dearborn was Ford city.  
<sup>6</sup> ] ]  
 [ Mr. Ford owned the city lock, stock and barrel, he owned the police  
 force, the city council, the Mayor, John Alcary, and they'd passed any  
 ordinance that Ford wanted, you probably heard about the ordinance they  
 passed, you couldn't distribute any leaflets in the city, organizing  
 leaflets. And we'd go out to the <sup>gets</sup> passed out leaflets for  
 organizing purposes, the police would come there and arrest you take  
 you to jail and harass you and they would let you go but after you had  
 gone before a judge and the judge Lee R. Schultz(?) was the company's  
 judge. They had everything and they just had this constant  
 harassment. ] <sup>1</sup> ] <sup>3</sup> ] <sup>4</sup> ] <sup>5</sup> ] <sup>6</sup> ]

I: So did you start at the Ford Motor Company early, was that always your  
 desire?

R: <sup>3</sup>[ <sup>4</sup>[ Well I went to the Henry Ford Trade School. I started my employment  
 there in 1934. I wanted to be a tool and die maker and I went to the  
 school. I graduated from the school and I had four years of  
 apprenticeship after that. ] <sup>3</sup> ] <sup>4</sup> ] And I was going to become an engineer, and  
 move up from being apprenticeship into the engineering department for  
 a few weeks and I had started as an engineer. <sup>5</sup>[ Put in a year and then  
 I got interested in the organizing. And I was a volunteer organizer. ] <sup>5</sup> ]  
<sup>6</sup>[ I joined the union in 1937 and joined the at that time Dodge Local 3.  
 It was already organized and they were an established union and we  
 had, Local 600 was not organized we had our charter issued in 1938 of  
 May. And that's when we were first established as a union. And most  
 of us had joined. We joined under assumed names. You couldn't join  
 under your own name. ] <sup>6</sup> ] <sup>7</sup>[ We had I don't know if you remember Homer



Martin. Homar Martin was the president of the International union, united automobile workers and he was also at the same time on the payroll of the Ford Motor Company.

I: Really?

R: Well, certainly. Homer Martin didn't you read about that.

I: Well, I haven't studied too much about Homer Martin.

R: Oh he was a smooth operator and I used to go to meetings and he was a preacher. He was a Baptist minister and man he could spellbind you and he could talk a leg off you but what was happening <sup>3</sup> everytime we would organize there were so many workers they would be discharged until John L. Lewis came in. That was about 1940 May, I remember I attended a meeting when he came into Detroit. At the local union as a matter of fact when they scheduled him in they kept it a QT because they didn't want Homer Martin in the meeting. Homer Martin still was the president of the International Union. <sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup> And John L. Lewis came in he brought Mike Woodman and some of his other administrative aides <sup>4</sup> and it was on a Sunday about 12 o'clock he used to come down there and he, John L. said before he wanted to talk to the organizing, we were volunteer organizer, we had about 50 in the room there out of at that time 80,000 members, <sup>5</sup> he said before he wanted to speak to us, he wanted to take a ride around this Ford Rouge plant he'd heard so much about, he wanted to know why it's so difficult to organize it so he left, it took about an hour and a half to make the rounds and he came back and the first thing he said was I don't see any <sup>M</sup> machine guns or national guardsmen around that plant. He said when we organized the coalminers and we had to fight the Pinkertons. They had machine guns, bayonets, rifles, you know they actually did and he made us seem, feel kind of

fearful he said, you know, you guys scared to organize?<sup>5</sup> And then he put on a plan a very subtle plan<sup>6</sup> [it was at that time about 15, 16 plans<sup>7</sup> comprised of 80,000 employees in the Rouge plant,<sup>6</sup>] and when we organized before, we used to organize, he used to sign anybody up as long as he was Ford workers. He says no I'm going to cut that out. He said only turn in the names from your building and from your own department, that's all. And what he did he started--

I: So that they could know who they were, that they were signing up?

R: Well, not only that we would want to know their names and then each person, when I signed up four or five people I'd have to give those names to this individual, this individual had to give it to that individual. [We wanted to know where the spies were in the Ford set up.<sup>4</sup>] And you organized only in your own building. Everything was set up as a unit. It was broken all down. And after you organized on one department then you start to organize at another department. And he only deals with you. Before everybody used to just go to the local and give it to the secretary-treasurer and there was no controls so [Mike Widman who was John L. Lewis's administrative assistant became the organizer and he took over. He says you give and I don't want you to give to nobody else. I don't care who it is. You just give it to this guy. This guy will give it to the next guy. He will only know who the next person is. And that way we finally organized the place. And every guy was given a different assignment. In other words they broke it down so that it simplified it but at the same time it had certain controls attached to it. And then we would start organizing that. There was so much organizing.] ]<sup>3</sup>

I: So it sounds like the spies were an important deterrent.

R: Oh sure. Ford had, see <sup>3</sup> [the Ford Motor Company had two independent unions. They called it the Ford Brotherhood and the Ford Liberty Legion. When the union organizing became very strong in there and everybody started talking about unionism, the Ford Motor Company was encouraging supervisors and everybody was around encouraging the people to join either the Liberty <sup>3</sup> Region, Ford Liberty Legion or the Ford Brotherhood. Both companies <sup>y</sup> dominated unions. [The president of the Ford Brotherhood was Judge Leroy Schaffer of Dearborn.] And the president of the Liberty Legion was another company official, you know a top company official. ] <sup>3</sup>

I: How many workers did they get to sign up to these?

R: [ Well there's always those people who are fearful that if the boss goes to them and says look jobs are hard to get, the only way to get a job at the Ford Motor Company, you had to buy it. You had to buy your jobs. We used to go to the City Hall and you pay the company official or you brought a Ford Product, you go and buy a Ford car and you tell them I'll buy a car if you give me a job. No problem they give you a letter and you go get the job. And then if your payments were done, and you got layed off, your car was paid off you got layed off. And the only way you could hold on to your car or job is to go back and get another car. As a matter of fact we used to have the thing so well timed that when your last payment was due the boss came up to you and say hey it's about time you get a new car. I said I got a payment yet on my car. He says that's okay they want you to go out and get another car. ] <sup>1</sup> <sup>34</sup> [ And they had an, Ford had an organization in the Ford Service Department run by <sup>arry</sup> ~~Henry~~ Bennett. He was a goon. They hired all the convicts from Jackson Prison on their Service Department.

<sup>5</sup>  
 [ They had a rough situation; there is no question about it. There is many a guy got beat up and killed and we never even found out to this day what happened to some of our organizers. ]<sup>3 4</sup> That was the way you had your jobs and so when the boss come up to you and told you to join the Ford Brotherhood and he was signing you up. You know signing you up, the union. The guy wanted his job so he signed up. But it didn't do him no good because you know on the National Labor Relations, we finally struck the plant. ]<sup>5</sup> We had to slash the Labor Relations vote.

<sup>1</sup>  
 [ The UAW-CIO well it was a fight also with the AF of L, the AF of L was more conversative than the UAW or CIO. The CIO was considered a left wing union, and the CIO won in there. We got 60,000 votes. And 20,000 were for the AF of L, ]<sup>6</sup> the Ford Brotherhood didn't even get on the ballot. ]<sup>6</sup> They didn't get enough names. The Ford Motor Company saw they couldn't make headway there and so they switched their support to the AF of L. They said if there is going to be any union let's get a union that's a little more conservative instead of this radical and then ]<sup>7</sup> the church played a roll too. I'm a Catholic, I belong for the Catholic Church and when I went to church, he used to say, they opposed, they called it CIO Red-dominated unions and they encouraged the parishoners to support and vote for the AF of L. ]<sup>1</sup> Everybody got into the, you know the battle when it started was a long battle. ]<sup>7</sup>

I: How important were the ACTU in that early organizing period?

R: The what?

I: ]<sup>3 1</sup> The ACTU people?

R: They play the role in there. I think they wanted the union and I don't challenge their, they supported the AF of L but after the AF of L got beat then they became active in the CIO. ]<sup>1</sup> But not all of them ]<sup>4</sup> I

know a number of Catholics who wouldn't listen to our, you know, church and said, well look, if you want to preach you go on and preach but you won't vote. I had a big fight with my minister. I just told him, you just go jump in the lake. I happen to know who is organizing the plants. I told him I'm an organizer. [ I said I'm working with John L. Lewis the Coal-miners and don't tell me about that, they had always labeled John L. as a radical in that period. He was very radical. ] You recall the 1937 strike in Flint and he shut the whole city of Flint down. But they played a role. They were organizing and not all of them were in the AF of L and some a number of Catholics were in the CIO organizing. [ Joe McCusker was an ACTU member and he supported the CIO, this I know because I worked with Hoe, we were organizing together. Yet he believed in the ACTU. ] I didn't I wouldn't join it. I thought that the church shouldn't put his nose into our affairs. I said look you guys didn't do anything about trying to organize until we got in and start organizing, and you guys want to get on the bandwagon. I said no dice. We are going to run this union for the good of the workers. Everybody tried to get involved in it. Everybody wanted to have their finger in it.

I: How many of the Catholics do you think went for the ACTU line? Do you think most of them went along, because it <sup>was</sup> reinforced the church and it also <sup>in</sup> the plant, or did a lot of them just refused to go along with those?

R: They were split. I don't think it was <sup>every Catholic</sup> very Catholic I know a number of <sup>Catholics</sup> Catholics that want little part of the ACTU. I believe that those that became active in ACTU, were those who were very active in the church activities you know, they were members of the ushers clubs and

things like that and they become in the, they try to do their duty I guess, to Church and God. ] ]

I: As a matter of fact I was going through the ACTU file today at the archives and I noticed some letters from the Knights of Columbus to ACTU and it seemed like the people in Knights of Columbus were very close with the ACTU line.

R: Oh yeah and let me tell you this, and [ Henry Ford the old man was a Mason and in the plant you had to be a Mason if you wanted to be a supervisor everything was Kosher. ] [ Ford was anti- very anti-Catholic and there was many a Catholic switched his religion and joined the Masonic Lodges and joined the organizations that moved them up the ladder you know. Some people will do anything, I guess, to achieve their objectives. ] It was a strong urge (?) so they called them the square clubs in the Rouge plant. ] Every building had a club. And they called it the all Masons, was they were the, back in that time we were organizing at the Ford plant it was a complete plant they could build a complete car with it. Car plant, glass plant, steel mill. And so they had buildings, they don't have it now they changed considerably their plants, but every building had its active Masonic group. Every building, there was a top Mason, generally he will be, like an our building, I was in the Tool and Die plant, I'm a tool and die maker, we have the assistant plant manager who is a top Mason and if you wanted anything you had to go through him. And they would go around and if you were a, there were two groups functioning in there. [ There was a Masonic group and they called themselves the Square club and there was the ACTU's and they both had their leaders in all the buildings, the ACTU's . . .

R: How large were these groups?

I: Oh I don't think they were large but they tried to get into the Masonic groups the motivators, the influential people the movers you know the people who were very popular on the floor. They tried to get these people in in order to win support for their point of view and societies I guess their secret societies and ACTU and the Knights of Columbus were the same way. And everybody had a Knights of Columbus leader and they function that way and they recruited in their group and being a Catholic I had many a time Catholics come to me and say look you ought to belong to the Knights of Columbus; don't want no part of it. I'm going to be a trade unionist. That's my goal, that's my objective, that's how we organize and I don't want to be part of your group and I don't want to be part of the other group and on the other hand the Masons. <sup>6</sup> I didn't belong to the Masons or to the Catholic groups and I was always selected a bargaining committee member, I held office ever since the union was established in the Local 600 and never had no difficulty getting elected. But you found these groups generally were around the older element, the younger guys were kind of indifferent. You know they just like today the youth are more energetic, the young people as a matter of fact it was all the younger guys in there that got, the older guys had a trend for the AF of L: don't shake the boat we will leave things alone, and the younger guys let's take this company out, let's shut it down. It's general, it's today too, it's the same thing. It's the young people that are the initiators of activities you know. The older guys get comfortable in their lives and they don't want anything to happen they got children and they were pretty well established in their communities. But it's

the young guys who give the big power push to the CIO and they didn't want to fool with the different groups. They were, like I say some strong, every once in a while you would find one young guy who is overly ambitious as a Mason, or one young guy overly ambitious as an ACTU member who wanted to, he wanted to climb, climbers, I guess is the way I'd tab them.<sup>6</sup> But they changed as time goes on. This guy would change, this guy would get, you know, dissatisfied with the ACTU. I have seen them change so many times. The leadership like in our plant there was John Fitzpatrick. He was Irish-Catholic. He was the old fatherly type he was kind of elderly when we brought the union in there I guess he must have been around 55 and I was only about 21 then when they brought the union in there, and he would come and talk to me--look let me give you some advice I'm an old man, I have gone through experiences, you have to follow your church teachings, you know and I would tell him, John, I don't care, I said if I want to go to pray I know where the church is. But I said we're not going to mix the church with our trade union movement because it just isn't going to work you know I said I don't want to get involved in these fights.<sup>7</sup> And they used to, when we used to have elections, they used to, if the Catholics were supporting one slate of candidates, the Masons were supporting the other. Automatically. And they did this I suppose because and I know John and every plant used to have its own set of officers president running down, and if the guy on the top wasn't a Catholic John wouldn't support him. He would put another guy in there, it would be a third slate, you know.

I: So they would never go to the left then they would just--



R: No they would never support the left wing. <sup>1 4 7 8</sup> I was always part of the left wing. Always. All the way through from the beginning to the end. I identified with, and the reason I got identified is because they were the guys that were around, organizing when I was around. I didn't see these right wingers. <sup>10 9</sup> The right wingers were in the AF of L. <sup>9</sup> And then once the union come on the scene they all wanted to become job seekers and like that. <sup>10 11</sup> I know Bill McKie back in the 30s he used to come over to see my dad. They were organizing and Bill never denied the fact that he was a <sup>Communist</sup> communit, you know, he said it openly you know. <sup>11</sup> And I knew a lot of non-communists were good organizers. They just wanted to get a union in there and they didn't care if you called them Rheumatism or communists, they didn't care as long as they had the union because they got burnt so many times and they lost their jobs and they got disgusted with it. <sup>8 5 6</sup> And there was a lot of nationality groups in there. They played a very significant role. Surprisingly the Ford Motor Company was very clever. They used to hire in the plants. Every plant was hired by nationalities. The Motor plant was hired by Italians and Pollocks. They would have Polish and Italians in that building then the next building would be Germans. <sup>6 11</sup>

I: Do you remember some of the attachments of the ethnic groups with the buildings?

R: <sup>3 5 6</sup> Well the foundry was exclusively Negro you know they hired the Negroes, Armenians, Hungarians in the buildings there. <sup>6 5 3 7</sup> In our building <sup>4 8</sup> Tool and Die maker was exclusively German and English. There was no Pollocks. I remember when I'd come in on my apprenticeship in the plant there in 1938 I got to work with a German

diemaker leader and he just resented the fact that a slovic kid comes in here and go about a trade that is predominantly within the German and the English trade. The English and the Germans predominated in skill trades mostly all over in the city of Detroit and all over because in Germany you had the great industries, you know and the other places didn't have the industries. And England had a lot of industries too. They used to come from the shipyards the steel mills and when Ford hired he used to hire right from these plants, and he would go to these plants and recruit them. And the compositions were different, but they were clever. They used to hire them in this building and this building and in the Motor plant they used to always have one slate that would run all Italians and another slate ran all Pollocks.

I: Oh yeah. Which was right and which was left.

R: The Italians in the Motor building were the left and the Pollocks were the right.

I: That was the Boatin slate hun?

R: There was Boatin, and Johnny Gallo, Carl Stellato, Carl Stellato was at that time in the building. He was on a bargaining committee there in them organizing days and in another building it would be different, you know. It would be the Armenians would be the left wing and the Blacks would be right wings. It's usurping but, you see the Blacks when Ford motor company, when we struck the plant, the Blacks, we had a hard time convincing them to join the union because Ford had gone down South and brought them up and they were loyal to Ford during that period.

I: Oh you think that's more important than the Inkster community involvement?

R: Well, you see one of the things you have to remember, they didn't trust many of the Whites. [And Ford provided Blacks with jobs and to them they came from the deep South and when they came up and got a job and they were loyal to the company.] They figured look, this guy did something for us.

I: Ford went down and recruited workers himself?

R: Yes they recruited Blacks, particularly Blacks and they brought them up, put them to work in their foundries along with Armenians, a lot of Armenians worked in the foundry. [But well you take Buddy Battles who was Regional Director. I don't know if you read about it, he got caught for not turning over the money. Buddy Battles was on the other side of the fence. He was throwing bricks at the strikers during the strike in 1941 because he was one of those guys that believed in Ford. You know they gave him a job and then they used every technique] the Ford Motor Company used to hire a lot of sports people, you take all these, before they had professional football at the University of Michigan the all-Americans used to come, they used to become big plant managers in the Rouge plant, you know. Jack Block was there when they got done playing with the Detroit Lions, they made him plant manager and so they had an organized plan of bringing in sports individuals, you know they had no plant experience but they made them plant managers, labor relations directors and different signs of that nature, even after we organized, they kept bringing them in.] ]

I: [With all this influence with this ethnicity and the different plants did they have language clubs organized around the different units?

R: Oh sure, oh absolutely. They used to have Hungarians,<sup>3</sup> [the Hungarians used to have what they used to call the pedife club, the Hungarian where the organizers used to meet,<sup>4 5</sup> ] [the Polish people, Stanley Nowak was one of the top, Leo Kraschiski from the Amalgamated clothing workers when he used to be Polish (?) because I used to meet with them because their being of Polish descent.]<sup>1</sup> [I used to go and meet with Stanley Nowak and Stanley ran for senator in the 32nd senatorial district which encompassed the Ford Motor Company and he ran on a campaign "organized Ford" ~~it~~ he got elected senator<sup>6</sup> ] and when he became a senator you know we went to see him in Lansing and you know Stanley at that time on Daniels Street in Detroit and we used to meet with him and the Polish organizers and Stanely was an organizer and he was on the international staff also.]<sup>4</sup> The UAW staff. The international staff at one time consisted of people who just volunteered to do work, who only got their expenses, \$5 a week expenses. You know there was not staff job like they have today, you know there is a considerable difference.<sup>7</sup> [Well Stanley was an organizer and he introduced a bill in Lansing right after he got elected on the jobs that they were selling out. So he introduced a bill in Lansing that made it a crime for anybody to sell a job. You know that's a fact.]<sup>3</sup> I don't know if you ever talked with Nowak. He is 78 years old today I think.

I: No I haven't. Where does he live now?

R: He lives in Detorit in a government building, what do you call it government retirement-- ]

End Tape 1, Side A

Tape 1, Side B  
 Walter Dorosh  
 January, 1984

R: <sup>11</sup> <sup>1</sup> <sup>3</sup> [They had their own Armenian organizing committee and among those were Bagrad Vartanian, who is deceased now,] Loshagian(?) and I think he's still, he was around 80-85 years old now. There is a whole mess of Armenians but these were prominent ones. They worked and they are Armenians. And they had a big Armenian plant employment <sup>3</sup> and <sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup> [they had Negroes of course Reverend Charles Hill, I don't know if you ever heard of Charles Hill, <sup>6</sup> [Charlie Hill was one of the principal motivators in encouraging amongst the Blacks to join the union] <sup>4</sup> and there was Chris Alston <sup>6</sup> and <sup>7</sup> [our Mayor of Detroit, Coleman Young, I have known Coleman for umteen years. We organized together. Coleman was one of the prime organizers --] <sup>5</sup>

I: Was that of Local 600?

R: Yes. He worked in the plant. Yeah I think he worked in the Stamping plant there. I knew Coleman very well. We spent many a night together running away from the goons. <sup>2</sup>

I: Well we used to, after the city of Dearborn and Detroit they had a mayor Reading at that time he went to jail later on for being part of the rackets, prostitution, they hadn't passed the ordinance such as they had in Dearborn but Detroit was a funny thing about that again <sup>9</sup> [Detroit was set up where in <sup>7</sup> [Del Rey was where the Hungarians lived.] <sup>8</sup>

I: What did they call it?

R: Del Rey.

I: Del Rey.

R: Yeah it was where most of the Hungarians lived and [the Polish people lived in Hamtramack] and then [the Slavic people and the Russians, the Ukranians used to live up on Michigan West of Central] and [the Blacks used to live in what we called the Black Bottom] and the cities were mostly developed on that basis [and we use to meet in Dave Moore's home. [Dave Moore was one of the Black leaders. He is now assistant he is Adminisrative Assistant to George Crockett. [Dave Moore, we used to meet at Dave Moore's house along with Coleman Young and Christ Alston and, I forget some of the names. [We used to get what they called the Ford Organizer Tabloid and we used to pass them out to neighborhoods.

I: What was that one called?

R: Ford Organizer.

I: That's what it was called?

R: [It was the Ford Organizer that's what it was. It was a small tabloid. And the only way we could pass it out was at night time. And if you pass it out in the daytime you never knew if some agent wouldn't report to the company. [And Mike Witman told us once you start getting organized, I don't want you to be coming a hero, we need you in the plant organizing, yhou know. Once you get fired you are gone and even though file an NLRB case you are still not in on the plant organizing. And he said let's stop there, before we were all bold and walking around and they kept firing them. They fired 4,000 people you know and he said that's nonsense. He says you don't go hunting in the woods with a brass band. He says go on in there very quietly. So our whole technique changed. Ford Motor had a secret organization so we'll have one till the right time. And so we used to do this you know.]

<sup>1</sup> [ And ever so often we'd get stopped by, the Ford Service department used to drive all around these streets with their cars and they'd park, and every once in awhile they'd catch one of our guys and they'd take their papers away from them. ] So we went back underground and then that period there to try to get the message and get the story into the people's homes. Coleman did this, Dave Moore did this. ]<sup>10</sup> ]<sup>11</sup>

I: <sup>3</sup> [ So most of the language or ethnic clubs were progressive in that early period?

R: Yes, they were all left-wing organizations. They were the they, were the motivators. They moved. And they used to call their own, well that was another difficulty, <sup>4</sup> [ the Hungarians couldn't understand English, so they had to speak Hungarian to them. ] <sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup> [ The Polish had, Stanley used to be on the radio program and talk on the radio, you know. ]<sup>3</sup> Ford workers please join the union if you want this, and then there was a struggle between the church, <sup>7</sup> [ at that time we had a congressman John Lazinski who was the Catholic church's candidate for Congress in our 16th congressional district. Well he was on the opposite side. And the Congressional district and Senatorial district, Nowak's were identical, you know they were identical makeup and one got elected congressman as a democrat and one got elected senator and both had opposite views. But the Polish people predominantly were in this area and they supported them. Both Poles for office and they were there they had two opposite positions Congressman Lazinski who was a rat, though he was a democrat. He ran on Roosevelt's program but he was anti-union every Catholic church in this area supported him you know and I used to get so upset about that. ]<sup>5</sup> ]<sup>6</sup> ]<sup>7</sup> ]<sup>8</sup>

I: The Ford Motor company is unique in that it had at that time all those buildings together. How much of an effect did that have on interaction between workers in the plant, was there a lot or did the workers pretty much stay within their own buildings?

R: [ They stayed within their own buildings. They were afraid you know. I had, hell you worked with a guy for years, you never knew his name. You are afraid to talk with them.

I: What about after it was organized?

R: Even after it was organized. [ After we were organized the Ford Motor Company still had its agents around. ] I'll give you one illustration. I was on a bargaining committee in the Tool and Die plant, this would be around 1955-56 and we had a fellow who was a crane operator, he was a rigger, he used to hook up steel, he used to have the walk of the whole building, a very nice guy, a popular individual, he had tickets for football games, for baseball games, he was well liked by everybody. Everybody liked the guy and so anyway one day in the committee rooms sitting in the committee room along with the other committeemen and we were talking about, some guy came in and I forgot to get his name, and he said so and so just had a heart attack and the ambulance just took him away to the infirmary down there so we went down there the committee and all and by the time we got down there they had just put him in the ambulance and he was just carried out and he had a jacket and everything, and they said well this is his jacket, and he gave it to me and he said you might as well take it and find out where his locker is and put it in his locker and close it up. He said by the way here are some papers that fell out of his pocket and I said okay so I took the papers, while I'm talking to people I got them



in my hand, and I go back to the committee room because I had to go, the committee room preceded going to his locker, I didn't know where his locker was. I still had to find out where his locker was, to put in there. I layed it on my desk and I was working on something and some guy comes along and starts reading it, you know reading the stuff there and said what the hell is this, he said. I said what have you got. He said I saw it on your desk here you know I picked it up and I said what is this, I'm reading it and here is a guy that was making reports on what different people were saying and what different people were doing and anything that looked suspicious you know you know I looked through the thing and I talked to our president of the building who's name was Lacey, I said Lacey, what's this all about, I said you have any idea what this is all about and he said there's a stool pigeon. <sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> [Stool pigeon for the Ford Motor Company and I said well let's find out. We kept this and we put the stuff in this locker and we opened up this locker and he had all kind of materials wehre he said he talked to so and so and so said this. He used to attend the membership meetings, he used to report everything in the membership meetings. Well anyway he was off for about for months and finally he comes back to work and we got the word out if anybody sees him to let us know and somebody comes in the committee room and says Tom's back. He is? So I went down there and I said hey, come in the committee room. I closed the committee room door and put this on the table and I said: "What is this?" He turned red, he didn't know what to say. And he just come back from a heart attack, I didn't want to press him. I said what is this? I said to him, you just come through a serious illness, we don't want to disturb you, but we're not going to allow

you get away with this. I just want to know what this is all about. I said you can either tell us or the thing is going to grow. I'll let it out on the floor and it will grow. And you are not going to be around here long. ] He said well he was recruited by his church and they told him, and they give him a box number. And he used to get \$50 a month sent to his box number.

I: What church was this?

R: Well, he wouldn't tell us. I don't know if that was the truth or not.

I: Was it information on who was supposed to be members of the CP or something like that?

R: No it was just so and so's talking about shutting the place down this guy called his boss a filthy name. He said they told him to, for anything he thought was important.

I: Was he a Catholic or--

R: I don't know, we never knew. See he came in and we thanked him. The Ford Motor Company supplied him with these baseball tickets and he always had tickets he always said I can't make it. He'd come in the committee room couple of times all the good guys hey I got two tickets to the Michigan game I can't make it. He says do you want them. I said no, I don't have time to go. But he was always giving tickets away, everybody liked him. Always had lot of tickets and that was an in. The company knew how. The short of it was, we excused him, told him to go on (?). Our board got together and we discussed this and we said look we can't avoid this anymore, we got to protect our workers. We got to press charges against this guy or ask the company to terminate his employment. We are not going to have a guy like that around us. The guy quits. But I think the company transferred him up

to another plant, you know they got plants all over the country. They probably paid his way. So we had a national Ford conference and I brought it up there and I told them to keep an eye on the guy. I don't know we never did hear anymore about the guy. But I guess that he came in but you see we have a unique situation. We have interplant seniority at our Rouge plant and then we got areawide seniority too, that's if an individual, he's got like 1940 seniority in his plant, he has to have 45 to get back to work and then 39 in the Rouge. He can hire him and he can come back in there if there, if his seniority permits him you know. And at the time of recall he's got to make up his mind whether he wants to go back to his original basic seniority plan as we call it, or, because he gets what they call date of entry there and he gets his total seniority in his plant so he makes up his mind if he wants to go back and so, periods of time people <sup>d</sup> drift all over and so we didn't pay too much particular attention to it and we lost track of the guy anyway you know but we have had two or three others like this too so we know that the Ford Motor Company does. They have it to this day.

I: So that keeps workers from communicating too much?

R: No I don't think they do but there is a number of incidents that occurred when I was a plant committee member and things occurred, we are suspicious of individuals, we were, I don't know how they are today. I retired two years ago. Of individuals who participated in all activities but never say nothing. He was the kind he would go to the meetings he would go here, to the strike meeting, the meeting of some groups he's there. He wants to know what's going on. And we used to have another guy in the plant who was an electrician and he

used to go all over. He used to attend meetings. We had 18 plants at that time, we had 18 units and he used to be at all the 18 unit meetings. They would say what the hell are you doing there. You don't have a right to go in that meeting. You could just sit there, nobody would stop you. And we found he was a company paid agent. But we are foolish if we don't think in the union, that a corporation, a billion dollar corporation like Ford doesn't have any agents around. They may have them right in the board you don't know, but they are pretty smooth. ] You know even their labor relations people changed their tactics. When we struck the plant at first, our first meeting with management, man, we used to almost have fist fights.

I: This is in '41?

R: Yeah we used to almost have fist fights in our meetings with the company. They used to come in and say: No absolutely no, don't give me that you know.

I: Like the Boulware tactic?

R: Yeah. Just strong-arm, you know, we'd have to <sup>go</sup> on the floor and shut it down. The company don't know what's happening, but that was anarchy, real anarchy. Every guy was doing something different, we said gee this has got to stop. ]

I: Yes that's interesting. I was reading <sup>at</sup> ~~that~~ the Ford Motor Company Archives, a manuscript by Harry Barnes which never got published. It was supposed to be the sympathetic report of unionization at Local 600 but it never got published for some unknown reason. But anyways he had a chapter on what happened to labor relations after the UAW was organized at Ford and he claims that before it was organized there was hardly any strikes. There was hardly any wildcats or short stoppages

or slowdowns and afterwards it just really exploded with slowdowns  
and--

R: [ Sure, because the workers felt they had power. Before that they  
didn't have any power. They were divided with all kind of agents  
around and they were fearful and then there was only the young guys  
that, well we had, <sup>3</sup> like in the skilled trades, we had a 1936 and 37 we  
had a shutdown and we tried to bring the ADSA in there and they closed  
that whole plant down, shut the plant down and they hired all new  
people. I wasn't there at that time, I'm talking about the skilled  
guys that were there. <sup>3</sup> Well they showed, what happened they really  
began to realize they had power, man they, we had to turn around and  
the committee had to act as breaker(?) on some of these things.  
Because everyday he you'd go to work and they'll strike everyday, they  
were going home, going home and finally the guys started getting mad.  
<sup>4</sup> Well some of the older guys, older people became acclimated to the  
Ford conditions you know, you know what I'm talking about. They have  
already learned and they have become kind of susceptible, they become  
very milktoast. The younger guys that come in there yeah what the  
hell, you know they were raising hell but what they were doing is  
getting rid of these guys. One time they had a trouble maker they  
hired in. They'd get rid of him, you know they took him up, he was  
fired that's all with no questions asked. And some of these young  
guys when the union came in there, Lord, you know we were just pleased  
<sup>0</sup> about their militancy but everyday they had a shutdown, everyday, you  
know. And we would go down on the floor and say "what the hell is the  
problem?" you know. They says wait a minute we are not going to go  
for that, you know. <sup>4</sup> What was happening, it was competition we didn't

have any universal rates of pay and we got what you can talk your boss  
 out of. <sup>4</sup> [ We've had some die makers, when a strike occurred,  
 apprentices hired in at 70 cents an hour and when you hit a dollar an  
 hour you was a journeyman. He could graduate into that 75 cent an  
 hour but it doesn't mean you get the money automatically. <sup>3</sup> [ They used  
 to give wage increases in 5¢ increments. And if you wanted to become  
 a boss as a Mason, he'd say if you want to join the Masonic Lodge,  
 I'll give you a nickle, you know. That's the way it operated. <sup>3</sup> ] Well  
 anyway when we moved to a dollar an hour you was considered a top  
 diemaker and supervisors as a rule start at 20 cents above the  
 diemakers who were \$1.20 an hour. But they used to ring cards and  
 they had badges like we had you know they were all the same. <sup>6</sup> <sup>5</sup> [ ] So when  
 we took, Jesus, about a year until we were able to get what they call  
 the personnel payroll records of all the personnel and the reason we  
 wanted this we were threatening to strike them again unless they  
 turned them over to us because we want to know just what the hell kind  
 of wage rates we would be asking for on our contract negotiation. <sup>1</sup> <sup>6</sup> [ ] War  
 came on the scene of course and that screwed us out a lot but we  
 established, we maintained that throughout the war. <sup>5</sup> [ A dollar and  
 \$1.20 for tool and die makers and production I think they stopped at  
 75 or 80 cents an hour. And when we got this payroll records and we  
 pulled them out, we had some guys who, well it showed you the  
 company's operations, there were some guys who did nothing they were  
 just clerks in the department. They are making \$1.50 an hour. The  
 foreman were making 90 cents an hour. Oh were they hot, when they saw  
 these, you know. I delivered, I showed them to the supervisor because  
 every, I had what they call the body die division. Fender and body

division die room came under me. They gave the whole thing to the president of the unit. And he broke it up because I was the committeeman, what they call the district committee man. And so he turned those records over to me and I was supposed to go by and check each guy off and find out if that's his rate of pay and I told him this is what the records show. [ Well, they started all looking at them and then we found out that these guys were getting \$1.50, \$1.60 were ~~the stooges~~ tells tooges for the company because the minute we got the payroll record they disappeared. They, all the supervisors were furious. ] Here is a guy who was a clerk and they hire him as a clerk like today under our clerks in the plant are right on the bottom. Sweepers make more than the clerks. All they do is like check in the payroll and menial jobs for a foreman. They were hot and by looking at these payroll records you were able to tell who the stooges were, who the agents were and when we began to put two and two together you know. [ Well the company wanted these records back later on and they said that they would give us something I forgot what else we asked for. ] We wanted something bad and when we struck the plant, we also got what we call the payroll division. The company wanted that back too and in return they would give us something that we wanted bad. I think it was a check off, I think they gave us a check off in return.

I: Why would you want that?

R: Well, the check off is if you, we used to spend all day trying to pick up the dues dollars day in and day out and I couldn't take care of the other business.

I: Oh they gave you check <sup>off</sup> up, okay.

R: Yeah we asked for it. ]

I: I thought you meant they gave you check off records.

R: No the union check off and so then we got that I think in return. We returned the records and that was very damaging. They didn't realize it. They didn't understand it. Payroll, what do they know, they just run it off and give it to us. They come up on cards at that time. We don't have the data processing like they have today. Each individual card we had to look at them I made a record of them filed them, put the figures on it and when they looked at it, I think I kept my copy I made for years but then we finally, it became useless. [ It was always "okay let's forget what happened." "Let's bring them all into the union." There are a lot of reasons why these people did this you know. Nobody knows the reason for it, you know. They might have said to this clerk, well, look we will hire you in. We will give you a job if you will do this. And they said okay I'll do it. Jobs were scarce and some guys figure what the hell what do I have to lose. I think I got a good job out of it. ] [ What we try to do is, same thing between the AF of L and all the divisions of the AF of L and CIO they say look let's forget it. We are all one union now. You know. The first five or six elections it was AF of L vs. the CIO you know they involved the CIO and I know one guy he talked to me and said look, he says "I just thought the AF of L was better, why do you, why are you picking on me" you know. "You are dominate now but if the AF of L turned around" he says "would you want me to pick on you because you was supporting the CIO.? I said okay let's forget about it. It was a long fight there. But it still was imbedded there for awhile but it's gone today of course. ] ]



I: Was the foreman's union that was organized during World War II a big deal?

R: [ Well, they had a foreman's union. They went on strike and I don't know well they were on strike for about three weeks there was no supervisors in the plant and then they finally settled and they just got rid of the, they moved all the militant organizers of the Foreman's union (?) and they got rid of them. Under the collective bargaining agreements, their supervisor or an employee would leave what they call included work or excluded work, he does not have a guarantee to go back to included work as an automatic thing. <sup>you</sup> You are at the mercy of the company. And if you become a supervisor, an engineer which is excluded work any salaried position then you're <sup>at</sup> ~~are~~ the mercy of the company and if the company wants to bring you back, they bring you back. If they don't you are gone. That's all.

I: So they were organized and there was some kind of discussion about whether they would be affiliated with the UAW?

R: <sup>3</sup> [ No they were organized under the Foremen's union of America. They wanted to be part of the UAW and we said no. That was not hard to see it was a decision of the International Union made.

I: Do you think that there was a change in the nature of the supervisors themselves after the union was organized?

R: <sup>4</sup> [ Well, they were afraid right after they were organized they were afraid. ] They were hiding and we had real power and of course a lot of, they would come to the committees and say look "get this guy off my back" the guys were just you know they felt free. Boy what a wonderful (?) you know. "Get this guy off my back you know. He's eating me up alive." They were afraid there for a long time. Even

the superintendents we used to whenever we had any problems we couldn't solve on the floor we would come down, okay, let's go to the superintendent's office. At that time we had about 4,000 people in our building, we had about 2,000 people around the office and the supervisor would be shaking his hands like that, you know and they would say what's going on, what's going on. You got some supervisors out there . . . call them in, call them in," you know and he would get his secretary and call them and say what's this all about you know and he would be actually shaking like this, you know. Our superintendent at that time was Joe Derby and he was just bouncing off the pavement and he said okay we will take care of it we make a decision and it could have been the wrong decision but he says okay we got it everybody go back to work. Okay then everybody go back down the aisle. And another thing we demanded a coffee machine in the place and got everybody standing about the coffee machines you know. They just in a hell of a position. They couldn't get no production going for life or death you know. Everbody was thinking oh, what power you know.

I: Yeah. <sup>4</sup> } So later on after the war, that supervisor's union  
<sup>3</sup> } disintegrated right?

R: Yeah, by 1948, about '48 or '49 when they fell apart. They went on a strike for about three weeks and nobody did anything in the plant. <sup>Ford</sup> For was losing his shirt and this was under Harry Bennett. They was doing a lot of stupid things. <sup>3</sup> } They operated with the (?) you know I remember we had the negotiatons <sup>4</sup> } we had a general council meeting, general council of local 600, our delegates from each building that are elected and they meet once a month and they take care of their

business in the local union. [ And we used to have at that time one  
committeeman for every foreman. ]

End Tape 1, Side B

W. Dorosh  
Tape 2, Side A

inaudible.

..<sup>1</sup> [<sup>2</sup> General Council, they said that 150,000 grievances, none of them are being settled. We're going to have to notify the company, this is about 1947, 48. We said we are going to have to notify the company, or we're going to shut this place down. ] ]

I: What stage were they stalling at?

R: Every stage. We would argue about, [<sup>3</sup> they didn't have labor relations like they have today, they used to hire ex-football players. They put them in every building. I'll give you a couple of tickets for the football game you know just arrogant and they didn't understand the relationship of forces in there. Well, anyway on this one case Jack Blant who was the all-American center for the University of Michigan was considered one of the company's top labor relations guy and so the local unions went to the company and said look you either start settling these grievances or we are going to have <sup>to</sup> a strike this plant. The company <sup>4</sup> was then converting to its new '49 model and they were just gun-ho on getting that car out. It was an opportune time. And so the company said ok, we will instruct Jack Blant who will sit with all plants, all 17 plants and settle these grievances.

I: And that was the plant review board stage?

R: Na, they had no procedures, that was the top stage yes and he was our top level. We had all these grievances, . So anyway we walked in with ours, tool and die had two or three days set aside and we come in there with out<sup>5</sup> grievances and then we had a pile

like this you know and so we took the first grievance out and naturally cordial, cordialities were out of the way, we took first grievance in, we read the grievance off, and he said "denied." I said wait a minute what are you denying for. "Denied no, unmeritorious." Okay next one. I said wait a minute we are not ready to go to the next one. Let's discuss this grievance sheet, you know. So and so we go through it and all that. "Unmeritorious denied." We would argue that thing for an hour. We would get exhausted and said okay let's get the next one, maybe we'll get the next one. "Denied, unmeritorious." And we went through about 15 like that so we had a caucus. Okay let's go through them, let's see if they are going to grant any. So we go through it you know. Aren't you, and many of those grievances at that time dealt with seniority.<sup>3</sup> [Seniority was, because what [was happening before the union came in, if the foreman didn't like you, you just boom you went into another building you know and you could be a tool and die maker and you could end up in the production plant, and the guy would figure, it's a job you know and so they'd constantly move people around.] If there were troublemakers and all and so they had at that time established building seniority and building seniority meant that you had preference of shifts and preference of jobs. There was afternoons, days and midnights and the preference shift was days and some preferred midnight before afternoons and so by seniority you picked your job. And so each building had date of entry. In other words if I worked 20 years in the plant and in a building like the tire plant and say the company bumped me off and said go to the spring and upset building. So you go to spring and upset so you got date of entry there. You got date of

entry, and then you go right to the afternoon shift. You say wait a minute "I got 20 years seniority." So he wrote a grievance why he got bumped out of his building and he wanted to go back to his building you know all that, <sup>or</sup> ~~of~~ just a mess. [ Oh the company tried everyway to see if they could disrupt and we hadn't nailed any principles down in these areas yet because we were dealing with wages and classifications because when we come into the tool and die unit we had 2000 classifications and the classification is important because if you are working on the mill and I'm working on a mill and the company had the classification set up at a Cincinnati and a Milwaukee mill and two different classifications and I could be, they established it that way you know, and then not only that they had him classified as diemaker A, diemaker 1, diemaker 2, diemaker 3, diemaker B, diemaker--all kinds of--and die repair and each one had a separate classification and so we are trying to put a seniority list together. So we said wait a minute. This is nonsense. We were wrestling with the big things trying to group all the similar classifications and we had a hell of a time trying to convince a company because they had their friends that they could protect. You know if they could have a friend working on this mill here and this, the both identical machines but they got two company, just like a Ford and a Chrysler you know and they say now we have to lay off the Milwaukee mill. This guy could be with one month seniority and this guy had 10 years and he is out in the street you know. We said wait a minute, no way we aren't going to buy that, and some were getting all furious, and you couldn't get promoted and they said well we promoted people from the Milwaukee mill. What do you mean, they are all mills. They rated machine repair. They said

machine repair one, two, three and machine repair A, B, C and we said what's all these classifications, you know. Well this guy A machine repair A in order to repair these machines . . "oh wait a minute we want them to repair all the machines," "no we want them especially" and they did that for a reason. Because as a rule they used to have supervisors in these operations that didn't know anything about the jobs, they were appointees, you know. Stooges, appointees. And so they knew this machine and they want him on this machine only. They knew that machine would run. That production has got to go and skill maintained with production operations. And so he know that Tom Brown he

okay that's the guy I want. Because he couldn't he couldn't repair a machine if his life depended on it, because the supervisors were political appointees, goons, ex-football players, boxers, but they had the big jobs, you know walked around with blue suits, white ties with the guys and kept the jobs going. And they got the big job.

As a matter of fact one of the things that not known too far and wide is that when we struck the plant, there was at least 1,500 people never saw the inside of the Rouge plant were on the payroll getting paid. They were in Florida, they were down here because we had sent guys out to locate these guys when we sent these guys out to locate them the guys said what do you want with me. He says oh we have a word from the union, we have a payroll, Ford says that you are on the payroll. And this guy's going to college, University of Detroit, University of Michigan and they were getting paid it was a loose organization. They would just put them on my payroll and I would check them in and check out, no the guys going all over the, they had no procedures, no system, in fact the Ford workers

admitted that the union came in and helped save the company. They were going to go broke. They had no system. There were goons running it, the service department running it and nonmanagement and nobody knew what they were doing. It's amazing how they even did some of the things that they did. ]

I: At this time didn't you have public accountants coming in auditing this sort of thing as the payroll was being passed out or did that come later?

R: That came later. [ You see we used to get paid in cash. No pay stubs, nothing.

I: Yeah, that's how it enabled you to use aliases, right?

R: That's right. They used to get paid in cash. You had a badge and they'd give you a pay envelope, and your badge number would be on the envelope. No name, no nothing. They would never let you know who you were, just a badge number. My badge number would be W1860 and that's yours. You don't know if it belongs to you or not. You go to the bay window and you show him a badge and he looks in there, here is 1860 and away you went. No name on them, no social security, no nothing. ]  
So they can pad it, in some departments they had hundres on the pay, and fobody ever knew who they there. If I was the superintendent in that building I could put anybody I wanted to on the payroll. Who would challenge it. Who would challenge those guys. There was hundreds of them. We had to locate these guys and they finally admitted well why the hell I'm not going to work in the plant. We told them we want to know your classification, what shift you work on, what building you work on. A lot of them got smart and they didn't want to answer the questions so we knew right away that there were



some 1,500 who never saw the inside of Rouge plant on the payroll at Univ. of Mich., Univ. of Detroit, Wayne University, their fathers were some wheels in the company and put them on a payroll and give them a regular weekly wage you know.

I: That's amazing.

R: Oh yeah they did a lot of, <sup>1 2</sup> [we had pictures we had taken during the organizing, what Mike Witman told us to do, is to get cameras and make sure you don't get caught. Take pictures of things that you see is wrong. We had accumulated a lot of pictures and the company knew we had these pictures because we showed these pictures in the NLRB hearings.

I: You mean like working conditions, things like that?

R: Yeah a lot of things you know. We saw a lot of things going on. Well the company wanted <sup>the</sup> pictures real bad and we finally agreed they had to give us some, sort of pictures though. That company, I'll tell you to work in the Ford Motor Company during that period was terror, real terror. ] ]

I: <sup>3</sup> [ So you were mentioning earlier about the seniority problem in tool and die. Did you ever get that settled?

R: Oh yeah we got it down to three classifications from the 2000.

I: Wow.

R: Yeah. You have your, we have grouped your tool and die maker, the machine operator or your small machine operator. That's all you are now. We have grouped them altogether. All these thousands of classifications. We did that also in the plant too. do you know we had all kinds of them, so they established three, the designated, undesignated, and, they called it the classification of cleanup and

everything. There is only 3 basic classifications you know. And every plant had thousands but now you know where you are. And now we have, we eliminated date of entry and if you get transferred moved up. All your total seniority goes with you. In other words the company couldn't play this game no more you know.]

I: [What happened when this football player that was heading the negotiating committee?

R: [Oh well anyway after one day in negotiations we spent 8 hours there and we would argue back and forth and never settle a grievance second day nothing, finally we went to see Tommy Thompson who was then President of Local 600 and we said, "Look, we had been there for 16 hours already and we haven't got one grievance settled. We told him, ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> attitude, you know. So he called the company and they told them, I don't know what they said, and next day we come into the negotiations and he said brother you really put me on the spot. And I said what do you mean we put you on the spot. He said you guys went and seen Tommy <sup>h</sup>Thompson after we completed the negotiations. We sure did.] And he said we haven't settled a grievance so I said today is our last day and there will be other groups coming in and we can't operate. He said look let me tell you 50 percent of these cases. He says he took that pile and broke it down he says here is 50 case--grantees and rejectees. <sup>we</sup> He said hold on we can't operate that way because once you get a rejection you establish a precedent, or if you grant something you also establish a precedence you know. He says I got to grant you 50 percent. He said well let's start going to work now. Well they knew we were serious you know because <sup>4 3</sup> [tool and die was always a unit that was militant, very militant. We led all the

strikes and we moved all the forces even, we broke the no seal formula they were the one that were initiated it here at the Rouge, we forced Walter Reuther to move on it. But we had a good militant group of leaders they were dedicated good leadership. They were all conscientious people. And there were so many inequities and we figures<sup>d</sup> we had to get these inequities corrected.]<sup>1,3</sup> And --

I: Do you think that the fact that the workers were skilled made a difference?

R: Oh sure because there was a shortage and the company was worried<sup>4</sup> they had a layoff in 1948 we used to have, when a strike broke we had 14,000 tool and die makers in the Rouge plant. You know tool and die, machinery repair was part of the tool and die unit. And we had 80,000 well during the war we had 120,000 people working at the Rouge.

I: And that included people in the service.

R: <sup>6,5</sup> [Those on the job. 120,000 are the Rouge plant and after the war when we struck the plant Ford was furious. He was going to sell the plant, he was going to get out. Edsel Ford and his wife finally brought Henry Ford to his senses and he finally settled after a 10 day the strike<sup>5</sup>] and then we struck the plant in 1948 I don't know if you remember this.

I: Speed up issue.

R: Speed up issue yeah. <sup>7</sup> [In '48 we struck the plant and we kept the plant down for I think about two or three weeks. I can't remember exactly how long it was now but again we close out the whole Ford industry because that was the Ford industry. They didn't have nothing beyond that. They had a couple of paddle(?) plants around but that was it. Ford made a decision then to decentralize the Rouge Plant.]<sup>6</sup>

I: As a result of this strike?

R: Well sure because we shut down and everybody said we had them by the throat because he had the Lincoln plant and that's all he had besides that you know and he had a few paddle plants around the country and <sup>2</sup>so they made a decision that they were going to decentralize that plant. They were going to build plants all around the country and we went to court on that in 1952, and we went before Judge Freeman in the city of Detroit federal judge <sup>1</sup>and we had <sup>3</sup>Ernie Goodman the attorney who used to be the attorney, UAW attorney before Reuther, when Reuther took over he threw him out, he was part of R.J. Thomas administration <sup>3</sup>and we worked about three or four days and we presented the case. <sup>2</sup>Our argument was that by the company decentralizing makes insecure our jobs, of 80,000 workers. <sup>1</sup>And the cited a number of other cases, court cases and the judge after the case was completed the Ford Motor Company, Local 600 vs. the Ford Motor Company the judge in handing down his decision said that the case is a good case that it was meritorious and then he said that if he was to make a ruling, he didn't say so much that he would rule in favor, but the Ford Motor Company couldn't decentralize unless he talks to the union. But he said I cannot handle this case, I cannot make a decision because the union, the contract is not with Local 600 but with the International Union. <sup>4</sup><sup>5</sup><sup>8</sup>He said I will give you so many days and to bring the International Union in to join the local on this case and then he will render his decision. I was on the staff then at the Local 600 with Stellato, Stellato was president then and he went down to see Walter Reuther and he wouldn't see us. So we told his secretary what we wanted and we said we would like, we had big (?) going on with the

International Union because Walter signed the five-year contract and we were furious about that. We disrupted at the conventions and all over and we raised hell with him and we said he had no right to, without convention decision, to sign a five-year contract just walk in and say who the hell made you God. He ~~and~~ carried on a campaign in Ford facts which was our official publication. I was the head of the paper then and I really blasted him. <sup>+</sup> And he wouldn't join us in that case and Judge <sup>e</sup>Freman then dismissed it. <sup>1-5-8</sup> That case had serious ramifications where industry could not, if you had made that decision industry would not just be able to close up a plant from down South run away or you know because they want to make big profits in other locations all because of unionization or a number of things you know. Because if you recall in that period it was a drive maybe cities to lure business. It caused grave consequences for the community, for the city and everybody.

I: And no other unions picked up on that afterwards, because that's an important issue today.

R: Well let me just say this, that those who picked it, up the events have changed dramatically, but at that time it was a new thing and you see it depends when you do things too you know events sometimes, the picture becomes more clear because at that time the government and everybody was favoring the South you know after that, I mean. The drive was to ~~move~~ <sup>6</sup> everything down South away from the unionized centers. But we, <sup>6</sup> Judge Freeman dismissed the case without prejudice. He couldn't get Walter Reuther and Ken Bannon who was the Ford Director to join us in the suit against the Ford Motor Company. <sup>7</sup>

I: Do you think that Reuther's motives were just because he was upset with Stellato at the time or do you think that --

R: <sup>2</sup> [ I think Reuther at that time, my honest opinion, <sup>1</sup> we were too big for Walter Reuther, Local 600 we used to go to a convention, we used to have 300 delegates and the convention at that time we used to have 1500 delegates. We had quite a sizeable crowd. And at the 1955 convention or was it '53 or '55 I forgot which one now, Stellato ran for Vice-President, we just nominated and ran without any campaigning and he finished in the runoff. No candidate had sufficient votes, there was three that ran for Vice-President. <sup>f</sup> After that election Walter Reuther also changes <sup>d</sup> the constitution. At that time if you remember when Walter Reuther got elected in 1947, you could run for the presidency <sup>of</sup> one office at a time, if you lost then you could also run for your own job again, Vice-President. And if you lost that, you could run for Secretary-treasurer. You could run for some job, you know. <sup>3</sup> [ Well if you remember Walter Reuther got elected President and R.J. Thomas ran for Vice President and got elected. After the convention, after the Stallato convention where we almost upset Reuther, he said oh no from now on you are going to have to elect everybody at one time, one vote. It changed the whole concept of the convention. ] <sup>3</sup>

I: So you think that his refusal to help you with this court case was just a political movement --

R: Well, yeah we had a big fight with him. Look we were out to get him. We were thinking about running Stellato for president against and we had introduced a number of programs, we put out all kinds of literature, <sup>4</sup> [ we backed Reuther off on the five-year contract, we

introduced,<sup>4</sup> I don't know if you recall this period,<sup>5</sup> we introduced a strike fund, Carl Stellato, and we introduced a resolution at the convention. Local 600 for a \$100,000 strike fund, and Walter Reuther called it the push button strike said we wanted to push button, if you read the convention proceedings, it's all in there. Let's see that would be what '50, '52, one of those conventions, I can't recall now. And they lasted off we had a big fight on it on the convention and it just got beat by a few votes. Today the strike fund was about half a billion dollars and it's \$500,000,000 and I don't see them giving the money back to the workers. You know it's a good thing there's no question about it. It serves a very good, you know at the time of the strike today they get \$65 a week, that buys bread.<sup>5</sup> There are a number of things like that,<sup>9</sup> we pushed on pensions, Walter didn't want to push on pensions. We started back in '47. We put up a big fight in '47 for pensions and Walter Reuther wanted the --

I: Guaranteed annual wage?

R: Yeah, guaranteed annual wage that's what he was pushing for and we used to say we want pensions<sup>9</sup> and we wanted it there 30 hours work 40 hours pay.

I: How much support did you get for that?

R: Oh we had lot of support at conventions but they would always, Walter was always turning around on the convention floor. He would get some issue, I remember we had a conference in Washington, D.C. and that's when we introduced the resolution. Originally 30 for 40 instead of the guaranteed annual wage and Walter Reuther said the 30 hour a week,<sup>8</sup> at that time we were involved in the war with Korea, 30 hour week was helping the communist and we must be communists and boy he really

reared. Took us to town in Washington and we had the FBI in a conference and everybody, oh what a setting it was, and they invited secretary of labor, Mitchell the secretary, he was a pipefitter, remember, in Eisenhower's Cabinet he would come in and he red-baited anybody who would do this would be known as stabbing soldiers in the back, we said what the hell are you talking about.

I: There were layoffs at the time.

R: Yeah we had layoffs, thousands of unemployed, we had 20,000 unemployed at the Rouge. We were down to 60,000 then you know. And we were agents of Moscow by recommending 30 for 40. ]

I: So this was just --

R: Political at that time.

I: Depending on who would raise the issue, Reuther would support it or not? If the right wing or Reuther's backers had initiated a proposal like that do you think it would have won?

R: I don't think so. ] I don't think, I negotiated with Reuther, I was on a Ford negotiating committee from 1961 to 1973 and all those negotiations I sat and I saw with Walter and I don't, his theory was different. His theory was that you take elements out of the work week. The shorter work, not the shorter work, vacations, increased on their vacation periods, holiday pays, getting more holiday pays, then Leonard added to these here 14 days that we got in addition and that theory was to take, instead of cutting the workday down to 7 hours a day or 6 hours a day you take more elements out of the work week. We'll introduced new, Walter talked about retirees phasing out when a guy reached the age of 60 he would start taking three months out of the year off and the company would pay him you know. Of course that



would conclude, if you figure there is 4 weeks vacation pay that's one month already and there are 14 paid holidays and then the 14 other days we used to get, what they call personal days off you know. If you add all these up he was already within two and a half months and so they figure a guy reached the age of 61 then he would add another week and that this way they would have to keep hiring more people. That was his theory. He believed in it I think, I think he was sincere on that. I don't think, his thinking as I view it, by reducing the work week would make it, the cost prohibitive, it would be prohibitive for people to invest money into industries. They have to get an 8 hour day to make sure they get a proper return on their money. I think that was his, I think he sincerely believed that. And he had economists too you know, he had Nat Weinberg and Cohen who would work with him. And I think they helped influence him. These guys are topflight economists. I think Weinberg worked for Harry Truman at one time and was an economist. You know you got all kind of economists. One says you can have a good year, one says you are going to have a bad year.

I: Yeah.

R: We did something that's interesting, in 1967 I was the chairman of the Ford Negotiating Committee and we went on strike if you recall and were fighting for an increase, special increase for the skill workers and we wanted a 20 cent increase but we didn't spell it out at that time. We said we wanted a significant increase for the production workers. The big economic issue, and if you recall that period, Johnson asked us to hold the line and he set up some guidelines that said hold the line. Our economists --

End Tape 2, Side A

W. Dorosh  
Tape 2, Side B

R: Wallace sent letters to 100 economists in the country. And what he tried to do was to get support for our point of view and we would make this public, you know. We got 100 different responses. Every economist had a different solution, different answer. Wallace said that's the end to that. But from 100 economists, we send to. I was the chairman of the committee and as chairman of the committee we consulted and we discussed this and we said okay, let it go. And it was a letter just saying that we are presenting and we if I remember the contents of the letter, saying that Johnson asked us to stay within this here guidelines we think within the guidelines, and so and so the Gross National Product up and with this year, we had to go back three years, '64, '65, '66, '67. It's projected '68, '69 and '70 and we think that we are within this formula you know. Everyone come back with a different answer. Well, I gave up on the economists.

I: So he didn't send it to labor economists, just any economist.

R: Well, he sent them to labor too, but as I said they got different, in other words there was no significant trend in support of their position, you know.

I: Un hun.

R: And all kind of different formulas. They had their own solutions. Everyone thought it was pretty hard just like you get two psychiatrists together and you can't get them to ...

I: One thing I forgot to ask you at the beginning was that you could list the different positions you had in the union from the beginning until you retired.

R: Oh Jesus!

I: Just get the main ones, the ones <sup>you</sup> who would spend a lot of time in.

R: [ Well, I did every kind of job you could think of. I was department committeeman, district committeeman, bargaining committee, I was Recording Secretary of the Tool and Die unit, Vice President of Tool and Die unit. President of the Tool and Die unit, general council delegate, convention delegate almost every convention and President of Ford Local 600, Administrative Assistant for Leonard Woodcock.

I: Which years were you president?

R: Sixty-five to '75, ten years.

[ X: That's a long time. And then during the early '50s you were on Stellato's staff?

R: Oh yeah. Well, [ I was in charge of <sup>2</sup> publications in 1950 until about '52 when the un-American Activities committee came to Detroit and then I resigned and went back to work and I got elected again, committeeman. [ <sup>1</sup> Because we were named <sup>3 4</sup> Local 600, they named about 300 guys that were communists, <sup>5</sup> Shelton Tapps and Lee Ramo both worked for Reuther, named us, <sup>3 4</sup> all agents. [ <sup>5</sup> Nothing happened out of it they just sold everybody's names they began, the committee, they just asked us if we were communists, of course we couldn't answer because if you answer you have to be a stool pidgeon. And so on advice of lawyer you say that you stand on grounds of, I don't want to be intimidated. ] <sup>2</sup> But right after that Reuther put an administrator <sup>after</sup> of the Local 600 and this was '52 I believe, and they put administrator over there and took

everybody out of office took all the staff and put his guys on. I went to work in a plant.

I: At that time were you back in the shop?

R: Yeah, everybody went back to work in the plants. They just says go back to work in the plants. So I went to work building dies, I was a tool and die maker. And then right after that Walter wouldn't allow us to schedule new elections. At 600 until he thought we were ready for an election.

I: Yeah it was supposed to be 6 months or something like that?

R: Something like that yeah. Six months went by and we started raising hell and we took about 1,000 guys, I guess out to Solidarity House. And I guess that scared him. Becuase we had a big riot out in front of the building there you know and not only that we told his administrators that, his administrators coming down to the buildings, and we told him the next one come into this building we were going to throw his ass out you know, this is what we told um, "If you won't let us come in see Reuther, don't you send your administrators out to our buildings, we'll throw them right through the door without opening the doors."

I: So what were they doing, they were acting as the committeemen and chairmen?

R: Yeah. They were acting well they were in charge. The regular committeemen functioned but they were the overseers.

I: They were like the chairman of the unit would have been.

R: Yeah, they were over the chairman and everybody. You know they had, so they went through all the buildings and so Walter made an announcement shortly after that that elections would be scheduled and so we ran an

election and Walter ran out of the international reps Gene Prato ran for president he was Bannon's Administrative Assistant. Jack Peligreno ran for Vice President, he was Administrative Assistant to the Regional Director and I think there was about 50,000 votes cast. I thin<sup>k</sup> Stellato got about 35,000 and I think the rest got about 6,000, Reuther took such a beating there that, in them years we used to have elections every year. The next election Reuther wouldn't support nobody in the race. No place. Everybody went uncontested. The left wing. There was all the left wing elements. And then after that Reuther wouldn't, well he started making overtures towards the local. Stellato was bitter about it. And he would't trust Walter,<sup>b</sup> because he ran with Walter as the candidate for the international union against Tommy Thompson. <sup>Tommy</sup> Thompson Thompson was a left wing candidate and that was a bitter campaign.

I: He was running as a right winger that year right, in 1950?

R: <sup>3</sup> <sup>2</sup> <sup>1</sup> Oh yes, Stellato ran in 1950 as a right winger. He, John Fitzpatrick was chairman of his campaign committee. He was chairman of the ACTU at the plant.<sup>2</sup> And after he got elected and within three or months he<sup>4</sup> broke with Reuther because right after that it was when the five-year contract deal came up. And that's where the fight started. It was something else that had occurred that, what the heck did Walter do. I can't recall it in my mind but it was the five-year contract, it was better, you know it was at that time, we felt throughout the whole war the Ford Motor company and these corporations made huge profits. We had a contract in 1947 and before the workers could get organized it seemed like the top made the decision in negotiations and we got nothing practically you know. <sup>4</sup> I think they give <sup>t</sup> fool and die makers

18 cents an hour increase and production workers 11 cents, after war, years of profits, tremendous profits, we let four years go out without any increases and everybody was just getting ready for it and before you get started and the negotiations were over they said here is a settlement, take it or leave it. And there was a lot of resentment. And one of the things that they had in that contract was a no-strike clause. They put the no-strike clause in there and few other features that were new and there was bitter resentment over that and so we had meetings, the votes were taken at the meeting halls. And in the meeting halls all the international reps was there and people were afraid to vote and, and many of them didn't vote, you know they just were indifferent. And they carried the contract by a very small margin, you know. And so then we started a fight that we want secret ballots none of this nonsense so they promised us <sup>in</sup> a 1950 that's the way it would be, you know, the 47 contract, '50 contract, and Walter goes right back again signs a five year contract without even, you know he had a couple of good features, I'm not questioning that, we talked 2½ percent annual improvement factor and the cost of living index was good but the 2½ percent we says before we get 2½ percent we should at least get 50 cents to make up for all those war years, you know that's this wasn't what they private discussions were going on, we would get a sizeable increase and nobody even thought about the 2½ percent or the annual improvement, in fact it was Wilson's contract, G.E. Wilson, so Walter thought it was a good idea. Well the cost of living formally turned out to be a very significant thing you know because, but since the contracts are signed since '50 I bet you the cost of living must be at least 4 or 5 dollars per hour by now, you

know. But if we didn't have that we would have been getting it anyway in a contract by, I think we would have got it anyway but that made it automatic and the company, it may be easier for the company because they delt it out in pennies instead of a big lump at one time. Those are the issues that Carl fought on,<sup>3</sup> you know, he was bitter about it. I know Carl, we organized together and we're good friends to this day.

I: When did you start working with him? He was on the right when he was in the Tool and Die?

R: He wasn't in the Tool and Die, he was in the Motor plant.

I: Oh yeah I'm sorry.

R: He was in the motor plant. <sup>1</sup> He was on a bargaining committee there and then he went to the international union on staff and then they convinced him to run. But he was a left winger in the plant. And he ran on the right wing ticket for President of the Local 600 and msut have won by maybe 300 or 400 votes. It was such a, maybe one had 15,300. It was a very close race. But Tommy Thompson <sup>15"</sup> got beat. <sup>1</sup> And then when Carl broke with Reuther he was way left.

I: Yeah he did that for political reasons also, he needed suport from the left to oppose Reuther?

R: I think he believed in it. He believes it to this day. He believes in a shorter work week. I think, I know Carl good enough to believe, that those are his beliefs. I don't think he went because he wanted the left's support. I think eventually he would have got it you know by taking positions he did, but he was astute enough to know that these are the issues that, he was a Ford worker, and he <sup>came</sup> from that area and he had to pay for his jobs and he had to stay in the bull pen just like everybody else you know. You know the torments of being an

employee in a Ford Rouge plant and I think he, in my opinion is, that he sincerely believed in those things, I still think he does.

I: What about his trial, right when he got elected, the trial of the 5?

R: This is still during the Reuther period before we convinced him that if you want to stay there and since you didn't run out on left wing ticket, you got to smash all these left wing leaders in the palace there you know. It's a grandiose scheme. I talked to him about it a number of times. He said I was young, he said I just sold a bill of goods, Reuther said you are very successful and if you don't the left wing is going to defeat you in the next election. We used to have elections every year. <sup>2 3</sup> [Before the election, before the ballots would, the ink would dry, they would start another campaign, and he did, they pressed charges against five, the council voted it down, the trial was thrown out, the council was all left wing. I don't think that's right. I'm not saying that I don't think it was left wing, I think that the guys seen in that that, it was just a divide, a union technique you know, called this guy a catholic or called this guy a communist, or called this guy a socialist or Trotskite or whatever, and I think that the council at that time was still made up of the guys who helped build this union and I think they just saw the fact that, it was almost unanimously voted out, even right wingers, some of the right wingers that were identified with the right wing couldn't conceive of it, except again the strong ACTU, I think John Fitzpatrick said that he was strongly behind it, you know. <sup>2 3</sup> ] Overall I know when the hearings were held and trials and the hundreds of people used to come there and they intimidated the trial judge and the committees and



everything you know and the committee was made up of five ACTU guys as a matter of fact.

I: Oh really?

R: I think so yeah, if I remember their names. We talked about it many a time. And I said to him how can you be so stupid? You know, I have never known you to be a guy that believed in these techniques. Young and stupid, he says. But he stayed 15 years as President and I succeeded him. ]

I: How do you think that some of those other things that passed in Local 600, the red-baiting things like having to sign the Taft-Hartly Act and also during the Korean war that little pledge that all the officers had to sign?

R: Well, there was a whole development that took place at least <sup>2</sup> [ I was before the Internal Security Committee in Washington, I was before the UnAmerican Activities Committee in Detroit and each one of them they said they had cited me for contempt 45 times, 55 times, Walter Reuther had me up before his trial committee he was bitter because he knew I wrote the stuff about him, all the material that came out condemning him on his . Carl would talk to me, we would sit down I was in charge of publications and I was writing his articles when it came out, and we blasted Reuther you know, and we had a guy in our staff who told Reuther about it. His name is Earl Averill, I don't know if you have ever heard of him. Earl went down and talked to <sup>W</sup> walter Reuther and so when we had the hearings we went up there and Earl said there is the scoundrel right there.

I: Yeah they called you the ghost writer.

R: Yeah it was before the UnAmerican Activities Committee too. Because he had laid it out before the UnAmerican Activities Committee too, Earl Averill. And he says that what happened was we were writing articles against Reuther's policies, the 5 year contract. And some of the plant chairmen, had great difficulty in composing material to put in the Ford fact's so I they would come to me and say well write it for me so I wrote it for several years you know and when I got before the UnAmerican Activities Committee Congressman Rankin says to me, did you write this article, did you write this article and Earl said, Earl Averill already told him. Not Earl, Dave, told him that I wrote all these articles I wrote Stellato's articles, we had some guys who were proficient writers themselves, [Paul Boatin could write himself] and [Ed Locke used to write himself.] There were some guys, we had one chairman who couldn't even write. He agreed with the sentiments, I said you want me to write it, I'll write it for you, and yeah, put his name on it.

I: Yeah the way those were structured it really didn't sound like, it didn't say that it was written by this chairman.

R: It just had his picture up there.

I: Yeah.

R: But his allegedly was his, you know. ]

I: Yeah.

R: Well, I don't know we talked about it, there was a great bit of discussions and everybody voted. [They said look this is only a devicive tactic. If we fail to sign these pledged all it will mean is that they will have officers take our place under the law, you know and they would contest us to the labor relations department. We

talked to attorneys, we talked to liberal attorneys and they said signing don't mean a gooddam thing. All you can do is vacate these jobs for guys who may not want to carry on the struggles, you know, don't demonstrate the same consciousness. Based on this discussion we all finally says okay let's act, so we all signed them. But if we were communists all they do is prove it and we would go to jail. None of them were proud of it. Nobody was prosecuted. I went before the public review board, let's see you know what the pbulic review board is, the UAW public review board?

I: Yes.

R: I ~~was~~ the first case before the public review board also. At that time the chairman of the committee was, what~~r~~ was his name, a Rabbi from Dewtroit, Adler, called me up and he told me that [Walter Reuther says that, that was in '53, it was right after the '53 election I was elected again to Recording Secretary to the bargaining committee in the Tool and Die and it was a veyr hot heated election and they used the UnAmerican Activities Committee material and everything and that I was a big Red and workers said I don't care what he is. All I know is he's on a job, he does the job they said, I don't care. It didn't bother them. [There were five people that ran for the job, Recording Secretary and I bat five without a runoff by 2-1 majority after coming back ] and I had left the plant in 1950 I had resigned the job and then I went, Stellato asked me to come, he said I got to have a guy who can write and take charge of Local 600 publications. I thought about it and I hated to give up being on the line I think being on the line being a committeeman is the greatest thing in the world. You have direct contact with workers and you just feel their strength, you

could feel the sentiments generate. I could always predict what the heck was going to happen. Get on the floor you were always talking to people. You hear all their problems, it just exactly, and I knew every guy by his first name, his badge, his seniority and his family problems and everything you know, its just.

I: You were on half time when you were committeeman?

R: Full time.

I: Full time. Full-time you got a committee desk and you are full time  
 R. on the job. And its the greatest strength in the world. It's the best job in the world. It was just a great feeling, you know. I hated to give that up. When I was on the bargaining committee when I gave it up. I was in charge of the whole plant and you don't have that direct first stage, you have the second stage, and I was very reluctant to give it up and naturally I had gone to the local union, and then you sit in the chair and you're busy with the brass you know and you don't have that daily contact you know, that is great. ] So when I went back Carl says you know after he won the election come on back, no I says, I don't want to go back there I love being right here. ]<sup>2</sup>  
 Well then Reuther contested it. Reuther contested it and said, there were 5 of us, I think he contested the plant and we cannot serve because we are communists and we have been communists, so I went before the review board and Monsinger Higgins and Weinstein he's a judge from Chicago, he was then I don't know if he still is now. They had this 7 man panel. They ask you questions and all that. I said look I'm going to be here, convict myself, if you got evidence that I am, let Walter, Walter didn't show up. Didn't show up after that. So they just dismissed the case, you know there was no evidence to prove

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 it. } I know what happened there. After that Walter started getting friendly with me. It was in 1961 when I got elected to negotiate. I knew his wife before, well I knew Walter and his wife together, but I knew her before she married Walter. She used to be in the old Seattle headquarters in the Hoffman building and she used to collect dues. She was a secretary in the office there. Her name was May Wolfe, Wolfman. But we used to know her by Wolf. So I knew her real good and when I got elected to the Ford national negotiating committee Walter got worried about it because we had Carl, me we had 4 elected from Local 600 and it was 11 on the committee and we had 2 other guys we had enough votes on the committee to stop Walter from doing anything. So when we met the first time and Walter says to me he wanted to talk to me and he says when he was young he would do a lot of foolish things like you do. He says I did some things I'm sorry for bla, bla, bla. He says let's let bygones be bygones. Let's concentrate on helping the workers and the negotiations. I said fine, that's all I'm here for. We got no problem if its on behalf of the workers.

I: This was in '61?

R: Yeah 'yl. Then after we completed negotiatons he asked me to come work for him. I said no way, no way.

I: Going to work for Reuther at the international meant you had to adopt all his views?

R: He was, his, man, period. That's all. Reuther ran that with an iron fist. But he mellowed, in his latter years I know. He cut out a lot of this red-bating and a lot of his divisive tactics. I got to know Walter very well I went out with him often. I was chairman of the

ford negotiating committee and then I was also chairman of the resolutions committee Walter appointed me for that job and the next five conventions we used to have a lot of fights but then he began to support every resolution that I supported he had mellowed. Well we had some private talks and I guess he felt in his latter years he was secure in power they needed no other techniques or tactics and he was all pwoer. but I tink, like I says, when you age you mellow sometimes too. I hope I never mellow. That's why I'm retired ] I was administrative assistant with Leonard Woodcock and then I worked for Frazier but I didn't work with him as his assistant, I worked with the skilled Trades Department and when they started making all these concessions I started arguing with him, all the guys, you know, the last contact negotiatons. I says this country, to all the basic things I learned in this trade union movement, and I <sup>had</sup> projected when I ran for election, ] I projected a proposition, okay, I said okay, instead of making these concesisions to the company, let's put them in a bank, let the company put them in a bank for us. They owe us this money you know we take 40 cents cut. Put 40¢ in there. When the company profits it can give ths money back, you know. I'm not interested in breaking a company. He said oh we are going to break this company. Don't worry about these capitalists, they take care of themselves. They don't need you to do the bidding for them. So we had a big argument on this and I resigned and I went back and ran for president of the Local 600 in 1981 and I got into the race just before the deadline and couldn't put a team together. ]

I: Was that one Rinaldi?

R: Yeah I ran against Rinaldi. I blased, because he was my Vice President and I left, I turned it over to him you know and he had my whole staff and everyting there and so the guys all come to me and said Jesus, you put us in a hell of a position. If you'd h<sup>ave</sup> done this six months <sup>ago</sup> we could have made the adjustments. You got in the day before election, literature is coming out you know. I was so bitter about it. We had a meeting and we had a discussion on this the staff and I spoke against this and I raised hell about it and I was up talking to JDoug about it and to me it seemed like falling on deaf ears and I said I just can't go along with this. I'm not going along with this. Steve Yocki said to me you act like a rank and filer, he says why don't you go back and run for President of Local 600. I said you know you give me a good idea. I said that sounds like an excellent idea so I'm going to resign and go back to work. I think it's an excellent idea. I said that's where I belong. You can't do nothing in 3 months because I come back and he beatg me by 7,000 votes. He got 12 and I got 5. Just couldn't get the thing going you know but Iput the literature out the same way. I came out and says I'm against concessions and concessions and sell outs.

I: [ But Rinaldi is more of a right wing leader.

R: Yeah. A right-winger.

I: Was he one back then?

R: Always was. He was vice president when I was president. He did what I told him.

I: He didn't run on your slate?

R: Yeah he ran one election. He ran one election Vice President. I got him. He never got elected a job in his life. He was staff member for

30 years and he always said, you don't, he didn't know the feelings of the guys in the plant ~~the plant~~. You know he operates just like a bureaucrat, you know, move heads around and make this deal and make these concessions and when Jim O'Rourke who was my Vice President the 8 years I was there he got elected, Mike got elected in the last term I was in. He was elected two years I got elected in '63 and Mike got elected with me. No. I left in '75, yeah '73 and I left in '75. I didn't want that job either. That was a mistake on my part. I knew Leonard very well and he begged me to take the job. He didn't have a Ford man on his staff. He wanted a Ford man. And before I knew what I was thinking I agreed to go work for him.

- I: [ Do you think that there was a difference between the workers that were around during organizing period in the early part of the union drive, like the whole '40s and the newer workers that came in later?
- R: Oh sure there is a difference.
- I: No I mean in the solidarity and the militancy. You said earlier that you think that youth makes for militance.
- R: Yes the answer--the older workers knew the meaning of solidarity they didn't want nobody to--

End Tape 2, Side B



W. Dorosh  
Tape 3, Side A

R: By the time the bell rang, the starting bell until the quitting bell these young guys come in there ... they challenge, its more challenging, and it's good, I like that. I think that's very good. I don't like to stifle young people, they are the future. They are more educated, they understand more. Sometimes I wish they learned more in school but they don't. I guess you got to learn it in the college of hard knocks or something. You got to learn it through your own experiences. ] But there is a cycle that these companies go through. It takes five years for a person to get acclimated to a shop. <sup>3</sup> <sup>2</sup> [ You hire into a plant, you will not be acclimated to the surroundings until five years, at least five years. And the way we know this is whenever a new industry goes up and the Ford Motor Company puts up a new plant, for the first five years they will lose money on it. They couldn't get things harmonized. ]

I: Workers have to get used to the jobs?

R: Get used to the job and begin to move with the.... You can go into the plant and watch some of these production workers work on jobs, its so technical and they can do it with their eyes closed. They do it because they get into the flow of it. Some jobs you look at people and just picking up fenders, pushing up all day. How do they do it? One of of the most difficult jobs I used to observe is putting headliner in a car. Do you know what a headliner is? It's that thing that goes inside a car that cloth. And you out to see these guys. They put, he'll jump into one car it will run about maybe from the

width of this house, 20 feet, he will get in there and he will lay on his back and push it up in there and tack it on the gun by the time it gets to 20 feet he will get out and get the next one. Eight hours a day, putting headliners on. See the cloth is hooked to the back already and he pushes it around. Well I couldn't do that if the car was stopped for three hours. They just beautiful. If they lose a guy then he is what they call, experience, you need experience on a job like that. You are just not going to get it. They keep bringing in guys after them, you know. It takes years to put the guy on that job. Boy when that guy is off from work they have connections, you know. They have to have four guys working to try to get it out. It's the most beautiful way he does it, just lays in there. I'm sitting there, I walked through the plant many times with the officers, we looked, it's just amazing I said I don't know how the guy can do it. Some of these jobs and it takes them five years to get acclimatged to that particular job. One of the things I learned, when I was president of the local union, one of the things I wanted to correct was a complaint that registered for years that the foundry workers are Blacks and the Blacks are confined to the foundry operations and I said when I'm elected I'm going to do something about that. I'm going to reach an agreement with the company I talked with our officers, the elected officers, we reached an agreement that Ford Motor Company, we were prepared to strike the plant on this issue. That when they hire new employee in the plant he is going to replace a Black with a high seniority in the foundry and the Black will get the job that's available in the plant and he takes his total seniority which means he can bump into the other jobs, so I went into the foundry, met with the

foundry committee and, beautiful, good, good, ok. So I met with the company and I said to the company this is what we are going to do. Oh we can't do that, he says, we foul up our foundry operations. These guys you know in the smelting operationand they don't need no formulas they have done this for years and they got to replace.... Well you screw up the whole operations you know. I'm sorry, I said, but that's the route we're going to travel. We went to the foundry meeting, and at that time we had about 2500 foundry workers and I'd say about 80 percent were Balck in the foundry, then. And I said all right, oh they applauded, they were happy. I said this is it, we're not going to mess around with this you either get it or else. There's going to be a shut down. And the company knew I was a member of the National Negotiating Committee, I was chairman, they knew that, they wouldn't give it to me in between the negotiation but they surely would see me at the big table with all the big brass up there you know and as a rule they liked to settle their own problems. They don't want it to go up there because generally they will say Jesus what do we need you here for? They said finally okay. So we finally reached an understanding and the understanding was that when they hired new people in the plant they would move these guys out They moved about four or five guys within two or three days they wanted to go back in the foundry.

I: Why was that?

R: Couldn't get acclimated to the operations. They were so set. See the foundry while it has difficulties it's dirty and hot, they have jobs that are one hour on and one hour off. So they actually work four hours a day or half hour on hour and a half off, half hour on, half

hour off. This is what they call heat--heat exhaustion time. I was kind of amazed that the guy comes to my office and said look--he went to the assembly plant, he says, man I can't keep up like that for 8 hours a day. I said are you kidding. I said you know I'm embarrassed I got to go back to the Company. He said look man, Mr. Dorosh, do anything you can Brother Dorosh, please get me out of there. He said I won't last a week. He said I'll be in the hospital. Well, I said okay. Let me see if I can get you back and first thing you know that whole committee came to see me. Scrap it. Nobody wants to go over there no more. They all talked about it and they'll stay in the dirt and they'll stay with this, but they know the operations. They are acclimated, you know. Thirty years, 25 years. Now they know that job, and that's another thing that occurs. You work with these people you know them all. For 25 years, you've spent more time with them than you spend with your family. Just think about it, eight hours a day, day in and day out, you know all their problems they, just like a community you know. ] And the same thing in other buildings we have what they call plantwide seniority at the Rouge. If you get laid off from building A if you got more seniority you can bump a guy in building C, D, or E. You have to take \_\_\_\_\_ in the plant. Well when we negotiated it <sup>5</sup> come years ago everybody was real pleased about it. But you know what? They don't implement it because people want to go back to the same building where they work. It could be dirtier, hotter, more difficult, less pain. But they know everybody, it's just like a community. They come in in the morning they talk and they exchange food sometimes and you know they just won't break it up. You put in 25 years, 10 years in a plant you know you put in a lot of

time. You're just like as I say everybody in their (?) town you meet them on the streets and talk to them and they don't generally apply it. The agreement is on paper it is there it's usage is very limited. Every once in awhile a guy may get mad and I say the hell with them bastards, I'll take the lay off and go to another building. I went through this so many times where the guys would bump and said I want to get back to my building, can you do something about it Mr. Dorosh? I took this layoff I had that job. Please I want to get back to my building. I miss them guys, you know they are a bunch of bastards but they are my bastards. And things of that nature.]<sup>3</sup>

I: Was there much opportunity for men to talk on the job or did they just do their talking at lunch time?

R: Well, see after we introduced the relief time they allot a time.

I: When is that?

R: We introduce the relief time in 1962 negotiations. We start off with 12 minutes before lunch and 12 minutes after lunch. Twenty-four minutes a day. And then we increased it to 18 minutes before and 18 minutes after. And there is a release man that comes around and releases these production people. He says, you are supposed to go for 12 minutes at a time. So he takes your job and when you come back, another guy. But in the meantime, he says, this operator's got time, you can go upstairs in the cafeteria or go down to the coffee machine and they talk so they have got a lot of time you know, not lots of time, but they got more time than they, they got time that they never had before.

I: What about before like in the '40s and '50s?

R: Oh they didn't have no time. I told you ;you didn't know the guy's name next to you. One guy was telling me one time he worked with a guy and they worked on the, in the motor building and the crankshaft job and when a carckshaft come out of the foundry they have burrs on them that have to be ground off and you ground them off with a big heavy grinder and when you use this, in these days they never had that modern air suction system like they have today in a plant. They put goggles on people and they put a mask on them and you grind on this job for 8 hours a day. He says, this is nice to come on this job, this guy was an Italian guy and the guy that worked with him was a Black and never knew it, he said he made a lot of slurry remarks about Blacks and this guy never said a thing and he said I'm so shocked one day when he took his goggles off on the job, I guess after so many years the guy got tired of listening to him he finally figures it's about time I let this lman know I'm a Black. He said I always thought this guy was a white guy the one he was working with. Well this happened many of times before. As I said you went by numbers. There was no seniority list, there was no names posted no place. The boss would come up to you, are you 1682, yep. Come on with me. He didn't say are you Walter dorash or Tom Brown. They used numbers in the plant at that time. 1682, yep that's me. Come with me. Where are we going? You're going to transfer to another department. That's the way you went by. We never knew names and then the first time you run for elections some of the names we saw and tried to get familiar with people and when the union come in it was just like a community, great feelings. ]

I: Okay now I would like to talk a little bit about the political differences between the right and the progressive caucuses. Can you talk about what the different groups were that made up the progressives and how they differed?

R: [ Well the progressives were always initiating new ideas and [the right wing generally wanted to just leave things alone and things will take care of themselves.] Progressives were generally initiators of new dimensions for negotiations and this is the way I had always seen it. ]  
<sup>3</sup> [ Just let things go, things will be all right. These guys are lazy now they ought to have some of this Fordism, every so often you'll hear some old timer say that, boy we ought to put this union out of business for about 6 weeks and let these guys know. I said we are not going to do any experiments to teach anybody anything. People have notions that you could stop progress. It can't be done. The road you traveled is gone. And you could never turn the clock around. ] I don't care how the Ford Motor company tries, I don't think ~~eye~~, no matter who's in leadership, I don't think they could ever bust the union. ] As a matter of fact I think in many respects it benefited them too. We used to standardize so many things for them. They told us this a number of times in negotiation. And we taught them, as a result of unions, by standard weight scale, because they used to have a difficulty always wrestling within your wage rate. You don't even have to argue. I'm going to quit, you know, especially among skill tradesmen. Seniority, while it was good for the workers also helped the Ford Motor Company considerably. The guys always come back. They know when you have recall, you know. Years ago they were telling us when they laid off guys they had to go to other jobs because they had

no seniority there was no such thing and they would have to go on down south and out west and all over to try to hire people into their plants. They used to spend thousands of dollars and they said, this way we know we have experienced people always coming back and it helps them considerably. I don't think, the union has done them some good. They benefited from it and we benefited from it. I think it's sort of a mutual thing I think they recognize . Not in all respects we make demands on them that are always new, and it seems outrageous to them but <sup>2</sup>when I was the chairman of the Ford Negotiating Committee there are people within the companies within some higher echelons too, I believe, who would like to see the workers get a bigger share of the earnings of the company. I had that experience when I was chairman of the Ford Negotiating I can't remember what negotiations it was, '67 or '70. We were, it was something to do with pensions, women's rights, the pension programs and things of that nature and the Company had just stood on it and we had, we put up publicity on this and we couldn't budge the company and I thought we were going into a strike we could feel it, if you know the experience of the committee, it came close to settlement. And you could feel it, we weren't far away from settlement, this comes after years of sitting on a committee, as I say, I was on it for at least 25 years and we had the kind of start to think about reevaluating our position because the company was telling us look this is a strikable issue. They don't generally say this except then you are going into strike. Because one of the things they learn in negotiatons, they never say no because they know that gives them trouble. They will say we will study it and we'll get back with you and give you a counter proposal, they never say no. Or they'll



never say, they limit it to the extreme, but we'll take this out as a strike issue, we're prepared to take a strike on this issue. And you get into that kind of a thing you know it's serious and especially when it comes from the top guy sometimes the (?) negotiators may say don't pay it no attention to them. But that top guy raises his comments very carefully, he don't just throw words out. He has like I say when he says something boy, if we think he's slipped, oh he gets slack all over the place. Absolutely. He is very, he seldom does any talking, he lets his other guys talk, every once in a while he'll make a comment and they summarize, we've gone this far we have an agreement we got all this behind us. Yes. Okay. Well, I will have our papers ready for initialing. When I was there we had, Bugus was ther ein the first set of negotiations and Malcom Denise was in all the others. Malcolm was vice president of Ford Motor Comapny and top attorney for the Ford Motor Company and you could tell by his comments when you were, you know, going into, heading into a strike because if he says too many times that we had really slapped him around. And we would like to get him to slip up, and every once in a while he got in a caucus and get ready for negotiations we will try to trigger something to get the company to spill something. They sent one of our guys after him, go get this guy and get him really upset, call him a liar and get him angry see if he will slip up on something. Sometimes they get so<sup>w</sup> anxious and especially during the crucial period of negotiations, and slip up. We did too, sometimes. They'd get us so mad, we'd slip up. But any way in this one set of negotiations we talked about it and in a meeting, I don't remember if it was Walter or Leonard now, and we finally said well let's get back

tomorrow and see what the hell happens.... I left and I went back to Local 600 I'm sitting in the office and working on something and a special delivery one of these special delivery services guy knocked on the door and comes into the President's office, my secretary, he says I got to give this to Mr. Dorosh only. She said well, he's here. He took it in, handed it to me and said I'm supposed to give this to you only and then [it was the breakdown of the companies proposals somebody from the company had slipped them to me and their techniques and tactics where they said that if we have, we are prepared to grant this.

I: Somebody on the Ford side?

R: Somebody on the Ford side you know. He sent it to me because I suspected, again I'm thinking out loud here that he might have been getting ready for retirement and he wanted his too, because whatever we get they get too and he was probably bitter about it. He probably figured it was small on the company's part I got all this information [so, we went in like tigers the next day, and said, ok you want this strike, you got it. You tell us, tell us no today, we will be out tomorrow. No wait a minute back up because we had the material. And a number of times a couple of, another, I got couple of phone calls from some company official, you had to be a company official to know it. In some kind of negotiations, you stick with it. Walter you will get it, I'm just giving it to you straight, you know. Well, there are some people I remember even one Ford negotiator. I'm going to put this off the record. People are people, you know. Because a guy is management doesn't necessarily mean he is stupid, you know.]

I: Were there a lot of union guys that went into management?

R: Oh not a lot of them, some of them did. A lot of people liked to stay within that security, as I said last time. [ Once you go on to supervision they could say to you Ford's got 17 plants assembly plants and about 8 stamping plants and about 6 or 7 other manufacturing plants. If you are a supervisor in the Rouge plant, they could say tomorrow you are Louisville plant and they moved them. ] And that's happened to several of their people, and they stay wait a minute. They stay within the security of union structure. They know their job is there, they are going to live there. They got everything there.

[ They get some of the rough treatment. A lot of them people in management get some very rough treatments. Oh they have come to me crying at the local you know like this one guy told me he was in the Rouge, went from Rouge, went to Chicago plant stayed there about a year or year and a half and he transferred to Cleveland and he did this just because they wanted him to quit, and from Cleveland they were ready to transfer him to Buffalo. And he said look, I'm quitting. I'm not going to travel around over this country like this, you know. And at every place they were giving him the roughest jobs, you know. He msut have been somebody that didn't square up with them you know and they just wanted to get rid of him or maybe the word was out to get rid of him.

I: Did the supervision change from plant to plant, were there some plants that were more antagonistic, towards the union and the workers and others that were more easy.

R: It didn't change from plant to plant. Every building had the same thing. [ They had some good supervisors and some rats. There is no one that has a special distinction, you know. You had some supervisors

and some locations in some places you know, people are people, there is no plain, set line that they are all good here, all bad there. ]  
 Just like all whites ain't good. [ I remember we were carrying on a discusison one time about Black people and people who just repeated the same cliches about Blacks you nknow, and one of the white guys popped up and he said you know one of the worse no good son of a bitch I can think of in my lifetime was Hitler and hwas white, you know. I don't know of any Blacks that was as bad as that guy you know. He made a profound statement. He said the worse son of a bitch I ever met in my life or know in my lifetime he says was a white man and his name is Hitler. He says goddamit I can't a Black that comes no place near it. ]<sup>3</sup>

I: What was the level of racism? Was there a lot of troubles with that or did most workers tolerate?

R: Well, originally the company as I said had Blacks only in a few buildings. And then I would say the war came on the scene more Blacks were around in the other buildings. And there were then people that were racists, no question about it. We would be lying if we said that they weren't. There would be people saying racists comments, saying racists stories they hear over and over again. And we had some difficulties. [ I worked in a plant that was exclusively white and they started getting some Black skilled tradesmen in there, apprentices, but the building was predominantly white. When I ran for president of the tool and dye I elected the first Black <sup>reporting</sup> secretary that ran on my ticket. I was concerned about him. I wanted him to get elected to the degree that I was prepared to go to the opposition to name, I went to the opposition and I said you name a Black for

recording secretary and I will support him, you know, so I went, I was fearful that the whites would defeat him and I was greatly mistaken.

He ran against a white and got elected. ]<sup>1</sup>

I: Who was this?

R: Hilton Robinson was his name. He was the first Black ever got elected to office and this was in 1963 in the Tool and Die unit. He ran with me. And I said I went to the opposition and I said because I was in office I replaced, I was vice president I moved up to president in <sup>4</sup> 1961 and that was an office, and so I was running for reelection. [ One of the Black recording secretary, I didn't want to run him for trustee because I thought that a recording secretary was important, he recorded membership meetings, he read the reports, he read the communications and the general comment is always that Blacks can't read, he can't write, Hilton Robinson I knew did because he graduated from Trade School with me. Went to the Henry Ford Trade School together so he was a graduate and he graduated from Trade School, so they couldn't <sup>3</sup> use the arguments that we don't have a tradesman to represent us. ]<sup>4</sup> [ So I was very concerned about it because I didn't want him to run and lose and I wanted that very bad. I would rather not run. Nobody stood up to face that kind of situation. All it does is perpetuate racism. And so I ran him and I went to the candidate who was running on the opposition slate and I told him, I said well I didn't tell him I had a candidate yet, but I said if you name and I'm satisfied that you can do the job, I'm willing to join with you I won't run nobody for recording secretary. I won't even put him on my ticket I said, you know, run it blank or I said if you want me I will run him on my ticket too, you know run them together. He wouldn't accept it. ]<sup>3</sup> He

thought it was some kind of trick, he wouldn't buy it. I said okay because I'm going to run on it and I told him, I said I was going to run Hilton Robinson. So he says to me yeah I don't think he is going to go along with that, the white workers in this plant won't go for it. I said well we can find out. He got elected. He ran a white recording secretary on his ticket and we beat them.

I: Was it close?

R: I can't recall the results. I couldn't tell you my results, I won, and my whole slate won. I couldn't tell you if it was close and I don't remember now.

I: <sup>4</sup> Did this guy have a reputation in the plant?

R: <sup>4</sup> [HILTON ROBINSON] He was well liked. I appointed him athletic director. He was a very good basketball player. He was an outstanding athlete and I appointed him as athletic director in building, Black over all whites, and they accepted him. You know if you know the business. I think that helped. I think that the younger people, the ball players knew his fairness you know and they knew he was the right guy and I think that helped but I think the young ball players supported him. <sup>4</sup> <sup>2</sup> [We had a basketball team, baseball team, softball teams in the plants and 17 plants, well I don't think they have any now I think they got about 12 plants now. And each plant has its own recreation program they have the plant league the local union schedules the election, I mean the contests, you know.

I: I noticed that a lot of space in Ford Facts is devoted to that.

R: Oh yeah. [Well you take young people when they get out of high school they go work in a plant, they selected to play athletics and it's good recreation. It's good because the whites and Blacks they play

together you know and they drink beer out there years ago I think the  
local is completely reversed now, }<sup>5</sup> I think the majority of ...

End Tape 3, Side A

W. Dorosh  
Tape 3, Side B

R: . . . Black baseball. Times changed. The whites don't want to work in the plants right now.]

I: Well, getting back to this issue of the right wing, left wing thing.

[ What were the groups besides the ACTU people that made up the right wing? Was the Socialist Worker Party part of it?

R: No I don't think so. [ I think the right winger was made up of mostly ACTU, former people of the AFOL-CIO I'm talking about the basic, you know the leadership of course, not all of them are. ] [ They are made up of and those who supported the AFOL-CIO, those who supported Reuther, those who liked Walter Reuther would automatically be on the other side because we'd always oppose them.

I: Would you say that their practices on the shop floor, handling grievances and attending to the committeeman type duties were different from the progressives?

R: No I think they were the same. I think they both went out and tried to do the job once the policy was set. They were obligated to, you know. I didn't all the years I have seen them operate I don't think that they didn't attempt to do the right kind of job. I think that they wouldn't pursue it as diligently maybe but I don't think they tried to sabotage the union. ]<sup>2</sup>

I: [ But you would say that the Progressives were out there in the forefront?

R: Oh yeah. They were always out pushing. [ In other words the difference the big issues that dividied the two forces especially which was very



embarrassing to Reuther was the Black and white issue. ] In the 19, what it, 1946 convention I think it was, the UAW, the left wing introduced a resolution at the convention suggesting that a UAW Black vice president be created. The Reuther forces objected to this and said that it was reverse discrimination putting the Blacks in a box, he could only run for that job. ]<sup>7</sup> The left wing if you get the proceedings of the 46th convention it was at Buffalo, I think, the left wing said nothing of the case. The reason we are suggesting this is because there are a lot of Black workers in the UAW they have no representation and they ought to have at least one Black representative that they could point to. But the board consisted of 26 representatives and the UAW membership is comprised of at that time, if I remember, one quarter of the membership of the UAW, and they have on representation, you know. And surprisingly one of the chief spokesmen against it was Horace Scheffield. He was one of the Black community leaders. ] ]

I: Is he still around?

R: Oh yes he is still around. And he spoke against it. He pointed out that, he is the guy that coined the phrase that it's reverse discrimination. He admitted since that it was a very said mistake, that he was deluded by Walter Reuther.

I: He was one of the most prominent right wing Blacks?

R: Oh yes. Yes he was. ]<sup>8</sup> Walter used him extensively whenever there was a Black and white issue, Horace Scheffield would be there always taking a side of the administration. ]<sup>7</sup> But that was one issue that divided us considerably. Everytime, I remember when Walter Reuther, and Walter Reuther was good on the Black issue, he was very good on it, you know,

he supported, let's say after the Buffalo convention he saw the mistake but he couldn't reverse it because the people that comprised his right wing leadership were anti-Black, you know, at that time.

Strongly anti-Black and they didn't care, they were indifferent about it. In other words, they had in some respects the same attitude that the AFOL had, you know, the AFOL had the same attitude towards production workers. You should be organized into a skill and we couldn't convince them to organize the production workers, the basic steel industry workers. But the Civil Rights issues divided the two groups considerably. The question of opening new opportunities for Blacks. The progressives were always projecting ideas, programs for promoting Blacks into jobs. In other words giving them their day in court, they couldn't see it and it was that kind of philosophy, I believe, that time will take care of everything. It doesn't always hold true because so many things can happen.

I: Is that the period when after that Reuther brought up the issue of reverse discrimination, was that when he called on Tapp's to come up to international? Is that the one Black spot that he had?

R: I'm trying to think when Tapp's went to the international. It was in the '50s sometime. It could have been around there, yeah because it was in '46 convention and this annoyed Walter considerably having to defend ~~ern~~ not being able to defend his position on the Black community. The Blacks at that time were quite upset about it. Horace and Buddy Battle, Shelton Tapp's was on the other side of the issue at that time. Shelton Tapp's was one of those people who supported the fight for a black representative on the international executive board. He supported, Scheffield, Buddy Battles, Jimmy Watts, who was the

director under Coleman Yuong, opposed it ]<sup>5</sup> because he was Walter Reuther's administrative assistant. He was Black.

I: Jimmy Watts?

R: Oh yeah. Watts was Walter Reuther's administrative assistant at one time there, Walter Reuther hired him.

I: And Watts was right wing himself?

R: Yes.

I: So they came to differences politically, Reuther and Watts?

R: [ Reuther fired Watts and Watts was back at Local 600, Staletto put him on the staff. Stellato at that time was anti-Reuther so Watts became the head of the ]<sup>7</sup>. If you wanted to work for Carl he had to be anti-Reuther. But there was some pro-Reutherites on the

Staletto staff. I <sup>2</sup>culdn't say they were all anti-Reuther. ]

I: [ What were some of the things that allowed Local 600 to be such a, people called it the thorn in Reuther's side. It had a lot of power, a lot of people. Were there any other characteristics of the local that you think attributed to its allowing it to be so independent?

R: Well, they worked together. ]<sup>3</sup> I<sup>4</sup> remember one person we got I think his name was Walter Cassidy he was president of our transportation unit which is a trucking, railroad industry and he says I support Carl Stellato as my president for Local 600 because Carl Stellato is the best guy that Local 600 can select. In spite of the fact that he is a left winger. But I also support Walter Reuther as president of the international union because he is the best president that the international union can select. And I cite him to point out that there were several others who felt the same way, you know. They knew that Carl was a left winger at Local 600, in honest opinion they says that

Carl is the best thing for Local 600 and his program the supported his program at 600 and so when we used to go the conventions and we used to ride and kid Walter Cassidy and some of these other guys you know, he said I can live with it. He said if this convention adopts Walter's programs I'll support it. If they don't I won't support it. ]<sup>2</sup>

In other words, well they weren't leaders in other word sthey didn't have a position, I guess. Good guys I guess and the workers lked them and they got elected. ]<sup>4</sup>

But there were several other people like that in the local union that I know of that supported Walter Reuther and ]<sup>5</sup> ]<sup>3</sup> I never voted for Walter Reuther for president of the international union except the 19, what convention was it, 1970 convention was the

first time I voted for Walter Reuther, ]<sup>3</sup> and I voted my local union in a block and it was one vote couldn't cast because the guy that was

running was Art <sup>F</sup>fox who was from the Tool and Die unit and he was running for President and it seemed so strange, you know, he's from my

unit, my own local union, I was president of the Local 600 and I said I'm casting the vote and the block for Walter Reuther and let Art Fox

cast his <sup>o</sup>w vote you know get up and cast his own vote. Well, I knew Art Fox he was on the bargaining committee in the Tool and Die unit

and his word was never any good. Never any good. You could never believe him and I would, I said I would be playing a game if I would

support a person, to cast a vote just because he came from my local union. He had all the things that his word just didn't mean anything. ]<sup>4</sup>

Just--

- I: So he voted left wing?  
 R: Who?  
 I: Fox, against Reuther?

R: He was running against Reuther.

I: Oh at the convention. I thought you meant in the Tool and Die unit.

R: No he ran against Walter Reuther at the 1970 convention. And I said the only time I voted for Reuther was that time.

I: Oh. Okay.

R: [ And then besides that I have always voted against him and the strangest thing was that he came from my local. It was my unit. They said why couldn't you support him. I says this guy is just I said I don't want to get into it. But he just really a character. If the sun was shining and you would go out and say gee the sun is shining he would say hell it is. What are you talking about it shining. What do you mean it's shining. You know he would come up with the most idiotic arguments. When I was president of the local union he came over one day to see me about something. I said okay I'll see if I can get it taken care of with the company. He was on a committee in the Tool and Die. So I went to the company and negotiated with the company and I told him about it and he he said okay no problem. I went to the next Tool and Die meeting and I told membership and all that and he got up and said I didn't tell you that. Who told you that, you know. What the hell you talking about. I said you know there is a person that his word was just. ]'

I: How can a guy like that, from the leadership in the Tool and Die unit expect to get a large amount of votes at the international?

R: Well he was just protesting. See he plays the role of being against everything. You know aginer. Never for anything. Just against. He was against Reuther. He wants to come back and say I took that Reuther on. I ran against him. You know, thata boy, you will get

that man. And everybody likes to see somebody take the big Goliath out. He was always against it. I had never seen him for. I said to him one day, Art will you tell me someday what you stand for so that I can make my mind up. If he tells you to do something or he projects something and if you agree with him, he will back off. But he is another case. I don't want to talk--he is deceased now, he has been deceased for years. So it's not important. I said the only time we voted for Walter Reuther was because I didn't want to vote for him. And you know what, workers in the plant all understood it. Well all the leadership knew him too. He would get up on the General Council. He had charged in 19, was it '67, yeah 1967 negotiations he put out a leaflet within the plant, we had a strike, we had a 30-day strike against the Ford Motor Company finally we had a settlement. We put out a leaflet that Walter Dorosh, President of Local 600, chairman of the Ford Negotiating Committee along with Walter Reuther and he named Ken Bannon and a few others, had sold out. He knows, he could prove that there was a settle, that we could have settled this strike when we were negotiating, he was arguing. We should strike to get all our demands that we put on the table. Not one demand should go off the table. And when we went on strike, he said the strike was needless. Well he sold out. There was no reason for this strike. Workers lost thousands and thousands of dollars, you know. How do you work with a person like this. But you know workers say well at least that will keep you guys on your toes. There are some people who say it keeps you guys on your toes you may be an idiot but by god he keeps you guys on your toes. ] Oh what kind of men--there was a lot of people well I had a Dr. Fisher who was a counselor in the City of Dearborn for years

and he says you know how I get elected, by being against. I said what do you mean? He said he never stuck with anything. If you are against it he says and I voted in that council if you check them council records Walter, he says you will see that I never voted for anything. They can never blame you for anything. I said well how can you get elected, you know. I just look at the bad parts of it he said and I come out and I tell the people to do the job on you, which is true when you think about it you know and you take a bigger portion of people go to the polls like he said more people go to the polls and vote against a person not for one. Do you know that? More people go to, you'll never hear from someone, I'm voting because I like him. I'm voting for him because I can't go for that son of a bitch. Isn't that the common comment.

I: Yes, that's true, in U.S. presidential elections.

R: Yeah. They are not for. They are not for. I don't think none of my people were for Reagan, they were against Carter.

I: It's just the way campaigns are structured, they are all throwing mud at the other person.

R: That's right. They are not there for. They are against at least the biggest percentage of people are against the candidate and not for. It's the truth when you think about it because you can't trust him. I don't know about this guy I'm not for him but he's better than that guy. And Fischer never lost an election. Yeah he said I never support a thing in <sup>the</sup> life and he said check the council records. I said well how do they operate, you know. I was the president there when I talked to him. I said how the hell do they operate. He says, I'm successful, used to get elected to <sup>o</sup> council, he's deceased now. I

said my God Doc, I says, we went to see him about something I forgot what it was about, he wanted something from labor and Local 600 was in Dearborn and I had a relationship with Hubbard and I talked to Hubbard he said look I'm willing to go for him if you can convince Doc Fisher and some of these other guys. Don't worry he will not support anything, he will never take a positive vote. He will abstain, he will absence himself, he will not project. He was elected every damn election. But if you talk to the people, yeah but he won't hurt you though. What will he do for you. There is not a positive person. Everything is negative. That's the way a fox was. You can think about this thing, a President, vote for international president for (?)

I said this is unthinkable, you know. I said I want to make it clear I am going to vote for Reuther this time so they understand, and I convinced my whole delegation. Would you have done anything differently under the circumstances?

I: You never know how a guy is going to operate if you don't know what his policies are.

R: That's right you know he drifts, just like a board on the water, you know. I'd rather, I have more respect for a person who stands for a position I may not agree with it, you know, it's an honest position. I hate a guy that wavers.

I: Talking about people with strong positions. How could the people who were open communists or communist sympathizers and such, how do they operate on the shop floors. Do they talk politics a lot or do they just stick to militant trade unionism or how--

R: Well, I don't know who all the communists were in Local 600 or any place else as far as that goes. I could assume who was a communist



who wasn't a communist but I think that would be unfair for me to state that he was a communist. <sup>1</sup> But people that made up the left wing as I said before generally stood for a position. They were always projecting something. They were always moving in. They were always introducing resolutions and the other group always opposed it vote for anything and they always opposed it. <sup>1</sup> As I said, the right wingers in the plant I think they fought for grievances just like anybody else did. I can't deny. <sup>2</sup> Joe McCluster was on a bargaining committee with me in the Tool and Die and he ran as a right wing president for the Local 600 and was elected. He didn't deny it. He was pro Reuther, pro you know, but a job, well we worked on bargaining committee, man he did a good job. He wrote the grievances, processed the grievances to go in there and battle. They never projected never, <sup>2</sup> let me give you an illustration. If there is something wrong with the seniority agreement and we know it's wrong and it benefits the company and doesn't benefit the worker you don't know these things sometimes until you negotiate them and then in practice and you say, holy God, we left a big hole there. They won't take steps to correct it. You know they won't project. They won't, <sup>3</sup> I introduced a resolution when I was president of the Tool and Die unit, we had a separate tool maker trade and a separate die maker trade. And the work is almost identical. When you go through the apprenticeship program you got to take the same class and everything with the exception of the last 500 hours. You read the blueprints of the tool maker instead of the dye maker. All this 7,500 hours, school hours and everything were identical. Tool makers they work on changes that they place in the engine, rear axle, these parts of the car. Die makers work on the body design,

bodies, body fenders, floor pans. When the company is making major changes in the bodies they are hiring diemakers from the streets and tool makers are layed off because their work is, see they don't make the changes simultaneously. The body design is made, changed significant change, they put their money in the body design and all the engine work and everything would be almost the same. When they don't make the, they run to the body designs in three years cycles. They don't make, all they do is move the crome some place differently. The designs, the silhouette, is almost identical. When they don't make those then they go into extensive changes in the engine design and change the engines or and they do all their experimental work on the rear axles, transmission, and all this other stuff. And they will make changes in body die work, they lay off the diemakers and they hire toolmakers from the street. And we've always had amongst our group about 400 people layed off at one time or another they would never get them back because, and so I bgan to think about it, and I said, this is wrong. Why don't we combine these classifications? Normalize our group and then we would have fuller employment for all our members. I took it up with the committee and the committee said it's a good idea. The toolmakers have a tradition and die makers have a tradition, and they don't want nobody to break tradition here, you know we are pure diemakers. All over the country there is pure die makers, pure tool makers. I says we're going to break tradition. Let's try it. Let's try it on for size. So I introduced it in the next membership meeting and got the resolution and put together all the sequence of events. Half of them didn't know how it would occur. These changes would take place in five years and they appeared at, the

reason I established the 5 years because there is 4 years apprenticeships. There will be new people coming in and they will be coming in from the bottom they would be coming in as tool and die maker and after it appeared in maybe 10 years with a sufficient number of people come in, I let that 10 years question mark because I said I don't know how developments are, because we would speed it up or you could slow it up depending upon the employment. You know, there is a lot of people are being hired in and you could speed that operation up. And then you there would just be (?) one classification. So I introduced this in 1962 I think it was. And I brought it to the membership meeting and Jesus, holy hell broke loose. God almighty the tool makers were insensed that they would be working as die makers and die makers says tool makers are stupid and we had at that time maybe about 700 die makers and maybe about 400 tool makers and they were hot. I said, I made my step. We came back after the membership meeting and I said to, our membership meetings are always on Sundays. I came into the plant on Monday and I met with some of my good friends. Oh you better back off from that you are going to get murdered. No, I said I think its right, I'm going to go through with it. He said, Oh, I've been on the floor all day today, boy, they've been givng me hell. You go down to that die room they'll eat you up. I said well, that's where I'm going, I said, let's go, do you guys want to come with me? So anyway, the long and short of it was that I went down there, and I must have been down there for a week. Those guys just age me up. My throat was hoarse form talking and shouting, trying to convince them, giving them the facts. And then I went down to the tool and boy it was the same thing in reverse. What are you

trying to do. God almighty. You are helping the company, you're a company stooge I never believed that of you Walter. I said this is going to stabilize employment. I said it's a big step but someone has to do it. I'm going to do it. And they says well. I said I want to try to do it before election which is in '63, '62. Well, I couldn't get, before you take anything up with the company you got to get membership approval. So I met with the committees and we talked and talked and I said what's wrong with you guys don't you admit it's right. Yeah but you can't convince them people out there. I understand it, I said you got to get out there and you got to sell it. You know you got to go out and do the job. They were convinced after a lot of selling jobs after discussions and arguments and I showed them figures and I showed them the seniority list we had the names and everything. They would not tackle it, no way. You are taking a big bite. They said, no way. I got to take this bite. We don't want to go back to work. I said I'm prepared to go to work. I said if we can get this passed, I'm prepared to go to work on it. If I can get beat I won't mind it I said because I know I have a better job security. I said, as a union leader, at least I improved the structure to the point that I think everybody can benefit out of it. I didn't let it go because I thought it was bad. The long and short of it is that I couldn't get it passed before the next election. They used it against me in that election.

I: Oh yeah.

R: But I got elected anyway. They thought I was going to take the beating of my life. But the worker said he stood for something. And so what happened, after I got reelected it took me two more years

before the next elections and I still couldn't get it passed. They elected me but they would not, they couldn't accept it. After I went to the local in 1965 I went to the membership meeting and I spoke as elected president and I said let me tell you something. And I went through this thing with them. It began to hit the light. I said if you had done it, I said in 1962, I said, we would have been three years in that agreement. I said, so I checked with the company, I found out how many apprentices they put on. I can't remember about 400 apprentices. I said it would have been graduated, it would have been less than 400, I said instead, and I had it broke down in tool makers and die makers and pointed out you would only have 25 guys would be loaded this way you would have had 400, you know. You began to show ~~in~~ the facts. <sup>2</sup> [ I finally got it passed at a membership meeting but I wasn't around the membership as they went in to negotiate with the committee and MacCinzori was my successor, and he got it negotiated. ]<sup>2</sup>

I: In one of those separate contracts? ]<sup>3</sup>

R: Well, see each unit they had what they call supplement agreements. So he negotiated the supplement. Seniority structure but I broke it down, he said 1962 I didn't think about it, 1966 to get it up. But after they saw I showed them all the guys that come on after that and I kept talking with them and the guys began to say he didn't get beat by it, it didn't hurt his election, I only tried, you know. But this is what I'm saying, nobody would tackle it. <sup>4</sup> [ The right wing would say look, they would call it political. Well sure it's political but it's good. You know, politics, good politics make good government, good politics, you know, bad politics make bad government. ]<sup>4</sup> But I've got to get to--gt a drink of water.

Tape #4, Side A  
W. Dorosh

R: <sup>1</sup> It kind of split the local, you know. The supporters for Harry Truman. I think most of the people, while there was a lot of activity for Wallace--

I: Did it split the departments, or just the--

R: Yes it created a little split there but some of them, felt that this is an adventerous thing that Wallace didn't have an opportunity to win, and consequently you're helping to elect Dewey. These kind of discussions. Some guys were just hurt by it, you know they said that Truman was Roosevelt's, I'm talking about the older progressives who grew up in the Roosevelt era. And that created quite a division. While the Wallace forces were numerous, I think it would be about a 3 way split. Well, maybe not 3 ways, because there was no Republican support. A 2 way split, the right wing was 100% behind Truman of course. They just thought it was the wrong thing. A lot of progressives changed their positions, and went with Harry Truman. The people in the plant, I was in Tool and Die then, kiddes<sup>d</sup> us, they said, you guys are foolish you'll just get Dewey elected.

I: <sup>2</sup> Do you think that you got out a good size vote from the Ford workers for Wallace?

R: I don't know. I couldn't say. I don't know I have no idea. I can't remember that period now. But there was a lot of activity. I lived in South Dearborn at that time and Wallace finished first in my precinct. There is no question about it.

I: Oh yeah.

- R: Yes Wallace finished first in South Dearborn. If you checked the records in Dearborn you'll find that to be a fact. I think it was precinct 5, I was in, at that time. ]<sup>1</sup> Everybody on my street, I was precinct captain and we were very active. I would pick the people up and took them to vote and everything. They said that's the guy you should go for. Yeah, okay. I was active in the union. We finished first in South Dearborn. ]<sup>2</sup>
- I: I think I'll just take a look at all those--
- I: I'm going to have to look at the records of the precinct vote because they have those in the, they had them in, some counties do and some counties don't.
- R: If they had them they probably got rid of them now. What good are they.
- I: I know I was looking at Ohio, in Mansfield and they had good records from way back then.
- R: Oh yeah.
- I: The project that I started working on before this I was looking at 3 industrial cities Mansfield, Evansville, and Bridgeport, CT. And the vote for Wallace in all those came nowhere close to a plurality.
- R: Oh I know that. It scared a lot of people. Dewey was a corporate lawyer, the workers were really scared of the guy and they figured I ain't going to change. That's always the case. It's the case every year you know and Anderson ran last time as an independent candidate while there was some that agreed with him. They said I'm not going to lose my vote, I'm going to make sure that, because they didn't like Reagan.

I: <sup>1</sup> [ How important do you think the House unAmerican Activities Committee, which we talk about before, and about the whole series of committees, the senate committee and the house came tiwce and the administratorship. How much influence did you think that had over the curtailing of involvement by progressives?

R: I don't know. I don't think it changed anything. Everybody continued activities. The changes that occurred were the <sup>3 2</sup> Lee Romano, who was a left-winger up to that time, Shelton Tapp<sup>e</sup>s were the 2 that fingered, were the guys that were, the people that went out and named Local 600 and it seemed like in most instances ex-left wingers went in the other locals. <sup>3 2</sup> ] You know they went around. That's why labels about right winger and left winger sometimes throw me you know. I moved <sup>4 8</sup> [ during the UnAmerican Activities Committee period there were some right winters who rejected quite desperate, that thought this was dispicktable to do this to people, you know. I know a lot of right wingers who took that position and they said the guys any belief you wants, you know, and whether I agree with it or don't agree with it. They said I think this is damning, unless they got the evidence, they ought to put them on trial. <sup>5</sup> ] That was their position, you know. But just to have this, <sup>5</sup> [ they didn't like Lee Romano and Shelton Tapp<sup>e</sup>s. Becuase you know the reversal was they used to do that to the right wing. They felt their bite(?) you know. Lee Romano was one of the most outspoken persons in the local union, challenging the right wingers as company agents, company stooges, you know he always put labels on people. <sup>1 4</sup> ] He was vice president of Local 600 and if, he was part of the Tommy Thompson Administration. And he went, when they presented their programs, reports every month, and somebody would



question it, he would take off personally on these people you know, this was the whole history of well, the left wingers like that because it was kicking the daylight out of the right wingers. The right wingers were in inflable. <sup>1</sup> <sup>3</sup> [The lash, while he was a left winger understood how the left felt when he was going out and he would say this guy is a communist, this guy is communist, this guy is a communist, when Rankin was saying what buildings are the kind.... Well in this building here is so and so and so. You know he just let it off like it's a game with him, you know. It's obvious that the scoundrel always wraps himself up in the flag as a last resort. And he goes where he can get it easier. When the left was in power, he was a left winger, then Reuther offered him a job, he went with Walter Reuther and he was anti-, you know, <sup>5</sup> ] this is not a man, in my opinion. He was a left winger I know right wingers who were strong right wingers and just didn't appreciate it, you know. They thought it was wrong I remember at the General Council meetings this just come up and, there was some discussion on it, what should they do. And they said nothing, what should we do. Because somebody says something about this guy especially Romano, they knew Romano. <sup>2</sup> [ Shelton Tapps <sup>e</sup> wasn't vindictive, but they had Shelton Tapps <sup>e</sup> on something else.

I: Yeah.

R: I know. The government had him on something else, so he had to sing whatever they wanted. <sup>2</sup> They did that around the country they just tried to disrupt the labor movement. But I don't know if the activities had changed. There were some who, I don't know what you would call them, mudwamps, and they decided to go where it was better for them, at the time it was more convenient for him I guess, you

know. <sup>2</sup> [The good progressives they still stood together. They still stood. After it was all over, they used to run Local 600 still hell you know. Walter Reuther recognized that. ] <sup>3</sup> ] <sup>2</sup> ]

I: How long do you think it was that the progressives were in?

R: <sup>1</sup> [Well, the first election was in 1941, Paul Ste. Marie got elected. Paul Ste. Marie was an ACTU. He was replaced by Percy Llewellyn. I missed Joe Twyman. Joe Twyman succeeded Llewellyn. Llewellyn won, he became the 2nd President, he was a left winger and then Llewellyn got elected to the International Executive Board and was succeeded by Joe Twyman who was a left winger and then Bill Grant succeeded Joe Twyman was a left winger and Joe McCuster defeated Bill Grant and he was a right winger and Joe McCuster was a right winger and Paul Ste. Marie was a right winger, they were in there one year, one year each. Then Tommy Thompson got elected with the left wing, he stayed four years. Carl Stellato got elected as a right winger and within a year he was back into the left wing where he started and he was in there for 15 years and I replaced him and I was in there for 10 years. So there is 10, 15, that's 25, Thompson 24, Grant 25, 26, 27, 28 out of 30 years, 28 years were left wingers. ] <sup>11</sup> ]

I: What about in the building units themselves. I know you can read the different papers...

R: <sup>2</sup> [To tell you the truth from 19 I'd say about 1972, '73, '74 the wings kind of disappeared. Because from 19--I was selected in '65 and in 19--we have a different, with Walter and about 1970 Walter was making all kind of concessions to us, he called me up we would sit down and we would talk about different programs you know. I'm not saying he went along with me on everything but he wanted to know our views which

was important. We had a dialogue in other words. And I went on a resolutions committee he asked me to go on the resolutions committee at the conventions the convention was in '66 chairman of the Resolutions Committee '66, '68, '70, '72 convention, '74 convention, I think. No we didn't have one in '74. But at least five conventions I went, meet with Walter and he wanted to know what our position in 600 was. I think it was, the wings kind of disappeared. The right and left. I think. Now at Local 600 I couldn't, I never find who is left or the right myself.

I: No slates?

R: Oh they have slates, but the slates I think both slates now support the international union. <sup>1</sup> Owen Bieber. As a matter of fact, I think he's a pretty good guy. <sup>1</sup> I know him very well. He is a liberal guy. He doesn't drink, he doesn't smoke, he doesn't fool around. He's a guy that is strictly business. Good guy, very good guy. He is a lot different from Doug Frazier. <sup>2</sup> Frazier took to the bottle and ran around and couldn't take care of his men and he made concessions. I happen to know that Doug didn't care for the concessions but once the board makes a decision and the President carries them, you got to go along with it. <sup>1</sup> But I think if I was the vice president of the union I would tell them to go jump in the lake. I will negotiate for my department myself. He could remove you. I'd rather he remove me instead of participating in the negotiations and making concessions. You see there is a history to this, in all the negotiations that I sat in, and I have been in there a long time. <sup>3</sup> And as I said, I'm an old timer at this, the company used to always say to us, we don't want you to tell us how to run our business. That's management's prerogative.

Walter used to suggest if you call, making a, get rid of all this crome, make a cheaper car that will see on the market, cut the price of the GM cars so the public will go for them, and he used to resent that we would even dared to intervene in managerial areas. Well they told us that for years and they used to always, and when he used to go up to the negotiating table and we used to say to them well, open up your books. We ain't got the money. Remember what Walter Reuther used to say, you know, let's open up your books, let's see your books. Get them out here, you know. I'm not saying we're broke. You just put the items on the table and we will discuss the items, the cost I leave to us, they used to just tee us off to no end. ] ]

I: I have a couple more questions. How did being so active as a union member affect your personal life? It must have taken a lot of personal sacrifice and time involvement.

R: My wife can answer that better than I can. She thought I was some kind of goofball I guess when we got married, spend all my time in this union she didn't know the different between unionism and reumatism. I used to go membership meetings on one Sunday, General Council next Sunday and another membership meeting the next month. When I was President of the Local 600 I had a telephone at my bed. Anyplace I had to leave, I had to leave my number because when I was there we had 42,000 members. I was on call, I would get called in the middle of the night. You see the plant, the Rouge plant, we had a seven-day operation and a three shift operation. ]

I: So those are called 1, 2, and 3. Day is 1. Shift is midnight.

R: Days is on the second shift we call it. The third shift is afternoon the first shift is midnight. ]

I: How do you get name recognition on the other shifts?

R: Well, they get their committeemen. Every shift has their committeemen.

I: Yeah but for example you are trying to run as president of Tool and Die and you work on day shift. How do the guys on the other shift know about you?

R: Well, I generally started at 8 and I'd go till 5. You know and our plant they used to quit at 8:30 and the day shift used to quit at 3:30, I think. See because the midnight shift overlaps. It's not a full complete because there is a half hour lunch break. So there is one hour overlap. And so you can see if you get in concise, if you could get in at 7:30, as the unit chairman, I used to go in there and I would see the guy, if they wanted to see you they would wait in the committee room because they know you are going to be in there. Between 8 and 8:30 because you would be talking to somebody on the floor, somebody may stop you on the floor, but eventually I got to get in the committee room, you know. And then you have the schedules and you got your briefs and you got your local board meetings you got to attend, you got then your numbrs of committees of the local board, you're got to serve on. So there's all the assignments you have in addition to that. So you don't just have that one particular job. You get elected as chairman of the unit, you're an executive board member and they got about 7 committees on that board that they put you on one of them and you have to go to other units. And if you are on a committee you can't be in front of a unit hearing the compalints, complaints committee of the local union. You might have a complaint against a chairman you got to go in that other building and interview

these people and you schedule hearings. Where the local president can't be involved in this. It's another a board committees, a grievance committee, complaints committee, seniority committees, of the board we have recreation committees of the board, in other words when some problem comes up in recreation, he goes to that board that five-member board and they were all five members.

I: Elected or appointed?

R: Well, the President recommends it to the General Council so he takes office and sets up all his committees and he takes it to General Council. And of course you talk to the board member before you put him on. You say, when the elections are over, you say all right, you are the new elected people, these are the committees, I'm going to give you this, if you have any special preference, let me know. If you don't will you accept the jobs I gave you unless there's anything special, I don't want you to bring it up at the board. I don't want you to raise it because it might be personal. Bring it up with me and I will make the changes, you know. Some guy may not want to say up there, but he won't like it you know. Call me up and we'll meet in my office and we'll go through it. So you got all these other functions and you serve on the area CAP councils, which are politics. You have to attend those meetings.

I: Political Action committees?

R: Oh yes. You have area cap meetings, we have them. Then you have the district CAP meetings, and you got the state board meetings. So I was on all these when you are elected to that job you get paid an expense to make sure you attend them all. If you don't attend them, then your expenses are withheld unless you got a good reason like you say, while

I was sick, I can prove I was sick. But you got all these other functions. In other words that's why the UAW has a good political structure. People are there, you know. You have the districts, then you have community, I live in the city of Dearborn then I have a word to say in this Dearborn, you know. The UAW endorses, pass it out to their committee. But it keeps you busy. Believe me when I tell you. When I left Local 600 I went to the International and became an administrative assistant to Woodcock and then I traveled all over the country. You know I was a troubleshooter.

I: Oh.

R: Possible strikes and negotiates with the strikers. A complaint, some guy wrote a letter to Woodcock making charges you have to, you fly all over the country, for two and a half years, I flew all over the country, I said god what a job. And every place you go you are a no good SOB, you know somebody is mad at somebody in there if you make a decision. So then they got to come back and prepare a report, submit it and give it to Leonard, Leonard reads it and if he agrees with it he signs it and sends the report back on his signature and your signature and you got to sign it. So I continued that two and a half years and I said good Lord I got to get off this merry-go-round. And you are carrying your suitcase in your car. You drive to a city, the UAW has most of its local unions in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Michigan that is generally the UAW then we got some from New York a few locals in California, maybe about 10 locals in California, some in the south, very few in the South. A couple in Alabama three or four in Alabama and most of them are out here. And I should get in the car and just drive here and then we tried to group them together too and a

lot of them used to get 100 letters a day average. The retirees, somebody always sends a complaint. Some guy in the shop. But you got to remember we, maybe had 500,000 members and some of these signs a letter, and so what he does his secretary, he had five administrative assistants and this guy covers this area and this guy covered this area well they changed, they rotate you, they don't keep you, for awhile I had Michigan and I'd go all over the state and I had a '67, I had '66 Mercury, I must have put 100,000 miles on that car in a year. I was driving here and back and up north and back and if you come back, you got to make a report. He says I got to have it by Monday you got to be there Sunday working on it you know. Here again it's an administrative job, it's got to be done. There are many times the guys I would say 50 percent of the times the people are right in the plants when they are complaining about something. The local leadership didn't care about it. Most of the cases we got were complaints from Blacks. They weren't given a promotion to a job. The local union does not have a baseball team because the Blacks could dominate on the team, the vice president cancelled the team, they had a team for years. The whites had predominated now with the Blacks are coming in, he cancelled the team. We said wait a minute. The guy would say, well our members don't want to participate when you go in there you have to send a telegram you are going to be there so there is no excuse. You can't drive 200 miles and make sure the guy isn't there, you know, you come by chance. So you send him a telegram or you send a registered letter saying if you cannot be available please notify me when you can be available. We will handle this matter and you send a copy of the letter, so he can't say well I didn't know



about it. Here is a copy of the letter we got out, you are to investigate when I come down to see you I want you and this guy, the parties involves<sup>d</sup>, to meet in your office at 10:00 or you set the time. If you can't make it you are supposed to let me know. You don't say well let me know you say this is the time and I'm going to be there and we send a telegram to the complaintant. Well it seems like that don't mean nothing but to that particular guy, it was important. So you go in there and you listen oh no we ain't got no money. So you say to someone did you cut any expenses off? Are you still earning your full wages? Are you still getting your expenses? What are your expenses? Now wait a minute that's none of your business. I say I got to make a report. I can find out if I want to. I said we'll just get your records, you know. And he will tell me yeah we got increases you know you got to justify why you are canceling something that's been in existence and when the Blacks come in and they are better players and the whites don't want to play with them or something you know . If you want answers we said look, you better stick to your baseball team. We are ordering you to establish this team to keep this team up. And they have all kind of complaints you know and some are legitimate. You know very legitimate complaints and most of the bylaws of the international union and the local unions are to protect against railroading the activities of the membership, they must be a certain percent, they vary you know. This one local union and keep this off the record. Walter you got to go to Chicago so and so is happening so and so. I says when is this. Tomorrow he says. I think you better fly down there because it's important. You go down

- to the airport, your ticket will be at the airport. You never know what you can do you know.
- I: Talking about quorums and having that, what was the membership participation at the Local 600. Did you used to get good turnouts of different meetings?
- R: Well, let me tell you this our bylaws of Local 600 says that you must call a membership meeting once a year--
- I: That was?
- R: Local 600, yeah. Each unit must call a membership meeting once a month.
- I: Oh.
- R: All local unions in the UAW are obligated to call a membership meeting once a month. They can call shift meetings, they can call, you got to call a meeting where the people can participate, you know. In other words if you cannot call a membership meeting on a strike vote or contract vote where the membership is employed in the plant, in other words I can't schedule a meeting on Tuesday when the guys are working. On a Sunday for that matter if there is a big Sunday group working.
- I: How do yu schedule the unit meetings, then once a month.
- R: Well Sunday they had to schedule them, most plants let me put it this way. Most seven day operations plants have shift meetings. If you read the Ford Facts you'll see they will say shift meetings that decided upon first shift did this ...

End Tape 4, Side A

Tape 4, Side B  
W. Dorosh

R: So they are obligated under the constitution of the Local bylaws, Local 600 used to call, schedule shift meetings. As a rule, you schedule meetings on Sundays or Saturdays if there is nobody working. You could schedule them on a Saturday or a Sunday if a percent is working, you know, in other words, if 5 percent is working well there is still 95 percent that can participate in the meeting. But if there are full shifts working you schedule a meeting you conduct business that's controversial you can challenge them and they will make them schedule another meeting.

I: What kind of percentage do <sup>o</sup>you get for attending the different meetings?

R: It depends upon the issues. Sometimes in the periods sometimes like in the summer months the meetings, well they got so bad that they cancelled the meetings in July, August, September and move the meeting and each unit was obligated to schedule the board meetings and make the board decision available to the membership by posting on the bulletin board those months where you don't have membership meetings so they can keep abreast with the developments, if this nation has cause again anxiety they are obligated to call a meeting. The bylaws provide that they can get a petition circulated, but generally what happened was if they wanted a meeting, they could get it. We never had no difficulties. The local union, we used to get, well 1967 strike for, we rented the Cobol Arena and we got about 8,000 people in there and we had 42,000 at the plant. We bussed them from Local 600.

We got around 8,000 members. The next year I scheduled a membership meeting at Local 600 and we could seat about 1500 people in our hall there. I think only about 400 showed up.

I: How about back in the '40s and '50s?

R: Oh we had to have, we rented the Drake Stadium one time, we had about 25,000 people.

I: Oh yeah. Was that for a strike?

R: It was on a contract. Then we had one time the, we rented the fair grounds we must have had about 15 or 20,000 there too. Again it was on contracts you know, it was contract issues. And this is the way they voted in them days on a contract. They never had the procedures that they got. Everybody in the hall--all those for, all those against then they were walking out, half of them didn't understand what they voted for, you know. It was just too unwieldy. A guy wanted to speak, I want to speak on it. I want to speak on it. You know you would have to spend 15 hours there to let anybody speak. Guys raising hell we were sold out because I couldn't speak. We had the one in Drake Stadium it was hell. You know we had a platform out there and you couldn't see nobody, it was just... We finally abandoned that idea but I rented the Cobol Arena that was good because you could see everybody. It was kind of compact and we had the auditorium there. And I told them Walter Reuther would be there and he was there and he spoke on the contract. That was when we had the strike. The strike was on then. No it was after the strike. About 8000 showed up and then as I said the next few months, the next year see it says every July you are supposed to schedule, no one shows up, you know. See they liked the unit meetings because it deals directly

with their problems, shop problems. The local, what are you talking about parking lots and bigger things that we are responsible for in the Local negotiations.

I: So, for example, in the Tool and Die, what kind of turnout did you have?

R: Oh the unit meetings as a rule, we used to get maybe 300 a month.

I: 300 out of . . . .

R: Oh we had then about 2400 when I was president of it then. We would get about 10 percent--five percent. Again it would depend upon the issues. When we had the first two contracts, we used to rent the Shatsky High School, and we used to seat 1500 people.

I: Was this in the 40s?

R: Yeah and all the plants had such big membership turnouts that we used to rent all the high schools around the area.

I: Yeah I remember <sup>they</sup> we were at Cass a lot.

R: Cass Tech, yeah we rented ~~to~~ Cass Tech, Stellato scheduled about 5 meetings in their and that thing would be jammed right out in the street, we would put speakers outside. That was the biggest place they would get rentals, you know. You couldn't rent like the big arenas in them days. And every unit, 18 plants this local this unit would rent Western High School and you would go there and it was packed, you couldn't get in there. But at that time we were talking about the basic issues and you know what happens and we've been analyzing this for years. <sup>2</sup> [ Why did the membership shrink and it's the participation in the local union activities or unit activity? Well, you can offer two answers. One answer is all the problems that bothered them had been resolved, you know. What were their problems?

Seniority, wage structures, promotional activities. Everything spelled out now you know. In those days in first meetings a guy would say this guy I remember one of the first memberships in Tool and Die I went into he says this guy here was denied the leader's job for 10 years. I make a motion that the bargaining committee go in and negotiate to get this guy a leader's job you know. Everybody says yeah he's a good guy okay I'll favor it. Well that was a decision and we got to go in to negotiate. Well today there are rules that says twice a year anybody who desires some promoting to the following classifications, they put his name on the list with his seniority date and his badge number, you know. It's really on the list. And so what happens when we were still there when I was still there we would take them in seniority order. Let's see we have an agreement now with the company that people would be placed in seniority order on the list and when promotions are available, they will be given the job unless the company can offer substantial evidence to prove that he doesn't have the qualifications to perform the job. In other words maybe a person is, some of the arguments the company advances we cannot handle people, they are always fights or arguing. Can't afford to appoint a leader over six people, we had a grievance that said that the leadership, you would have 6 to 8 people, working for them. Well, if you can't get along with people, well he said, how could you prove he doesn't. Well, we gave you the evidence, well let's see the evidence. We are not prepared to give this (?) because you come in there and some foreman says, Let's see the evidence, you know. If we think it's significant the evidence, we'll take it into account, or we say to them okay if you say that's the case we are prepared to do this, we

are prepared to say give him six months. And we will talk to the people, I worked with them if he's not satisfied, we're prepared to pull him off the job, and they have no grievance. This is what you call giving the guy the opportunity to prove or disprove what they are saying is true. Well, today all these things are out. Everything you do, it tells you how you get promoted, it tells you how you get your shifts, another issue that used to bring out a big membership is shifts rotation. What that meant is, under the Ford setup, before they had the union they used to change two weeks, two weeks you would be on days, two weeks on afternoon, two weeks on midnights. Two weeks on days, two weeks on, God, your whole system would get all screwed up. So when the union came in people were kind of acclimated to the rotation they liked it because they had certain things that over the years that, you know, they probably bowl on those two weeks, and in the different leagues and they didn't want to foul it up, you know. So what the issue would come to, the next membership meeting, instead of two weeks, I make a motion that we change shifts once a month. And I want three... In other words, it's an issue that directly affected them. So that really created all kinds of anxiety and so all shifts would come out. Man you would have 2500 people and so they argued back and forth and finally somebody would say Mr. Chairman I make a motion that we make this a secret ballot vote and that the elections, that the unit chairman scheduled elections within two weeks within the next month and let the membership make a decision and that the election be conducted by the election committee. Every unit has to have an election committee under the constitution. Okay they'll vote it unless the guys figured they got enough votes to reject it, you

know. And vote it out vote it out. Mr. Chairman I want to speak in opposition. You can't speak on a motion to table or something. They get into a big discussion and all the counter-motions and motions and table, and finally they get that out. But those are the kinds of issues that will get big votes. Or if they say that the damn seniority agreement shouldn't be by, some of the young guys would get all kind of worked up. It will take us 15 years before we get to be leaders and leaders as a rule get 25 cents an hour minimum above the die makers. Well, you take 25 cents, adds up. So they said let's go to the membership meeting and then they say let's establish a ratio, for every high seniority guy, one low seniority guy, you know and you will have a packed house there. And the young guys will get up and they will start raising hell. But those are the kind of issues. But everything else is spelled out and I says we have done such a good job. See all our agreements are in a little book. There might be about 45 to 50 and its from A to Z, tells you everything. How do you get your medical leave how to do this, and it's all spelled out, and they've got these books so they figured what could they do with the agreement, and to change any unit agreement must be posted on the bulletin board at least two weeks before the membership meeting. So they say, I just don't want to hear about Tom Brown's grievance the hell with Tom, you know. Most of the meetings they come up with grievances. And the only guys who show up for the grievances is the guy who is directly involved in the grievance or somebody who wants to recommend something new but generally all just become so routine and drab today. And the only time you get maybe a bigger membership is during an election, they will say Senator so and so is going to be



there. You say oh I want to see that guy. Or Detroit elections, they may bring some councilman or yeah unless there is something specific or they will say the local President will be there you know and you can't be at every meeting every month because there are 18 units, it's just impossible. So okay he will be there. So he'll say I want to talk to that son of a bitch I got something to square up with him. I'll never forget the time one guy came up in the membership meeting and he says to me, how did he put it, I went to some membership meeting and he says boy he says I'm going to tell you something I voted for you and he says I think you are a good guy, but I'm not going to cast another vote for you again. I said gee I'd like to hear an explanation why, I said then I think you are obligated to tell it to the membership. He says you endorsed some guy that is running in his city on the city council who had agreed to increase their taxes. I said holy God, I said let me tell you something. I said, I didn't endorse him. It was in Ford Facts, you put it in Ford Facts and you endorsed him. Wait a minute I said, I endorsed him and I backed him because the UAW did it. But I said, we can't select candidates on one issue. You got to use a series of issues. If the guy is good on one issue but bad on 15 issues and we can't consider him either. He may be good on 15 issues and bad on 1 we have to support him. You know we got to consider him on the total basis. I don't give a damn he says, I will never cast a vote for you anymore because you endorsed him. And you know, (it was the funniest thing?) I said okay. But you know the next day he will call you up and say look I'm sorry I apologize. If that's your explanation, I'll accept it. I tell you the most interesting thing is to be with workers, it's great. I miss that

part, you know when I go shopping I meet hundreds of retirees or workers and they will tie me up and we will stand, as a matter of fact the last time I went to Florida, I was walking through, my wife does knitting she makes these pillows and so she went to buy some crochet stuff she says we are going past Lake City I tink it, let's stop along there there is a K-Mart here I can see the sign we will stop there and she says I want to buy some crocheting stuff. I said okay we have been driving for a couple of hurs and I could use a little walking, and I pulled into the parking lot. We walked in there and somebody said hey Dorosh you no good son of a bitch. I found a retiree. We had retirees from Local 600 living all around the country. We got a lot of them in Florida. We must have about 3000 of them living in Florida. And my wife said everyplace you go you get stopped, and you got to talk. Partiuclarly retirees they got all kind of problems they tell you about they are sick and this, you listen and you sit there and oh I tell you Walter. It's a great life. God, I don't want to hold you here too long, you kow its 10:30, quarter to 11.

I: I've one other thing. One thing I want to go through, which you passed over quickly. I remember reading this book called Ford Men and Method by <sup>3</sup> ~~Barkley~~ <sup>Sackett</sup> and it was written in the '30s and it was explaining the production methods at Ford in a very superficial way but they talked about the Henry Ford trade school there. And when I was reading that, they put it all in the company light, but it sounded like the trade school would orient kids, you go there instead of high school, right and that it would get them early, and people would go to that trade school would end up being more pro-company. That's the way it sounded by the way that they were describing it.

R: Well I'll tell you there were two people that put that trade school out of business, me and John Orr.

I: Oh yeah.

R: Both graduates from the Henry Ford Trade School. The reason we put them out of business is they had a big layoff in j19--the period I was telling you about, '51, '52, no it was later than that, about '58, 1957-58. [ We had about 800 Tool and Die makers layed off and they sent all the work into the trade school.

I: Were they paying much lower wages?

R: Oh certainly, we were making at that time about \$3.50 an hour and I guess they paid them about \$1.25. So we went into the trade school which was located right in the Rouge plant, it was located in the B building. We went to the trade school and we got all the work orders, and we noticed the work orders were transferred from tool and die to the Henry Ford trade school. We met with the company and we wrote a grievance on it and the company said it's not a grievance, it says we can't jump out of work, it's in the plant, it's our school; we did some research too. We had a lawyer do some research for us. ] Lacey, who was president did that. I forgot which attorney it was, but they got some (?) at the school (?) from that kind of work, they cannot compete, in other words, with adult community. And we went back into the, we were still in secondy stage of the grievance procedure and said to the company okay here is our disposition. The company said [ the labor relations guy at that time was Doug Knott who was an all-American football player with the University of Detroit, Detroit Lions, he was a halfback on the Detroit Lions, ] he says I talked with the company on this, there was going to be a meeting with

the company legal department and we want the international involved and nobody else. Very serious thing you are dealing with here. And they made us believe that we were committing a big crime by

(?) of this kind. It was a good school, I will have to admit. They put <sup>out</sup> on some very good mechanics. I don't think that there is an ounce of, as a matter of fact most of the people that graduated out of the Henry Ford trade school don't go into the shop itself, they promote up. Most of them are engineers. Well I'm talking about the period of the '40s, '50 I think that showed up about the '60s when the engineers become organized and they have to have a degree now, to go to college. Go into engineering now, they become more sophisticated too. We were talking about the schools. He said, you guys, I want you guys to know you are responsible, this union will be responsible for closing down this school. I said you don't have to close this school down. We said you can keep that school open. What the company did for years, we worked on this work for tools, dies and fixtures, and rates of pay, when I went to Henry Ford trade school I got 15 cents an hour and we competed with, that time the rate of pay in the plant was 75 cents an hour for the tool maker. I'm not saying that our work was quality but it was substantial to perform the work that you were doing, it require that finness. After I was in there for about the fourth year I was doing fine work. I worked on tools, fixtures that was used right into the plant. We were competing, Ford was competing since 1927 he started the school and it was closed in 1954 I think, it was '54 I think because we filed the grievance, '50 or something I can't remember the exact date but anyway by the time all that went through we agreed that the school would close after the

class graduated, four year period, it started '49 or '50, it was during that period of layoffs right after the war. Took all the work in there. So when you claim, or the claim is made in the book somebody lays a claim to the fact, I don't think that's the case. When I was on the national negotiating committee one of my tasks was to go around all four plants around the country and talk to the membership and go and visit the plants I didn't go to all of them there was too many of them. But I picked a certain number of them. Every plant I went into I found Ford Trade School graduates as managers of the plants. What I'm saying is they are highly trained in there, very good mechanics and I'll tell you something else, if you visit the job shops in the greater Detroit area they are owners of plants. They all went out. They are kind of elite, you know. They belong to the (?) group golf club here the Henry Ford Trade school alumni association club. I never belonged to that stuff. To me it seemed high brow. But they do, they have an alumni association and they are owners of all these small plants.

I: So besides going into be engineers or owners of their own plants the only other place they would go would be the tool and die shop or would they be distributed all around?

R: Job shops. Most of them went out, see let me tell you about a tool and die maker. <sup>3</sup> A tool and die maker is kind of a unique animal, he can figure, first he can figure percentage and everything and he will go where he will get the last penny if he <sup>can</sup> get a quarter penny more he will go across the street and get that job you know. They are very funny people I never seen nothing like it. The more money they got the more they wanted. And let me tell you something else. I'm a tool

and die maker and I'm talking about them all. Every so often Ford Motor Company, when I was at the local union, Ford Motor Company would call me and say that the, I don't know what they called it, UAR lunch company wants a meeting with you. When they do, nine out of ten times they want to raise prices. They have to meet with you to tell you, unless you can disprove that, you know. So they will come and go meet with them the officers will meet with them the company will take us in there. And they will say look here we haven't raised prices on coffee for seven years and we have been selling it for 15 cents a bottle 20 bottles, we got to go up to 20 cents, well you just can't do that. And so finally we will argue and finally we will get it down to 17 cents, you know, it could be one of those things. No come on 15 cents. You know 20 cents God damn it all these years, why didn't you raise it a penny every year. Nobody stopped you because you're not going to tell 'em. We can't take a five cent bite. And then they will go on they will call you, okay we will settle on 17 cents, we will cut down someplace else. Well anyway we go back to work, you go in the plant, you know, and guess who the (?) will come from in the first place, the most highly skilled, highly paid guy, Tool and Die (?) and he's complaining, and they are making at least 1.00 an hour more than the production workers do. I can't believe it. Everybody in the plant accepts it. They want to have a picket line around the lunch counter. So I go to the meetings and said wait a minute we negotiated on 17 cents an hour I mean 17 cents a bottle, they were going to put up <sup>to</sup> the 20 and I'm not going to <sup>keep</sup> you, if we were victorious, <sup>f</sup>The fact is you are still paying 17, you are paying more. But they got to proof. They shows <sup>ed</sup> us the bills. All you guys have

got increases in the last 7 years how much cost of living did you get, you know. That has nothing to do with it. Goddamnit, 3 cents and you know they give me more hell on money on one penny, the production workers won't say nothing they will accept it, because we tell them when you put those in, they generally put on the wagons or in the cafeterias, new cost as a result, and they tell you the meeting will be with your local leadership, and the local leadership agrees you know and they got my signature on there and it's on there someplace to show that it's legit, you know, they look and say our local agreed, there must be some reason for it. But them skilled guys they are so critical. And I said they can figure, they can, and you know what our guys used to do, if they found out that a job somewhere down the street is making more <sup>A!</sup>oney, they quit and go over there. And if that job shop was working 5 days a week and we were working 6 they would quit. ]<sup>3</sup>

I: If you can do this I don't know, what I brought here is a list of the different plants and something I'm doing is comparing the differences between the different units. One of the variables is political and another is militance or, you know, if a certain nationality group dominated, or so on. If I can tell you the name of the unit, and can you tell me some impressions that you have that characterize that unit?

R: I don't know what period we are going to be talking about.

I: About the '40s.

R: Okay. There is a considerable change I couldn't give you nothing on it. '40s?

I: '40s and early '50s. The early part of the union.

R: Well they used to bounce back and forth. They'd start off with, the motor plant. They'd elect a left winger maybe for two terms and they'd elect the right winger for two terms. There never was one way all the way across and like I said that people I can think of are, Bill Cooper was President there, Paul Boatman was president there, Johnny Kerr was president there, Humphries was president there and like I said one was left, they used to go back and forth. Remember those strained, continuous. The next building over was [the assembly plant and there too, you had the same thing you know one year you would get a [Johnny Quillico elected, he was a left winger] and the next time you'd elect Mike Donnelly was elected, and then you would get, and it used to just go back and forth. You would never have a straight. [The next building come in would be the glass plant. Here again they used to change [Johnny Roebuck was president. He was a left winger. Wasn't a bud guy for maybe two terms. And after Roebuck, I can see the guy's face, I can't remember his name now.

I: Was that Zarro?

R: [Mike Zarro was a left winger.

I: He was kind of an he was a left winger and right winger. He was kind of in the middle. He was a photographer and he used to get business by taking pictures during election time for the right wingers and left wingers. On issues he would side with the right, some with the left, he was a photographer. [Mike Zarro was, I can see his face but I can't think of his face. The next building would be the [Press Steel.

End Tape 4, Side B



Tape 5, Side A  
W. Dorosh

R: Jim Tamoor was a left winger, was a President 2 terms, or 3 terms. It was one year elections. And then Lee Ramono for about two terms. Then Archie Acciacca, a left winger for two terms.

I: Did McPhaul come in there?

R: No, McPhaul was never elected President.

I: Oh, he was Vice President.

R: Vice President. As a matter of fact I ran for President with him in that building, I was laid off then as a tool and die maker. In that building, McPhaul got elected on my ticket. McPhaul, Anderson, there was 3 of them. And that was a very interesting thing, he got elected and never served a day (McPhaul). He got fired. See what was happening, this was the militant days of our union, this was the '50s, '48. I got laid off, and I could have gone off and gotten a job as a tool maker or stay in the plant. I agreed to stay in the plant, in the stamping plant. I went to work in the stamping plant. I was working for a Polish boss, a personal friend of mine I knew, but I was working for him anyway. And what we were doing, we were carrying on a campaign during our lunch period we used to get up in the lunch room and speak I'd charge Archie, I was running against Archie Accaicca, and I charged Archie Accaicca, which was true incidentally, agreeing to speed up in the plant. He agreed with the company to put counters on machines before they never had no counters, you know. And Archie said well everybody is going to do their share of work and he became concerned about the company's effort. Anyway there was a number of

other things he had agreed to and we contested him on it. It was those things that bothered me that, the workers always had fault with different management and that's the approach that kind of stung me. So this Polish guy comes up to me, his name was Barney Gotch and said come on, I'll give you a tip. I said what's happening. He said I was just called down to Labor Relations, he said, I understand you're speaking in the lunchrooms. Yeah, I said, I'm up for President. I know you are, he says. He says to me there is going to be Ford Service, Labor Relations in there and under the contract I understand you guys can't speak in the lunchrooms, which is true, you can't speak in the lunchrooms. They are going to have your speech on a recorder, with the speech they'll nail you. You'll be discharged. So I said, wow, I better get down to McPhaul, McPhaul was a committeeman full time committeeman. So I said will you excuse me a minute, I said I want to go talk to somebody to make sure he don't get hurt either and so I go down and get all of them. [ McPhaul, and Max Chait and I says to them, it was Max Chait, Anderson, Dorosh, we had nine men on the slate but there was only about 4 speakers the other 5 were just good guys, you couldn't get them to talk in front of a crowd. I was a rabble rouser. McPhaul was a rabble rouser, Max Chait was a rabble rouser, ] and so was Anderson. And so the 4 of us were making a lot of noise. So we had spoke already they had 3 main lunchrooms and they used to get about 500 people in the lunchrooms. And we would stand up on the tables and speak. The first day I got up and spoke and Archie wasn't there. He said, boy if you say a word against me again I'll be there. I said okay you be there I'm going to be there the next day. So I was in the next lunchroom which was the bigger one they had two

on one end and the biggest one in the center. And Archie was there and he got up and he said he's not a production man he's a tool and die, he don't care about you guys, he didn't hit the issues though, and well he beat me bad there. I got in again, I said about maybe four months before the election they didn't know me in the building there. So I got down and when I got ahold<sup>d</sup> of McPhaul at the committee desk and I says hey I'm not speaking today in the cafeteria, I said you shouldn't, Max and Andy, let Archie speak. And he says, are you taking teh<sup>h</sup> word of a foreman. I said what have we got to lose. I said if nothing happens to Archie today you can go speak tomorrow. What's the problem. Look I'm not going to be a quitter, we got these guys on bla, bla, bla. I said okay. I'm not speaking. If yu want to speak I'm going to take that, you know, word that was given to me. And so they got out there, and they got Archie and everybody. They fired them all. Well I went to the hearings I had to go to the hearings downtown before the umpire and I defended Archie and all of them, you know. They wanted a witness for and against and nobody would go up there for Archie because they didn't care too much, and I said I'll go. And my story up there was that they've always done it, you know. What's all the concern about. So anyway the long and short of it, the umpire reinstated Archie but he kept the others fired. And we could never understand that. Archie was reinstated to full employment. But McPhaul, Anderson and Chait.<sup>3</sup> Well Archie gave a story up there also that he went up there too. He did say and I have to admit it, but they did leave it out of their text, that I know this is illegal but I don't want people to consider me as a coward to get up to speak if they speak, you k<sup>k</sup>ow and one of those things. I'm forced to do this

thing on whichever stand. This was his choice, and we started this and it is important for this guy to get up.

I: So it sounds like Press Steel was pretty leftist.

R: Yeah it was leftist. Following Archie was Joe Allen and Joe Allen was in office about 3 or 4 terms, I guess. And then replacing Joe Allen was John Szluk was a right winger.

I: That's Szluk?

R: Szluk that's right. He replaced them and then the wings kind of faded there, right after that period. Some of the left wingers were gone some of the right wingers were there the opposition that was, Andy something. ] All right your next building over was the [ Axle building. The transmission plant. That was the right wingers. Let's see the right wingers, were Andy Ignasiak, he was there at least 4 or 5 terms. And then after Andy Ignasiak, Eddie Plawecki at least 4 or 5 terms but after he left there, he went right on the international payroll ] and after Andy, wait a minute I forgot, a couple of terms there was Joe Hogan. ] Joe Hogan was a left winger and Blackie Backaruso. One term each. ] It was 2 years I think. Then the building went out of business. They transferred their job to Livonia. It's now Local 182.

I: So that one was going back and forth too?

R: No. It was right winger for the majority of time.

I: Oh because Ignasiak had such a long term.

R: Yeah. Ignasiak had about 5 years and Plawecki had about 4 or 5, about 10 years straight there. ] And then we got to the Foundries, the Foundries bounce back and forth. There was Otis Eaton.

I: ~~What~~ When Foundry are you talking about? Was he left or right?

R: [ The Iron Foundry. I don't know, he was just a trade unionist. He didn't have a wing in them days. ] And then there was Eddie Hester. He got elected as a left winger and then he went to right wingers the next election then back to left wingers and he went, he bounced around a couple of times. I think he won three elections. ] Then you had old man Johnson. Harold Johnson.

I: Oh he was right wing, right.

R: Right winger. Harold Johnson was a right winger. He was on the international, then he came back and he went back on the international and then Sheffield was on there one term. ]

I: In the Iron Foundry?

R: Yeah he was President of the Iron Foundry for one or two terms, and he went to the international and then Bill Johnson was President. He was a left winger. I think it was one timer I think three years. ] And then there was a Dick Bantom for about 2 terms, he was a right winger. ] Lefty Settles, he was about 2 terms I think.

I: He was also Iron Foundry?

R: Yeah. Lefty Settles. Some of these guys, Eddie Hester would win and Johnson would win and Hester would come back and win again and Johnson would win. You know I'm not talking about continuous. But like I said they each had a couple of terms and they bounced off,  
 . [ Schefffield would go in and Schefffield would go up,  
 When he got beat, Schefffield would come from the international, run and then, Asd a matter of fact it was on account of him we changed the constitution. He had come back and ran for president in the iron foundry at least 4 times. I think he won twice and he lost twice but he never worked in the foundry. He would be on the international

payroll and staff and he would come back and run as an international rep. There was so much noise raised at 600 about this that they changed the constitution saying a person must resign at least three months in advance of an election to be eligible to run for office because of him, and then if he would <sup>lose</sup> ~~would~~ he would never nothing, he would just stay on the international.

I: Where did he come from to begin with?

R: Dearborn Iron Foundry.

I: So he was there and then he went from there to--

R: To the international union. He went on that staff of Reuther. First time Reuther got elected in '47. He was in a foundry up to '47, I guess. And then he went on international and was gone for years and come back and run. If he won he would go back as president. After he lost he would go back on international payroll. You can't do that today, council. Once you resign you resign that's it. You don't have no claims. Well okay let me see now. Going into Rolling Mill it's been always right wing, all the way through. Never a left winger ever elected in that building. Steel mill.

I: Rolling Mill, that was--

R: Well, it was the hot bed, Harry Bennett, you heard of Harry Bennett.

I: Yes.

R: His brother Hays Bennett was the manager of that plant. And they hired every scoundrel you could think of in that plant. Hays Bennett was the manager at that time for 15 years and every, they hired them.

I: Was that another of the dirty jobs along with the Production Foundry?

R: That was the elite job, the bonus. People in that plant today, the sweeper must make about \$60,000 a year. The wages the bonuses equal

their wages that's why they just cut back, just now, on wages, they took a \$4 an hour cut. They are still way up there. The rollers make about \$120,000 a year.

I: Why so much? How do they get that kind of leverage?

R: Do you know what a roller is?

I: No.

R: Hun?

I: No.

R: A roller is the guy that rolls that bar steel and its got to be just perfect and he's got no gages to go on. It's hot and he knows, he learned on every experience. And it takes you thirty years to get to be a number one roller. Then years third roller and second roller and first roller. He sits on that booth and watches that steel roll through there. Bar steel, the most expensive steel you can get. Chromiom steel and all of that. That's expensive stuff. They don't let nobody play with it. So he makes about \$120,000 a year. But he may work maybe 72 hours in a row once they start rolling that steel he can't go. He stays right there. He's got an air conditioning room, and when he gets tired, the second roller moves in its place and he goes back there lays down sleeps for an hour, they now, they don't care. They got a refrigerator there for food and everything. But every roller in all the steel plants there. Now this is an art. This is the art they say that you can't teach. You got to learn it by feeling the steel and the rolls. You know they start off on a big block, you have seen how they do it. And they keep rolling it. It goes back and forth until it's maybe three blocks long, you know. And then they sell that steel, that's expensive steel. And then out of

that steel they can make sheet metal out of it. They can sell that bar. And then they would heat it up again and they would make sheet metal. That's really got to be right. And that stuff is expensive.

I: So they roll out a bar and then it's made into sheet.

R: Yeah or they can make a bar. Once they get that transferred there and to the sheet and then they start rolling it, it goes in the rolling mill. But is the bonus place, like our tool and die maker in the plant make maybe today \$45,000 a year and tool and die makers in steel make about \$70,000, 50 percent more bonus. But they are on 7 day operations you work Saturday and Sunday and you would be maybe off Monday, Tuesday this week and the next few weeks you keep changing.

I: So that was separate from the steel foundry or was that the same?

R: Oh no, that's a different outfit. It's the rolling mill. Steel operation at the rolling mill. Always right. ] And then you got the blast furnaces and then--

I: Was that the Open Hearth?

R: Yeah, [ Open Hearth. They call it the Blast Furnace today. Open Hearth was the old operation. They got these basic oxygen furnaces now, put this new operation in there and it used to take them 8 hours to melt so much steel, now they can, with these new basic oxygen furnaces it's forced air, pure air they heat up the metal and they can make three of them a day now. They introduced that in Germany. Germany is the one that's got the patent on what they call the basic oxygen furnace operations. [ That's been, there was only one left winger to my knowledge ever got elected and that was Johnny Duncan and beside Johnny Duncan I think he was two terms or three terms, ] it has always been, I hate to label them right wingers because there were a lot of



the guys that voted on good liberal issues, you know. Because we had another guy who was President his name was Carl Smith. <sup>1</sup> [Carl Smith was one of the first organizers we had in the steel operations. And he devoted many hours and hours and hours to the operations in organizing, but I don't consider him a left winger or a right winger. He was just, he was never a gungho guy who was going for reforms. He, I wouldn't say he was a right winger though. Carl Smith was president there for five terms probably, maybe even longer.]

I: Right at the beginning?

R: Yeah. <sup>2</sup> [And the guy who replaced him was Pete Kasper, was considered a liberal guy. He was one of the pioneer orgnaizers. But I again wouldn't say that he was gungho. He was just a good trade unionist.]

<sup>3</sup> [A lot of times I am one of the guys who don't believe in, because a guy makes lot of noise, it's good for the operation, because a lot of times you know again you don't go hunting in the woods with a brass band. It's always good, and I guess the times have changed where you don't telegraph all your punches.] <sup>3</sup> <sup>2</sup> [Miscellaneous which is known as a blast furnace operation.]

I: Miscellaneous is a Blast Furnace.

R: Yeah it's Blast Furnace now.

I: What is the Open Hearth called now?

R: Basic oxygen furance.

I: Oh, Basic oxygen furance.

R: It was during my negotiations that that was changed.

I: <sup>4</sup> [So miscellaneous was mostly right?]

- R: [ Joe Berry was right winger ] and just about all of them were. [ Bishop was a right winger. He's administrative assistant to Proctor now the Wayne Country Drain commissioner. ]<sup>4</sup> ]<sup>2</sup>
- I: I tried to get in touch with him but the person I wrote to was another bishop, I guess it was two M. Bishops.
- R: This is Jim Bishop.
- I: Oh Jim. I was thinking, was there a Maurice?
- R: Milton.
- I: Milton. That's the one I was thinking of. This one is--
- R: Jim Bishop. He works now for Assistant Drain Commission at Wayne County. I got him that job because we supported Proctor. It was a crucial fight. He said when I'm elected, I'll give you the appointment, boy you think these guys got these union jobs got lot of power. [ Well we elected Coleman Yung, the UAW wouldn't support him. Did not endorse him. I knew Coleman from Local 600 before we were organized, just can't understand this. Here is a guy that's labor all the way through.
- I: Why wouldn't the international support him?
- R: At first I don't think they thought a Black would win. And at that time they supported a guy in Detroit, he lost. I don't know but there was a period there we had this action and counter action. During a period that when we lost some benefits concessions a lot of these people took it out on our decisions later on. And when we asked them to support they said the hell with you guys. ]<sup>5</sup> We had recall drives going on Michigan, I don't know if you heard about it and had two democratic senators get recall which is the first in the history of Michigan, in all its history. Senator Milligan and Soropkin, two

democratic senators and the issue is that they voted for a 38 percent increase in the state income tax program now the whole, everybody sat down, everybody got into it business, labor, everybody says unless Michigan doesn't in the next three years get this kind of tax program, the welfare program, something is going to have to stop. And they said well jeez, those people, the workers should at least assume some obligation, continuing to pay the income, the unemployment benefits, that unemployed, you know we had a hell of a situation here and so everybody agreed they said it's an unusual, very abnormal situation we have people who are, need aid for children, dependency children, we have people are unemployed, we have elderly people, they all need help. These places are bankrupt they will go to the federal government hasn't contributed its funds. We have taken emergency step<sup>s</sup>. One of the steps is that we should increase income tax to a point where we think we can take care of all the people in our state of Michigan, and also society. Everybody agreed to it. Labor we were down there when I say, not me but our people that understand economics at Solidarity House and Michigan State AFL-CIO council and their legal people and their economists and you know they were down there, and they said yes, its a terrible situation. And Milligan has been there for 14 years and was a kind of scared to make, to do anything you know just keep going. And it would drop and drop and it collapsed and he said we are going to put the Michigan State back on the paying proposition. We got to take some dramatic steps. And the whole democratic administration voted for him. So they started the recalls. So now they got my senator here, they are going after him, McCulloh here. He's a democrat too and I have known McCulloh for umpteen

years. But and it was graduated back that as the people go back to work the tax would fall. This year starting in January it dropped the unemployment dropped and its(?) unemployment in the state. And tax, income tax applied 4 percentage points on one, .4, which means that there is 6 more points before it gets to 1 percentage point and it's 6.8 it's going to be 6.4. And if it drops some more every six months tax will be cut back. Well, I am like everybody else, I don't like to pay taxes. but I don't want to see people go hungry. I don't want to see old people thrown out of work. So I've got something I'm willing to share half a loaf of bread with them. But some of these people are so, they raise taxes, they started this recall movement and they got the thing into hysteria now. So they had the elections and two of them were defeated.

I: By Republicans.

R: Well, a recall. You know they vote them in, do you want to maintain them in office or get them out. And you vote yes, get them out. And they swept them out by big margins, you know two to one. But what happened they got elected by 250,000 votes and they got defeated by 25,000. Not many people participating in the recall. There was just those who had an ax to grind. And in this instance the Republicans got their people out en mass. 25,000 people isn't many people when you compare to, I think Sorropkin said he got elected by 275,000 votes. He got defeated by what, 25,000 or something like that because people don't respond to recalls. Two Democrats had been already eliminated and one more is coming up McCulloh they just put the petition down and this week in the paper it says 26,000 petitions to recall it, and say they are going to put it on the ballot. Well you know how people are

they won't vote. They just won't vote. And he is going to be recalled because the Republicans are going to get out en mass. So that's 3 Democrats that are getting whipped out and he said they are going down the stream and they have been successful in everyone. There should be a <sup>a</sup> lw that you couldn't be recalled unless it was like 25 or 30 percent of the past vote is in.

R: <sup>1</sup> Well, they ought to pass a <sup>a</sup> lw the only time they ought to recall them when he commits a crime against the state. You know what he did in my opinion was good. I know it's going to cost more, but you know what do you do forget about other people around you. You know, close <sup>3</sup> yur eyes, you know if we are going to become cannibals the first thing you know you are going to have to put bars and you won't be able to walk outside. Are we going to be humans or what are we going to be. You know we got people that are starving. You got jobs, haven't worked for two or three years. Now if we call employment out, some guys are going to pick up guns you know. I don't blame them. If we turn our <sup>1</sup> bakcs ons them this is the issue so they got . . . ]

R: Where are we at now?

I: Miscellaneous the last time.

R: We stopped at Bishop, <sup>2</sup> [Joe Berry, what was his name, it was a Spanish guy. He was a good <sup>t</sup> rade unionist I wouldn't say he was a leftist or a rightist but Joe Berry was definitely a right winger.] <sup>2</sup>

I: And he was in for quite a few terms.

R: Five terms. Yeah I'm going back a long time and I could see their faces but I can't remember their names. Okay let's see we are going on into the Frame plant.

I: Frame?

- R: [ Frame is as a general rule good left-wing progressives.
- I: It was called something else earlier.
- R: New steel foundry.
- I: I have all the old names.
- R: Yeah it's been, New Steel has gone out right after the war.

End Tape 5, Side A

W. Dorosh  
Tape 5, Side B

- 2  
R: [ George Knight. It was a left wing building. Once in a while you'll get a guy elected there that doesn't represent either extreme.
- Richard Wilkins he was in there about 4 years I think. He was a right winger or a left winger. As a matter of fact this guy used to play trumped for Erskine Hawkins Orchestra when Ella Fitzgerald started singing and he is a Black guy and he traveled around the country and he happened to be in Detroit, he was telling me about this, he was President when I was president of the local, he come to Detroit and Erskine Hawkins was in Detroit, he played at some ballroom, Black ballroom and they were hiring in the Frame plant in the Rouge, and some guy said I'm going to get a job so he went for the fun of it. He got the job. And he kissed Erskine Hawkins good bye. He said what a bum's life.
- I: Wants some stability, hun?
- R: Yeah, he said, what a bum's life. He said he used to ride busses and he says and played with his band in the '40s and he says he used to have to go in the worse hotel in town before you could get in, and he couldn't, 90% of the hotels wouldn't serve you, no bars, no restaurants he says, you don't know when you would eat. ]' ] 2
- R: How many plants you got there?
- I: 3 We already got production foundry.
- R: [ Then there is Transportation.
- I: Yeah that was not really a unit that had a locale. They were all over.

R: Yeah they had a building where they repaired the trucks and all that, but they were located all over. But that's been almost exclusively right wing. We had a couple of good guys in between that can't be tagged one way or the other but, as a rule, it's been always. Most of the time they were ACTUers that were elected there.

I: There were a lot of skilled workers in that group.

R: Well, truck repair, diesel repair, railroad repair, skill in that respect, yes. <sup>3</sup> Now you got <sup>1</sup> Maintenance unit. Plantwide. Almost exclusively right wing with one or two good guys in between that I wouldn't call left or right. The whole history of it. <sup>2</sup> <sup>1</sup> Fool and die, left wing all the way through. Just about one or two in between with, like McCusker, no McCusker never got elected, Fitzpatrick got elected one year and he got wiped out. <sup>4</sup> John Blaich one term and got elected right winger got wiped out. <sup>4</sup> Then besides that they had been all left wingers all the way through.

I: John Orr was President a long time, wasn't he?

R: No John Orr was president I think one term.

I: Oh just one term.

R: The first president was Jim Couser, the second president was John Blaich, the third president Virgil Lacey and Lacey was in there for about 12 years. And then after Virgil Lacey was John Orr. I think John Orr was one term then he went to local as vice president. Vice president I think three terms and then he went on to international payroll. Replacing John Orr was Fitzpatrick. <sup>5</sup> Then Lacey came back again and got reelected a couple of terms I think, and then he quit the plant. He was a qualified real fantastic negotiator. Good guy. Lord he was. He prepared for a case like an attorney did. <sup>2</sup> He did



research and oh he, any case he would take up boy he would win it, he did the job. If you didn't have it he would tell you. He used to come in here, when he used to come in the committee room there was many times, what they call nuisance grievances. [ Nuisance grievance is a grievance that you know, that the umpire has already ruled on a similar case and it's a lot of, urks the guys, by writing the grievance, all you do is clutter up the procedure and in the end the umpire will just say we already made that decision back in 1902, you know, and so Lacey used to come in every morning, I was on a bargaining committee, he would come in the morning and the district committeeman would be in a slot on the wall and you could file the grievances. And then the bargaining committee take the first stage grievances and look at them and then if we needed more fact sheets we go on the floor and we locate the guy and say look, we've got to have some facts. This isn't clear. We read the composit union request and the company dispostion and we say you got to have some more facts. So we attach a fact sheet to it <sup>b</sup>yu know. We write up the second stage and attach a fact sheet to it, you know these are the facts and on a second stage grievance, we say this, the aggrieved, the company disposition does not respond to the grievance, the aggrieved request was from south center the company we say the aggrieved was penalized for etcetera, etcetera the facts are as follows. Check with the fact sheet attachment A. And then we go on and find out the contract provides the following in article so and so. You know, Lacey would come in <sup>e</sup>before a bargaining committee and look at the grievances. He would get furious if you had a grievance that was not a grievance, you know. He would read that grievance, he would look at it, and would

tear it right up. He would tear it right up and throw it in the  
 basket, because he used to tell district committeemen, don't bring  
 grievances in here that are junk. We are not going to clutter up the  
 procedure with junk. If there is a problem you need the help of  
 myself or other bargaining committeemen, you talk to the supervisor  
 about something we are prepared to do it. ]<sup>5</sup><sub>2</sub> A grievance such as, the  
 foreman docked Tom Brown 6 minutes because he was standing at the  
 coffee machine for 20 minutes talking. That kind of grievance is a  
 nuisance grievance you know because nobody knows whether he stood  
 there 10 minutes, 20<sup>M</sup> inutes or if he stood there 20 minutes, he ought  
 to be docked. You know this ain't a playground. This isn't a movie  
 house. This is a place of employment. You can go get your coffee and  
 brink it back on your machine you can keep production. You can talk  
 for 2 or 3 minutes nobody is going to bother you but if you stand  
 around and laugh and sit down for 20 minutes is pretty hard to defend.  
 So you get this here, so the committee said the company penalized Tom  
 Brown improperly. He was docked 10 minutes requesting the 6 minutes  
 and 10 minutes be returned to him plus have the foreman quit  
 harrassing him. Well the first place the district committee's job is  
 to get the foreman to quit harrassing him. He don't put it down in a  
 grievance you know. You go up there and if he's harrassed and if you  
 keep your hands off this guy you got any complaints you go to the  
 department don't you just go around harrassing. That's done, because  
 I was a district committeeman I know I'd climb all over a foreman who  
 did that improperly. He's got a right to dress a guy down that's  
 doing something wrong. But just to harrass him, no dice, you know. ]<sup>2</sup>  
 And that's a grievance that is you know just (?)

procedure. He wants something that's legitimate, you know. And it's got to be factual. There is a midnight shift and there is a day shift and there is an afternoon shift. And sometimes he may be gone for two days because he may be in a board meeting all day, maybe he would be-- but if he's in a board meeting he's got a, everybody has to ring in the plant once a day. The chairman rings in once a day. And everybody else rings in and ring out. Now is the chairman is conducting union business he may be down at the (?) for two or three days, well he's not going to come running in the plant and he'd ring in down there. All he does is when he sees the company down there, he just tells them, you know, look there is the empire I want you to okay my time card. So once a week you take the time card to the labor relations and you okay it. They put on there had the umpire ring<sup>e</sup> for you, okay that the umpire ringed for you, had negotiations at central staff. You got to be in some unoin business where they saw you, the company that you are with them. If you are at the local board then the local president, I used to sign, I'd give him a note saying that we are a board meeting I called him at this time you know, in my office. In other, they had to account for their time. They can't be laying in bars and things of that nature. So when you get this kind of grievances all these nuisance grievances an you count them up like this, the guy that has a legitimate grievance really has justice denied because by the time you get through them because you have to take them at the dates they come in. They are stamped. Every grievance that you get you give to the company, they stamp them in. Date received. And then you take it to the next stage and it's stamped again, second stage, you know, date received. Third stage,

fourth stage. And everyone of them says that within three days the company has to respond to this disposition. The company has to respond. Meeting, you have meetings once a week with second stage and they have to respond within the next week. And generally they respond when we had the meeting with them, the company makes up an agenda and then tell us these are the meetings these are the items we are going to be taking up at the next meeting and we meet every week. And we we look at the agenda we say well we got all these grievances and we look through our grievances and we say look we got to get this and this and this and if we don't get this then we call the company and tell them we want a hold on this grievance a hold on this grievance because we haven't got all the information we are still seeking it. The company does that to us too sometimes. They will say that these two grievances we requested management to give us information from that department and we have failed to get it you know. And if we don't get it by next week we will grant the grievance. We always said if we don't get it by next week we'll pull the grievance. We are not going to wait for the guy. Generally what we will do we send a note back to the committeeman who wrote the original grievance and say get ahold of this guy and tell him to give us this information. I'll give you an illustration a guy gets docked, he said I have been improperly docked for three and a half hours and I am requesting my pay. Well you want to see the pay stub and you want to see date. You know, they think you are a mind reader. But then you look at it and you say what the hell, where is the information. So tell them to give us a date so we can check and go to payroll and see why he was docked, find out. Because if I go up to the company and say look pay this guy for

docking, he will say what day? What day are you talking about? That kind of grievance, Lacey would tear right up. ] The tire building is gone. <sup>2</sup> [The tire building was, the building was there let's see '41 and the union days it turned into a, they made army wings there in the war and right after the war they stopped it.

I: Oh really?

R: I think we had about 2 or 3 presidents in there and both liberal guys. ] They sold the tire plant to Soviet Union. <sup>2</sup>

I: I heard some story about the ship getting lost at sea or something all the equipment going over there.

R: I don't know.

I: Somebody told me that.

R: They sold it to the Soviet Union right after the war. We were still allies then I guess.

I: Okay we've got Spring and Upset.

R: <sup>3</sup> [Spring and upset. DeLoge, McIntosh let me see the building, was only there during the war and then they did away with it. And they expanded the Stamping plant into that plant. They combined the buildings to build a crossover. So they had three chairmen that I know of there for a period of six years or something. ] <sup>4</sup> [They had a good bargaining committee together, it was a left winger, was an Armenian guy, Bagrad Vartanian, he was a real left-wing progressive. ] <sup>3</sup>

I: What was his name?

R: Bagrad Vartanian. That's Ann Vartanian's father, you were at Boatin's house?

I: Oh yes.

R: Did he talk to you about her father?

I: No.

R: It's her father he was an outstanding guy, when he died I was a pallbearer. He was a good union guy. He was on the bargaining committee for years there. Good. He used to get elected. I don't think he even put out any literature. ]<sup>1</sup>

I: Yeah I have never seen his name mentioned.

R: Vartanian. Ann Vartanian's, Paul Boatman's wife's father.

I: Okay, the plastic building.

R: [The plastic building is the tire plant.

I: Oh really. That was the same one?

R: It was the same thing. After the government ran out of business there for years then the company opened it up as a plastic plant for awhile then they closed that down. Well, let's see plastic plant Ed Locke was president there. He was a good left winger. One of the original pioneer organizers. As a matter of fact we used to meet by Ed's house during the organizing days. He lived in Del Rey. Ed, who was after Ed? Ed was up four times. ]<sup>2</sup> And then they closed the place up I tink. ]<sup>h</sup> ]<sup>1</sup>

I: <sup>4</sup> How about the Jobbing Foundry?

R: [Jobbing Foundry. Well it's out of business now. We had George Popp. He was just an old timer. This guy couldn't even write or read. Elected president and held that job for 4 terms, 4 one year terms. But he was a guy who could go on a floor and negotiate all settlements. He was an old timer, one of the original organizers. He was Romanian nationality. ]<sup>3</sup> But he was, there were very few whites in the Jobbing Foundry, most were Blacks. And the Blacks had enough respect for him to elect him. Then after him when they started electing Blacks. One of the guys, that was Black, was elected, what

was his name? He was in there about three or four terms and then they closed the place up. ]<sup>4</sup>

I: Was it Peck?

← I: [ Cleveland Peck. ]<sup>3</sup> Cleveland Peck was in the Armour Plate building, that was a wartime plant. Cleveland Peck was in the Armor Plant and so was Jimmy Watts. To show you how injustice is committed, there was an election in the armour plate and the election was between Cleveland Peck and Jimmy Watts, this was back in 1944, '45 or something like that. During the war years. The UAW used to schedule conventions every two or three years and in the war years they didn't schedule any conventions. The procedure in the constitution was that any protest of elections it goes to the international convention. The convention made the decisions. So Jimmy Watts was elected President of the Armour Plate building and Cleveland Peck contested it on the basis of so many irregularities. [ I don't know what the irregularities were but everywhere it went it went to membership meeting, if the membership meeting supported the protest, then they appealed at the next stage, the next stage would change it back, you know, and return it and it would go to the next procedure. At that time it would have to go from your local union, I mean from the unit, to the local union, the local union to the region, the region to the international board, from the international board to the convention. Well anyway it just took four years to go through.

I: The building was closed up by then.

R: Yeah so what happens, at the convention it was academic, you know, the building was closed up and everything. Then when, I think it was the '48 convention, if I remember so, the committee came into the local

union to investigate it and all that and we said what the hell--yeah but it went through all the procedures and the convention grievance committee the grievance committee has got to come up with a decision because there might be a similar situation, you know, that may correspond to it, and you have a convention decision. So it goes all the way to the convention and Cleveland<sup>P</sup> Peck and Jimmy Watts at that time, Jimmy Watts was on the staff of the local union and Peck was on the bargaining committee in the engine plant and so they were sitting together and it just so happened and they were reading the decision of the convention committee, said therefore the committee concludes that the, Jimmy Watts has improperly been elected and therefore shall be removed and Cleveland Peck be declared the winner as president of the Jobbing Foundry. Jimmy Watts got up and said well I'm sorry I'm a good loser. It was victory. The building's gone. Election's gone. So they changed it around. Changes now, now the administrative assistant goes out and investigates it right away. He's got to get a disposition within 60 days. But this went on for four years. Talk about a bureauracy. God almighty. But they had many of them cases. They done away with that procedure. There is no more grievance report. It all belongs to the president and they said no way. There is a problem, you correct it. If you need some more administrative assistance we give you more of it. By God let's get these thins<sup>g</sup> out of here, which is right. The people want immediate justice, they don't want to wait 4 yrs where it becomes academic. ]<sup>3</sup>

I: Okay Production Foundry.

R: I gave yuo that one.

I: Was that the same as--



- R: I gave you Production Foundry, Johnson, Hester.
- I: Oh that was Iron.
- R: That's the same one.
- I: Oh Iron and Production are the same.
- R: It was the production foundry first and they changed it to Iron. I don't know what the difference is.
- I: Okay <sup>1</sup> how <sup>2</sup> about Foundry Machine shop?
- R: That was in production foundry and Jack Poole was present there for many years.
- I: He was a--
- R: Left winger.
- I: Left winger?
- R: I wouldn't say he was a left winger I'd say he was, he a good, he wasn't a right winger either. He was a good trade unionist. He was one of the original organizers. <sup>2</sup> Let's see after Jack Poole there was one more president and then they done away with that unit. <sup>1</sup>
- I: Was that Franklin? Harold Franklin?
- R: No. He never was elected president there. <sup>3</sup> Godfrey Franklin was elected the president of the Production Foundry now that you mention it. He just got defeated as candidate for Mayor of Highland Park. Just defeated, he's got an appeal in the courts now.
- I: What was he at that time, was he a left winger?
- R: Yeah he was a left winger. Then he worked on the staff. Then he retired now he is running in city politics. <sup>3</sup>
- I: How about Parts and Accessories.

R: [ Parts and Accessories, right wing, all the time. And let me tell you what the right title for that is today. Depot. There is a Brownstown Depot and a National Parts Depot. There are two depots. ]

I: Was Aluminum Foundry?

R: That's gone a long time ago. No longer there. And I think they done away with it right when the war came out.

I: Did we do the steel foundry?

R: I said there is no steel foundry.

I: Before?

R: The Armour Plate, that's Armour Plate.

I: That's the same. And the last one is Aircraft. That was only during the war too.

R: That was in wartime. Let's see <sup>h</sup> how as the chairman during the wartime. That's the Engine Plant now. It was about two years.

I: Was that McCusker, Henry or Yost?

R: Larry Yost. Now you got it. [ Larry Yost during in the wartime period. Larry Yost, I don't know where he's at now.

I: Yeah I tried looking his name up in the phone book, but didn't find it.

R: <sup>3</sup> [ Well Larry Yost openly proclaimed that he was a Socialist, member of the Socialist Party.

I: Oh really. Socialists were, he was the one that led the--

R: Led the strike.

I: The movement against the no strike pledge.

R: Yes, that's right.

I: He wanted to get rid of it.

- R: That's right. He led a wildcat strike in his plant they got rid of him during the war and about 27 other committeemen and officers and everybody. He wiped them all out.
- I: They never got reinstated?
- R: Not during the war. Government moved right in on them. Well this is what I say, he was an adventurer you know. He told everybody he was a Socialist, and we are going to start with Socialism.
- R: And I said what kind of idiot is this, you know. So he led a wildcat, I don't know what the heck it was all about. And they got them. They got a whole mess of them. I remember some of the names and they went to the <sup>U</sup>mprie and the <sup>U</sup>mpire said no way. They violated a no-strike pledge. They made so much noise and I'm against a no-strike pledge and if I got a problem. . . . He's a very fluent speaker a very good looking kid, he was blond, I think he was Swedish if I'm correct. ]<sup>3</sup>
- I: Yeah, I just saw a picture of him today.
- R: Very blond hair, good looking, very light complexion. All mouth, you know. You're going hunting in the woods with a brass band. He probably went a<sup>o</sup>und and told the, I'm going to go shut it down and you come on follow me down. I'll show, you know.
- I: So he ran off a left wing ticked?
- R: No. He didn't associate with the left wing. He thought the left wing was crazy and the right weing were company agents.
- I: Oh so he was independent?
- R: I don't know what he was, you know, to tell you the truth. He ran for vice president of the Local 600 on an independent, too, there were two slates. And he got a sizeable vote on it, I'll have to admit. He put all his pictures, bi<sup>g</sup> glamour picture.

I: And this was during the war that he ran for VP?

R: Yeah I think so. I can't remember who he ran against now. <sup>3</sup> [Nobody knew anybody, <sup>2</sup>] I remember the first election we had we ~~had~~, we had an election of the delegates to the convention. We elected the first committeemen who were elected, was in a big room. We just go up and said, everybody knew me as the guy who was signing people up and I said well now, they want us to elect stewarts, that's what they called them and I got about four or five of the guys in the department to call this meeting and it was still before the strike. So we got together and we had about 12 guys in the room, that's all the guys that would show up. We invited maybe 50 or 100, you know. But only about 12 guys showed up. We said well, we need a steward to start functioning, you know and said well why don't you take it Walter, why don't you take. Nobody wanted it you know. They'll get fired. I said, okay I'll take it. So that's the way we elected them. So then after we functioned and then when the strike, when we got the first contract we (?) on June 20th we got our first contract and then they said now you got to officially elected the stewards and notify company, we need a chairman and everything. And so we called a meeting at the hall and they would come in there and nobody knew nobody. We were all looking at each other and I was chairing the meeting and I said well the nominations, well what's wrong with you continuing, somebody says. Okay, I'll continue. You <sup>1</sup> know that's the way he conducted. Nobody knows, everybody is afraid, you don't know what to do, and you have been handling it, and so right after that, the UAW had put out a call for the convention, you know, because they had other locals that were functioning and we just come on the scene

in '41. And there as a state, CIO state convention it was not a UAW, state convention in Detroit here, you know. So we knew it when he said we all put it on the acceptances and the bottom must have had 100 names on it. Nobody knew nobody. And they guy that got elected, got just about every vote was a guy by the name of Pat O'Brien and he didn't want to go, he just . . . I will never forget that.

I: Why did they vote for him?

R: Pat O'Brien all-American name. ]<sup>3</sup> Guys--

End Tape 5, Side B