ARTHUR McPHAUL INTERVIEW
Tape #1

Q: ... give a little description of what kind of work you did in the Ford plant and when you started working there.

M: Well I started to work at Ford's oh about 1928. As a matter of fact, I went to Ford on April the, I believe it was April 14, it was in April I know in 1928 and I was discharged from Ford in 1950 so that's.

Q: What kind of work did you do when you first came to work there?

M: Well when I first went there I was working in the Foundry.

Q: The Production Foundry?

M: In the Production Foundry, yeah, and I worked there from 1928 until 1938 and in 1938 then I was transferred to the Pressed Steel, what they called the Pressed Steel. I think now they call it Dearborn Stamping, but it was the Pressed Steel at that time. I was transferred there, that was in 1938 and then I worked in the Pressed Steel, went to the Pressed Steel as a material handler and I transferred, changed from material handler to welder and, of course, that's what I did as far as the physical work is concerned until 1941 after the union when I became a committeeman in the union and I held different offices from then until the time I was discharged in 1950.

Q: What kind of other offices do you hold?

M: Well I was committeeman and vice president, I was elected vice president when I got fired but I was committeeman, district committeeman, bargaining committeeman then during that period.

Q: And then elected vice president of the unit in--

M: I was elected vice president of what they called at that time the vice president of the Pressed Steel unit. At that time it had 13,000 workers in the building and, of course, the times were much different as far as racial, you know, approach and so forth is concerned than it is now. It's not good now but it's a lot better than it was at that time. Of the 13,000 workers that worked in the Mill there were around 800 blacks and, of course, in my department out of the about 700 there were only about I guess 80 to 100 blacks at that time. But I was considered the left-winger in the department there and even though I worked with many of the coalition groups and so forth some of the people, when I became the, you know, leader of the so-called progressive group they were opposed to me and I was elected first, I beat one of their guys when I was first elected committeeman, a white fellow.

Q: Do you remember what his name was?

M: I don't remember his name, I really don't. I don't remember his name, but what was his name?

Q: Did he run on a right-wing slate?

M: No, he--it really wasn't a right-wing slate, it was what they call, see it was formally the progressive slate, you know, and we called it, we organized it into the broom, what we called the broom slate. But after it held office so long it became extremely dictatorial, it began to follow the so-called Phil Murray policy of what did they call it at that time? CIO policy. And the CIO policy was anti-Red, anti-everything, you know, and anti-progressive completely as far as I was

concerned. But it was an opportunistic approach that they took to the whole thing and, you know, go along to get along.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: And it begin to what I considered collaborating with the Company and going along with a lot of the things that were obviously not in the best interest of the workers, that sort of thing, and, of course, that's why I organized the progressive slate and called it the "New Deal for Pressed Steel."

Q: Oh yeah.

M: Yeah, and we had, I've got one of the cards downstairs we had President Roosevelt's picture on it with a cigarette in his mouth, you know.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: And that saying, I forget the saying. It was something about--you probably would be able to find, I've got one of them downstairs, but I don't know just where it is now. But there was a saying that we had I'm sure you'll run across it somewhere but it and I can't even remember it, I can't quote it but the last part of it was "let us go forward with strong and active faith" but I can't remember the rest of it. It was very good and of course it just took the workers by the best job, and we were able to beat them, we came from one committeeman myself and when I was fired I had the majority of the committeemen in a predominantly white building and of the--it was during the war we carried on quite a struggle for the hiring of women and especially of black women, but so that we were able to get a lot of women hired there.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: And we, out of the, in my department out of approximately 700, maybe 800 in my department because we were only supposed to have 300 and something but they put that many on me because they figured I could handle them, see. But it was kind of like the old saying, throw a rabbit in the brier patch, it was just what I wanted, the more people the better. And of those there were a number of Southerners who were just coming here at that time during the war and there was about, oh, 40 percent of my constituents was, my constituency was Southern white women, and of course, they always supported me even though the guys in the so-called center slate red-baited me, black-baited me, and everything else, but they never could defeat me, see. The only way they were able to defeat me was when they collaborated with the Company to get me fired.

Q: So the Southern women were a base of your support in unit?

M: Oh they were my supporters, oh yes they were.

Q: How did you go about eliciting their support?

M: Say what?

Q: How did you go about eliciting their support?

M: Fought for those things that were correct, fought the Company and fought for their interests period. I made no special approach to them, I made the same approach as I made to all the rest of them, treated them right, fought for them, fought the Company when they were wrong which was almost always but that's the way I won their support. I took one position all the time, that was against the Company. Now if the worker was wrong I would tell him he was wrong, and I will

support you this time but don't do it again because if you do it again I won't support you because it's wrong, you should not do it. I took a straightforward position and they respected that.

Q: How did you come to work in the union movement to start with? Did your father or mother were they active in the union movement?

M: No, no, I first, I'll tell you, I became active more or less in the union movement, from the unemployed days back and so forth as a youngster, you know.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: And when the union came along naturally I was always anti-boss, you know what I mean.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: Because I saw what they were doing and so forth and when the union came along I was for the union, it's that simple. The first time I ever really joined a union though was when the, become an active member in a union myself where I worked was when the union came in 1941 in Ford's, you know even though I worked to help to support the union long before that, you know to organize, that sort of thing. I was never actually a member of a union until 1941 because I worked at Ford's, you know.

Q: Uh-huh, okay and can you tell a little bit about the groups that made up the progressives in the union?

M: Say what?

Q: What kind of groups made up the progressive forces in the union, the left wing?

M: Well there were a number, divergent groups they were. There were what you would call I guess what they call now liberals, well that's not a good word for it in the trade union movement. There were I would say the progressive-thinking people somewhat left of center, you know, and maybe some on dead center, then further left and Communists were the ones that made up the left wing.

Q: Uh-huh and who was in the right wing? What kind of groups made up the right wing?

M: Well they were the more conservative, red-baiting element, Company collaborators, and that kind of people, concessionists and that sort of thing were the kind of people that made up the right wing. You see my contention has always been that, and I'll tell you straight, you know, the way I feel about it, I'm glad I don't know your ideology because I'm not interested really in what your ideology is. But my contention has been that the Fascists are the ideological leaders of the right as well as the Communists are the ideological leaders of the left. There is no question about that from an intellectual point of view. Now there are a lot of gray areas in between but as far as the leadership of these two groups are concerned they are the leaders, alright, now that doesn't mean of course that everybody in this left of center are Communists, because that's sure is, from a long way they're not. It does not mean that everybody right of center are Fascists, they're a long way from being Fascists but as far as the trends and leadership of the groups and so on and so forth is concerned that's my contention. As a matter of fact, I think I'm correct.

Q: Pardon me.

M: I say I think I'm correct on that.

Q: Okay. Can you tell me a little bit about the different politics of the building units? Did they vary from one to another?

M: Oh yes, very definitely.

Q: Can you characterize some of them? I have a list.

M: Well, for example, I would say that the Pressed Steel, at that time it was known as the Dearborn Stamping was a more or less a building left of center. The Motor building was left of center, that was Paul Boatin's building for a long time.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: Tool and Die was center, with a strong left group and a strong right group but more or less center shall I say. The Production Foundry was left of center. The Rolling Mill was a right-wing building. Transportation was right wing. Let's see.

Q: What about--

M: Spring and Upset was a left-wing building.

Q: Plastic unit?

M: Huh?

Q: The Plastic unit?

M: The Plastic unit, left wing.

Q: How about the B building?

M: I would characterize the B building as center.

Q: Center.

M: Because it was a swinging thing, but I would say more center because sometime they were right wing the officers they elected and other times they were left, but mostly center.

Q: Uh-huh. How about the Gear and Axle plant?

M: Gear and Axle, left wing.

Q: And Foundry Machine Shop?

M: Foundry Machine Shop, the Foundry Machine Shop I would have to call that a center building.

Q: How about Parts and Accessories?

M: More or less right.

Q: And Aluminum Foundry, was that?

M: Huh?

Q: Aluminum Foundry?

M: Aluminum Foundry left, that was Buddy Battle's building.

Q: How about the Glass building?

M: I would say the Glass building was left of center.

Q: And Maintenance?

M: Right.

Q: How about Miscellaneous?

M: More or less right.

Q: And Open Hearth?

M: Open Hearth, slightly left of center.

Q: And Jobbing Foundry?

M: Left.

Q: Did I already say Steel Foundry?

M: Huh?

Q: Did I already ask you about Steel Foundry?

M: Did you ask me about Steel Foundry?

Q: Yeah.

M: I don't think you did, but it was a left-wing building.

Q: Okay, and the last one is the Aircraft building?

M: What's that?

Q: The Aircraft, during the war.

M: During the war a left, a left building. If I recall correctly, Paul Boatin was head of that building during the war, if I remember, I'm not sure, I think he was.

Q: Okay, now can you tell me a little bit about the interaction of the men in the different shops at Ford? Did they normally talk to one another or did they stay mostly to their own shops?

M: What's that?

Q: Was there a lot of interaction between the men in the different buildings?

M: Oh yes, oh no question about that, oh yes, very definitely. As far as their caucuses, their groups and so forth were concerned and, of course, the interaction was naturally with the general council that was the legislative body of all of the buildings, see?

Q: Uh-huh.

M: So there was really definitely interaction there.

Q: How about with the rank and file?

M: Huh?

Q: How about for the rank and file?

M: Oh yes through caucuses and so forth. While, say for example, we had what were called during the election and we would have a slate that would run for office and, say for example, we would say the--I forget what they called it, well let me say the Tommy Thompson slate, let me put it that way. It was a coalition, see. The reason the left was able to keep control of it most of the time was because of a coalition, Tommy Thompson was a centrist.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: And, of course, the left would support him and the center forces would support him and so forth, a coalition. He--what was--I've lost my thought.

Q: You were taking about the interaction between the men in different buildings.

M: Yeah, well we would have a caucus, you know, we would have plant-wide caucuses, you know, let's say, for example, the Progressive slate. Well now, for example, this was a situation that existed, I just want to show you the kind of coalition that we had. For example in the Tommy Thompson caucus, which was the Local-wide slate that we supported generally in most cases, many cases, not always, we, the progressives from the Pressed Steel unit, and the broom slate people which was the center people left of, you know, the opportunist slate--I'll put it that way--were members of the same caucus as on the Local scale. We supported the same people most of the time, you know, on a plant-wide basis and, of course, that activated the rank and file that supported us in the buildings of course, the same as you would support the State and then on a national scale, it was sort of the same thing.

Q: Were those caucus meetings widely attended?

M: Oh yes, yes, yes, generally very well attended.

Q: How about the section meetings? When you had meetings for the buildings, were those meetings well attended?

M: What is that?

Q: The building meetings.

M: Well that depends on what building it was. Now, for example, in the Pressed Steel we always had overflowing meetings because we kept close to the rank and file and agitated the rank and file and give them reasons for coming out. Now some buildings wouldn't have a quorum hardly, yeah because they did everything themselves, run everything themselves and didn't listen to the rank and file but in the Pressed Steel we always had good meetings because you had activity all the time in there.

Q: What were some of the buildings that didn't get good turnout for their meetings?

M: Well I really can't say too much here, I can hardly say because, see, I didn't know enough about, I just knew that the meetings were small. Well now Tool and Die used to have pretty good meetings but, say, for example, the Rolling Mill, you know, they could meet in a phone booth at times, you know what I mean.

Q: Oh yeah.

M: Most of the right-wing buildings they didn't have no turnout because they were dictatorial, you know, bureaucratic, they didn't listen to the rank and file. And many of the others of course, I don't mean to say that they had a monopoly on, you know, running it themselves

because certain of the other buildings would do the same thing. But I would not like to at this point, see I've been out of there many many years and, you know you caught me just--

Q: Yeah.

M: And I would hate to attempt to pinpoint a building that had, you know, a small meeting because, for example, if there was an issue then that building would have a big meeting, you know, if there was a real hot issue. If there was no issue nobody would go hardly, see. But in, as I said, in the Pressed Steel we kept issues going all the time, that's why we almost always had overflow meetings.

Q: Uh-huh. How about the way that men in the union, the leaders, the committeemen and the officers, related to the foremen and the Company people? Would that differ between the different units?

M: What was that?

Q: Was there a lot of difference between the ways that the union and the Company interacted from one unit to the next?

M: Do you mean as far as the union policy was concerned?

Q: Well like the policy on grievances.

M: The action of--

Q: Yeah, the actions.

M Oh yeah, this was what I was telling you about in the Pressed Steel building for example, at the beginning of the union we had a real struggle with the Company, fought the Company and supported the rank and file, and that's why we broke with the slate because they got to where they make deals with the Company. To give you a good example, they testified against me when I was fired. Do you know what I mean?

So these same people and not just me but this was a continuation of a long pattern of Company collaboration what I would call it, see.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: So you had this in many buildings, you had this in many buildings. Not all, some buildings were militant, they would fight for the rights of their workers and so forth, you know, as a general policy. You'll find in all groups where a few of the, you know, the officers will try to make deals and so forth, but we're used to nip those things in the bud when we caught them and we'd get rid of them, you know, campaign against them and get them discharged, defeat them, you know.

Q: So as a committeeman what was your policy on grievances? Did you consider yourself a militant pursuer of grievances?

M: Did I consider myself? Oh yes, there's no question about I did and not only did I consider myself but everybody else did too. Including the Company. That was one of the reasons I was fired.

Q: So you would characterize the Pressed Steel unit as pretty militant one?

M: Yes, no question about that. It was one of the most militant buildings there.

Q: Can you characterize the types of grievances that were filed? What would the usual type of grievance that you were filing most of the time?

M: Well I don't, generally the grievances that you would file would be against things that the Company would do or fail to do, or would do against the workers or fail to do for the workers, fail to carry out

even written, you know, portions of a contract. These are the things that would cause problems, these were the things that we were doing.

Q: Was it generally working conditions or authority...

M: Working conditions many times, generally working conditions, generally that's what it was.

Q: Was there a lot of grievances on authority problems where--

M: On what?

Q: On authority where a foreman and a worker might get into a dispute and they would maybe lay off a worker or something like that for bad behavior against a--

M: Well we also had that too, but that was not, you know, a prevalent thing, not really because, not in our building, not in our building. It did happen, I guess it happens in all plants, but the main thing was, you know, speed up. They would speed the line up and so forth even though the contract had set certain rules about it. They just ignored the rules, you know, as long as they could get away with it.

Q: Yeah.

M: They constantly did that, and, of course, that's why we had to write grievance after grievance.

Q: Uh-huh. So did a lot of grievances get settled in the first stage or did most of them go up?

M: Well that would depend on the committeemen really. Now I settled I would say 50 percent of my grievances, maybe 60 percent of my grievances in the first stage because most, especially most of us in our caucus we settled ours in the first stage, you know.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: Rather than let them go through the second and third stage grievance, see?

Q: Uh-huh. Was that a written stage or was that totally oral?

M: Say what?

Q: Is that an all oral stage, or was it written down?

M: Well what is called a first stage grievance is a written grievance. Now you settle on the floor many of them, I guess every committeeman settles a number of things on the floor.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: But the first stage grievance is a, well, yes, it's a, yes, let's see, a first stage grievance, wait a minute I think I'm wrong now. A first stage grievance is one that you settle on the floor, yeah. It becomes the second stage when you have to write it, that's right.

Q: So there would be no record of those grievances?

M: Say what?

Q: There would be no record of those grievances then?

M: Of the first stage grievance?

Q: Yeah.

M: No, there would hardly, there wouldn't be a record of the first stage grievances. I'm trying to think now to see if I'm right. A first-- see when you write a grievance, because when it goes to the bargaining committee it becomes a second stage grievance and the bargaining committee goes to the Labor Relations with it. The first stage grievance, yeah, the first stage grievance, there is a first stage grievance, the first stage grievance is written but the committeeman goes to the Labor Relations with his constituent, his worker, see, and

you settle, what I would at that time, it's coming, it's coming back. I would settle most of mine, if possible, I was able mostly to settle most of mine, in the first stage and we wouldn't have to take it back to the bargaining committee and write the second stage grievance, so that's right.

Q: Would you say?

M: So there would be a record of it, oh yes there would be a record, yes.

Q: Would you say that the tendency to do that, to try to settle it in the first stage most often would differ between the right and left committeemen?

M: Well I would think, you're saying between right and left committeemen, oh yes there was a difference between right and left both. Whether there would be too much difference between right and center, you know, and so on, I don't know because, look, there were some in the right-wing group, some committemen who really worked, see, so don't get the idea that everybody in the right wing just didn't fight for their workers because that's not correct.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: Certain of them did but the general policy is what I'm talking about because you also had in the left wing, certain committeemen who were lazy too, you know, that didn't do their jobs because in most of the groups, left and right groups, there were varying, varying degrees of, you know, as far as the ideology was concerned.

[End of Side #1]

Q: ... ?

M: About what?

Q: The skilled distribution, how many skilled versus unskilled workers in your unit?

M: How many skilled?

Q: Skilled workers vs. non-skilled workers.

M: Well most in my unit, most of the workers were what would be called semi-skilled workers, you know, press operators, welders, well welders was, well it was a semi-skilled really. But what would be considered a skilled worker would be something like a tool and die worker or a machinist, die setter, something like that. But most of our workers were semi-skilled.

Q: Uh-huh, okay. Did the left-wing union people and leaders generally expound on an orientation towards the workers that could be considered socialist? Did they talk about socialist issues or at least the working class or class struggle-type issues to the workers?

M: Now ask that question again.

Q: If you were in the left wing, if you were a union leader in the left wing, would it be normal for you to talk about issues such as the class struggle and sort of socialist-type issues like working-class consciousness? Did those types of issues get discussed by the left-wing leaders to the workers or did they stick basically to the trade union issues only?

M: Not very much, not very much. They stuck mostly to the trade union issues. For myself personally, I discussed them many times because I believed in them, you know.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: And understood the importance of it as far as I was concerned. But it was something that was not raised too much generally in the meeting because the rank and file workers didn't understand it and many of the rank and file workers didn't understand enough to agree, didn't agree with, well they didn't agree or disagree because they didn't know anything about it.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: You know. For example, they used to say, one of the ladies, I'll give you a little example. There was a lady who was considered more or less a right-winger in my building, a white woman, and she fought when I first ran for committeeman, she fought me with everything she had, you know, because they said I was Red, see. And so after I got elected, I won, I beat their guy, that I was telling you a while ago, I beat their guy by two votes and so under the by-law the bargaining committee was not supposed to handle the election and they knew this. They were supposed to set up an election committee to handle it, but they figured well, he can't win anyway so they handled them themselves so when I won then they said, no, it was done illegally and called another election. I beat them by four votes that time.

Q: Huh.

M: And this woman came over to my group's side. She said, one thing, says I, so she asked me, came to me one day, she says, Are you a Red? I said, look, it seems to me that what you should be concerned about is whether or not I fight for those things that you are entitled to, not what my thinking or my belief, that's my own, you know. Maybe you

don't agree with my belief. Do you agree with what I do? Do you agree that I fight, that's what you're interested in because when I leave here I go home and you go to your house? She says, they told me you wouldn't answer the question.

Q: Huh.

M: Say but one thing about it, say you're all right. She says, I'm fighting for you and I'm working for you, and until I was discharged she was one of my best supporters. She didn't agree with me ideologically but she supported me to the hilt because she knew that I would fight for her and that I made no distinctions on who they were, whether they were my supporters or not. If they were in my department they were given protection, as far as the Company was concerned.

Q: How about during the war? What was it like in the plant during the war when there was the issue of the no-strike pledge and the incentive pay and these types of issues?

M: Well we had no struggle much during the war, because the Company would make a lot of money. It was on a cost plus basis so they'd let you sit around, why five people would do the work that one could do because they were getting paid for it, from the government.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: We had no problems.

Q: How about speedups?

M: Not during the war.

Q: Oh not speed-ups, incentive pay? Were you in favor of incentive pay?

M: Say what?

Q: Incentive pay.

M: I was always opposed to incentive pay. I was always opposed to--

Q: So during the war you didn't adhere to the argument that that would be the only way they could raise the wage rates?

M: Say what?

Q: During the war some people made the argument that the only way to get a wage increase would be to make incentive pay.

M: Well that was not true, that was not true. Now certain units had incentive pay but we fought it in our building, see. But during contract negotiations we got raises.

Q: Even during the war?

M: Yeah.

Q: So there weren't too many strikes during the war in the plant?

M: No, not at Ford's. You're talking about Ford's?

Q: Yeah, right.

M: I don't recall a single strike and, of course, I can't remember. I'm not saying that there wasn't because the Company always do something, no matter what happens, to cause, you know, certain things to happen, so they may have happened but it was not a prevailing thing at the plant.

Q: Was there a lot of turnover during the war, a lot of people changing positions and moving between buildings?

M: No.

Q: No.

M: Well now, I don't know. When you ask that question I'm not sure exactly what you mean.

Q: Well either people transferring from one building to another or people going off to war and other people replacing them all the time. New people in the building a lot.

M: Well, I wouldn't say that that was, you know, a real problem. There was naturally people who went to war and had to be replaced. For most, for most buildings there were always young people going off to war and they would have to be replaced but the thing that confused me a little you said a turnover.

Q: Yeah.

M: And, of course, there was, I don't, well that would be a turnover but not that much, no, no, I don't think so. What I would say quite normal even during the war, you know, as far as working conditions and so forth are concerned.

Q: Do you think that it was normal for sons and daughters of workers to follow their parents into the Ford plant? Was that common at Ford?

M: No.

Q: No. They made a different, usually--

M: No, I wouldn't say that, well you say, was it normal? Here again I'm not sure just exactly what you mean. I don't know if you mean that it was a pattern or--

Q: Yeah.

M: No, I don't think it was a pattern, no.

Q: Was there some of that?

M: I guess there was some. I guess there would be some, almost in any but it was not, see like, for example, in the mining industry the youngsters usually, if the father was in the mine they would come in

the mine, but that wasn't generally the way it was at the plants. Yes, a lot of sons and daughters came into the same plant that their fathers and mothers worked in, yeah that happened and of course it was quite normal but it was not what I would consider a sort of custom or pattern or some of that kind of, no.

Q: Okay, can you give me some of your opinions of the situation when they imposed a, the International Union imposed an administratorship over the local in 1950?

M: In 1950?

Q: Uh-huh.

M: Well, yes, this was a political thing of the first magnitude. Carl Stellato had, who was at one time in the so-called left wing and then for opportunistic reasons went over into the, I don't know what this guy really was, whether you'd call him in the right wing or opportunist or what, I really don't know because he became, let me say he was something like Ronald Reagan, yeah really. Because Ronald Reagan, see I know Ronald Reagan I was the head of the Civil Rights Congress here in Michigan and also on the National Board. I don't know if you've ever heard of the Civil Rights Congress or not but it was a Civil Rights Congress and we had quite during the Hollywood Ten fight out there I was somewhat active in that. So as I say, Carl Stellato was something like Ronald Reagan because at that time Ronald Reagan was head of the SAG, the Screen Actors Guild and he was, whether a lot of people know it or not he was more or less a left-winger at one time, see, and but for opportunistic reasons he changed, you know. So this is what happened to Carl Stellato and McCarthy, he

wanted to help McCarthy and McCarthy, you know, and they in order to break the grip, we give him a real rough time. As a matter of fact, the only reason he was elected was because in the Pressed Steel Tommy Thompson was opposing me, that was the center slate.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: And while we wouldn't support Carl Stellato, we didn't support anybody for President of the Local and as a result he got in. We knew that would happen, that he got in.

Q: Well why wasn't the left slate, why didn't you make up a left-wing slate at that time?

M: Say what?

Q: Why wasn't there a left-wing slate that year?

M: We had, let's see, you know I don't really remember why there wasn't. See there was a gray area there really. See Carl Stellato was more or less supposed to be in opposition to, see there were three slates. There was a center slate, there was a right-wing slate and Carl Stellato's slate which some people considered left wing but I didn't. I called him a left-right, see, because he was under the, in short, I don't know if you know about all these ideologies and so forth, see, but he was under the influence at that time of the Trotskyites.

Q: Stellato was?

M: Yeah during that period, see he wasn't really, during that election period I'm talking about because Stellato has never been under the influence of anything but Stellato. Do you know what I mean? He's an opportunist of the first magnitude.

Q: Yeah.

M: So about what I mean, I can't think of this guy's name that was handling his campaign and he was, at one time he was a Trotskyite and then he became, he left the Trotskyites and then became just a rank opportunist. I can't think of his name. So after the election Stellato began to red-bait and bring people up on charges and this sort of thing and Reuther, of course, began to weed out Communists so to speak and made a big Red issue and took over, put an administrator over the Local. It was a political thing of the first magnitude, really that's what it was. There was no reason why they should have ever been an administrator put over that Local, there was no reason for it.

Q: What were the ramifications of it? What happened as a result?

M: Say what?

Q: What was the result of this administratorship for the left wing?

M: What was the result?

Q: Uh-huh.

M: I think that it resulted in the severe weakening of the left wing because the left wing was never able to really control the Local there any more as it had in the past, see. As a matter of fact, it was part of that thing of my being discharged, see. It was the same time that Stellato got in that I got discharged, you know what I mean and so forth. So and it moved from, in other words, they got rid of most of the militant people. They either got rid of them or they prevented them from holding office for a number of years and, of course, if you can't hold office you soon, you know, lose your, and that's what happened, see.

Q: How many people do you think were affected in this way?

M: How's that?

Q: How many people do you think were affected in this way, where they lost office or were discharged or whatever?

M: Well I don't think anybody else was discharged. There were only a couple of people discharged, the group around me mostly were the people, they discharged three or four of my supporters, my, you know, committeemen.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: The people, you know, that's what, not my committemen but committeemen that was in the caucus that I headed, let me put it that way.

Q: Do you mean just in your building or--

M: Just in my building, just in my building. Now what happened in other buildings I really don't know too much because, see, I was no longer in the plant after that.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: See when this took place I had been, I was discharged in 1950, while this took place in 1950, '51 I believe it was, that the administrator was put over the Local, see this was a part of this ongoing thing.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: So--

Q: What about the House UnAmerican Activities Hearing? Did that have a similar effect later in '52 and '53?

M: Well, you see, the House UnAmerican Activities Committee, a lot of these same people, I may be a little ahead of my story really because the administration it may be, see in 1952 the UnAmerican Activities

Committee came here. It seems to me now since you mention it that it was after that that the administrator was put over the Local. It seems to me that it was, but it was all part and parcel of this whole thing.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: But most of the people that was called before the UnAmerican Activities Committee were the people that and then they had what they call a loyalty oath and, of course, certain people wouldn't sign the loyalty oath, you know, and then some did sign it and they claimed that they were lying, that they were Communists, that sort of thing, you know. So all of this was part and parcel of the destruction shall I say or demise rather maybe is a better word of the left wing at Ford's. This whole, you know, sequence of things from 1950 until '52, '53 after the UnAmerican Activities Committee came here, so.

Q: Can you tell me some of the important things that the left wing worked for in the union for international policies, sort of issues like the pension and other things that came out of--

M: Yeah, well it was the left wing that raised the question of the pensions to start with and fought for them, you know, it was the left wing. Most of these things that were in the best interests, originated in the left wing, not the right wing. I can't remember one single thing that the right, issue that the right raised that in effect was in the best interest, can't think of a single one, not one.

Q: And where did they usually originate?

M: Maybe you can refresh my mind.

Q: No, I can't. I don't know of any either.

M: I thought maybe you had, you know, but I can't think of a single one.

Q: Where did, for example, on the pension issue, where were the roots of those suggestions for fighting for a pension?

M: Say what?

Q: Where the idea for a pension come within the left caucus.

M: Where did it come from?

Q: Yeah, the idea.

M: Well most of these things, you know, the first people usually to raise these things were the Communists mostly, in the The Daily Worker, you know, and so forth and they campaigned for this sort of thing all along. And, of course, many of the workers including myself of course picked them up and brought them into the union and fought for them and they became issues that the workers supported. They were issues that certainly no matter who the originators of the idea they were good ideas and the right wing and nobody else could actually oppose them because the average worker could see, could look, yes.

Q: How about the fight against decentralization?

M: Say what?

Q: The fight against decentralization of Ford's, did that happen while you were still in the plant?

M: Well, see, when I left the plant they were not really, they hadn't begin to decentralize too much, that took place after I left.

Q: Afterwards.

M: Yeah. But, well, I won't even comment on that because I really don't know, I really don't know what the situation was then.

Q: Okay, I have a list of names of some of the people that were important in the Local and I would like you to just give me an impression of what you think this person was like as a trade union leader and as a man. We've already talked about Carl Stellato, how about Shelton Tappes?

M: Shelton Tappes, I think, was one of the best, one of the most basic trade unionists from the inception of the union at Ford's. He got off on a tangent during the UnAmerican Activities Committee and testified against some of us including me, but this was a sort of self-serving thing for him. Well I can understand why he did it, I didn't agree with why he did it, but I understand clearly why he did it. He felt that he had been let down by the left, that he stuck with the left when the left was in trouble, and then there was a certain incident that happened that hurt him and he figured the left was responsible for it which they were.

Q: You me that meeting with William Allen?

M: Huh?

Q: Are you referring to the meeting with William Allen? The meeting with William Allen, is that what you are referring to?

M: Well I don't know if I'm talking about the same meeting, I don't know what happened with the meeting.

Q: He talked about it in his testimony.

M: Say what?

Q: He talked about it in his testimony at the House UnAmerican Activities Committee.

M: What did he say generally?

Q: Well he said that he was called in to a Communist meeting where he thought he was going to speak and actually they asked him why he didn't join and--

M: Oh, no, no, that isn't the one I'm talking about, I don't know anything about that, you know. But I do know that, see he was the first black, well he was the first Recording Secretary of Local 600 and, of course, he was considered left, while never a member of the Communist Party. He was considered left, and supported the policies of left and even in many instances the policies of the Party, you know, in many instances but never joined the Communist Party. Finally there was another person that joined the Communist Party for opportunistic reasons because the Party had a lot of power there and could get people elected, you know, and Bill Johnson and, of course, Johnson, Billy Allen was one of the guys that insisted that why not elect Bill Johnson. I was opposed to it, I was opposed to electing Bill Johnson because I knew he was an opportunist of the first magnitude and I was opposed to it. And I knew that even though Shelton Tappes was not a Communist he was a good solid trade unionist and fought for those things that were in the best interests of the workers. There was no question in my mind about that, but he was defeated because the caucus endorsed, the Progressive Caucus, the left caucus endorsed Bill Johnson, so he defeated Shelton and Shelton never quite got over that. So that's why I say I could understand why he did, I didn't agree, you know, with him but I can understand why he did.

Q: Okay, how about Bill McKie?

M: What about him? He was a member of the Communist Party and a staunch fighter and there is no question until his death. I think that's just about enough to say about him. He was a union man from way way back, you know.

Q: How about John Gallo?

M: Who?

Q: John Gallo?

M: Good solid trade unionist.

Q: Was he well liked in the shops?

M: Oh yes, no question, no question. They could never have defeated John Gallo, the only thing unless, he was put on that list by Carl Stellato too, you know.

Q: Uh-huh. How about James Watts?

M: Opportunist of the first magnitude. He was wherever it fitted Watts' best interests and he's still that way today, he's in Coleman's, you know.

Q: Was he well liked in the shop?

M: Well, when you say well liked, no not that, but he wasn't well hated either. See he was an operator, he could always take care of himself--let's put it that way.

Q: Okay. How about Thomas Thompson?

M: He was a mediocre guy, was always able to get elected because people could support, you know, and during the, because of the coalition, you know, he was the lesser of two evils.

Q: How about Percy Llewellyn?

M: A good guy and a good union man too that's what I'm talking about.

Q: Uh-huh. And Paul Boatin?

M: Paul Boatin, a good guy.

Q: How about John Orr?

M: John was a good man, a good trade unionist, straightforward, you know. I can't say one single thing against John Orr.

Q: Okay. How about Joseph McCusker?

M: Joe was, what do you call it? ACTU.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: You know the Catholic Trade Unionists and so forth, right wing completely. But listen, let me say something about Joe McCusker. While Joe McCusker was a right-winger and so forth I got along quite well with him when he was President, I was head at that time of the Political Action Committee at Ford's. Paul Boatin and I were the first to organize the Political Action Committee here, you know, and statewide.

Q: Oh really.

M: Paul Boatin and I.

Q: Oh I didn't know that.

M: Yeah, Paul was the chairman of the committee at that time and I was secretary of the Political Action Committee, that was before the CIO, the trade union would accept Political Action Committee.

Q: Oh yeah.

M: See they didn't believe in a Political Action Committee, they didn't believe in doing anything much about it. We were the ones that brought forth the question of political action and actually I was on the committee to begin with Sidney Hillman and so forth. Sidney

Hillman was the head, but it was a new thing in the trade union movement at that time, see, that was the extreme left that, you know, the question of political action.

Q: Did you work for Henry Wallace in '48?

M: Yes, yes, yeah I spoke to...(?) Henry Wallace in 1948.

Q: Oh yeah.

M: Wallace in 1948, so--

Q: You were on Joe McCusker.

M: Oh Joe McCusker was--one thing Joe would do, he would say well I don't believe, I don't agree with him but after all he's chairman of the Political Action Committee and they've discussed it and he recommended, I'm fighting for it and he would do this. Frankly, I was able to get more things done, what might be considered left action under Joe McCusker than I was under Tommy Thompson, because he was a fellow that believed that this is your balliwick you run that one. I will support it, I'm President, and this is what he did. So really I got along pretty good with Joe McCusker and Joe McCusker after I was out of the building, out of the plant, he was still President of the union and I became head of the Civil Rights Congress and during 1951, I believe it was 1951, yeah, we handled the case of the Martinville Seven that they killed in Martinville Virginia.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: And I was able to come back here, I flew back from Virginia, they were going to kill the boys and we were fighting in the Supreme Court for a stay and this sort of thing. And I flew back and was able to get Joe McCusker to give money and to send a right-winger, staunch

right-winger with me, too, back to Virginia fighting on these things so he was--I really can't characterize this guy altogether because...

[End of Tape #1]

ARTHUR McPHAUL INTERVIEW
Tape #2

M: ...I can only say, let me summarize by saying I never had any trouble with him on things that I wanted to do. As a matter of fact, he supported a number of things on the question of civil rights for blacks and this sort of thing. He supported, see, he was the kind, they couldn't have red-baited him if he supported them, let me put it that way. They knew where he stood and he would support these things, it's a funny thing the relationship we had there, I had with him.

Q: How about his brother Henry?

M: Henry was, well he was a much weaker man than Joe was, let's put it that way and a vascillator, you know, not very smart.

Q: Okay, how about Virgil Lacey?

M: Virgil Lacey was a good guy, he was a good guy.

Q: And Lee Romano?

M: An opportunist of the first magnitude. He was the guy that was in the Pressed Steel that was President before, he was the guy that was heading the broom slate when I pulled out from him. He was an opportunist of the first magnitude, a company collaborator, red-baiter, and everything else.

Q: How about Joe Hogan?

M: A good guy.

Q: Was he basically left?

M: Basically left, yeah, well I'll say progressive, let's put it that way. Left of center, let's put it that way.

Q: Okay, how about Harold Franklin?

M: Harold Franklin, Harold Franklin was for Harold Franklin, you know.

Q: Was he a progressive also?

M: Well let's say that he worked with them, let me put it that way. He was an opportunist but he was in the left camp, shall I say.

Q: Okay, how about Dave Moore?

M: Dave Moore is a good guy.

Q: And Ed Lock?

M: Good.

Q: William Hood?

M: Good, see, Hood was at one time on a Reuther slate, you know, on a right-wing slate and so forth, but the guy was basically a good trade unionist because the left supported him most of the time any way, also the right supported him but he was basically a good guy. Listen, he had principle, let me put it that way.

Q: Okay, how about Tom Yeager?

M: Who?

Q: Tom Yeager?

M: Tom Yeager, I didn't know Tom, I really didn't come in contact with Tom too much. I knew about him yes, but Tom was a right-winger I believe. I think, yeah, Tom was more of, let's see. It's a little vague about Tom. I know that I know him but I can't place just exactly. I would hate to characterize him really.

Q: Okay, how about James O'Rourke?

M: Who?

Q: James O'Rourke.

M: Well, James O'Rourke was the right-winger I was telling you about that went to Virginia with me. He was a right-winger of the first magnitude, ACTU, you know, but basically even though he was a right-winger he was basically not a bad guy. I think he was an honest trade unionist.

Q: Okay, how about Tom Jelly?

M: Tom Jelly was a good guy, good fighter, good union man.

Q: Okay, and William Allen?

M: Who?

Q: William Allen.

M: William Allen.

Q: Or Billy Allen.

M: Oh Bill Allen?

Q: Yeah.

M: Oh Billy was a, he was the, he was not in the trade union, you know.

Q: Yeah, but he was around there a lot.

M: Oh yeah, well Billy was there, he was a correspondent with the Daily Worker.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: Yeah.

Q: Did he have the respect and--

M: Oh yeah, everybody respected Billy, everybody respected Billy.

Q: Uh-huh.

M: Billy was, you know, well Billy was straight, you know, he was, you know, they knew he was a Communist, they knew he was with the Worker,

but he had a tremendous amount of respect from every side, everybody out there, right and left, believe it or not, he did.

Q: Okay, how about W. G. Grant?

M: W. G. Grant was a, he was a good trade unionist, left of center, sometimes center but a good trade unionist.

Q: Okay, that's the end of my list. Yes, unless you have some other comments, that's all the questions I have.

M: I really don't, I don't have any comments that might be of value to you, you know. I can't think of anything that we haven't already discussed.

Q: Okay.

[End of Tape #2]