

INTERVIEW WITH  
KENNETH AND DELORIS ROCHE

...do it again. I was never in the leadership of the local except for being a district committeeman. I never made any decisions or anything. My father-in-law was first president. He was also a regional director of Region 1A until McCusker came on the scene.

Q: What year was he regional director?

A: Up until 1946. That was when the Reuther administration took over and defeated just about everybody in the left-wing group and they took over the UAW. From then on it was just right-wing organization took over steadily going down. So you see what we have today, what we have today is one big mess.

Q: Can you start out by explaining how you got involved in the labor movement? Were your parents union people?

A: No my parents came from Pennsylvania. They were sons and daughters of coal miners. My mother was the daughter of a coal miner and my father was the son of a coal miner. Their fathers were killed in mining accidents, cave ins in the mines. They moved to Detroit and both got jobs working at Robert's Brass. They moved to Dearborn from Detroit and my father couldn't find a job. He changed his name from Zezecki(?) which is a Polish name to Roche which is an Irish name but very few people realize it. I was born here, right next door to where I live now. I've been living here all my life. At 18 years of age I was hired in to the Ford Motor Company and that was in 1940 in September. I was taken there by my mother down to the city hall by Clarence Doyle, who was councilman and Carl Brooks was the chief of police. I don't know whether you know about him or not but he was the

stooge of the Ford Motor Company. This is the way things worked then. If you didn't know anybody you didn't get a job. So I was hired in to the Rouge Plant when I was 18, went to work there and soon found out, this was in 1940 when I was hired and the union was just picking up steam to get going, you know, so one of the guys in the shop that worked with me said are you in or are you out. I said in what. I didn't know anything about union because at that time my mother and dad never discussed it at home, but they knew about unions from Pennsylvania because they worked in unions there. My mother got fired in a button mill in Pennsylvania for leading a walk-out. I came home that night from work and I asked my dad and mother at supper. I said well some guy asked me about a union today. What'll I do? I had just graduated from Fullerton High School. I was 18 years old. Went to Henry Ford's School over here and my education was all wrapped up in a nice ball and handed to me. There was nothing, of classes of social studies or anything about socialism, capitalism, nothing in my curriculum about that at all.

Q: You just went exclusively to the Henry Ford's Trade School for high school?

A: I went to Henry Ford's School which is right over here on Ricordi(?). I went to Fullerton High School.

Q: So you went back and forth.

A: Back and forth, until the ninth grade there and to the twelfth grade in Fullerton. From Fullerton right straight to Ford Motor Company. Where was I?

Q: You asked your parents about the union.

A: Oh yeah. They took me, my mother and Clarence Doyle took me down to Carl Brooks office. I sat outside on the porch of the police station. They went in, talked to Carl Brooks and the next thing I know there's a Lincoln pulling up. Carl Brooks' secretary drove me into the plant. I was hired immediately into the plant and went to work in the, what they call the, at that time the apprentice school. I worked there for three months. And then in December they put me out into the plant, into the Gear and Axle building and worked over there. I was in that shift for several years but that's where I joined the union. I joined the union in I believe it was April of 1941 and two months later we had a strike. My father and mother told me to join the union. After that I got acquainted with Percy and several other guys, John Orr, Virgil Lacey, Mack Cinzori, Dorosh. Then my education began. From that time on, it was go, go, go.

Q: So you were younger than most of the other guys that were already...?

A: Yeah. Let's see I was hired in at 18. I was about 19 or 20 years old. And I retired when I was 57. I was there 40 years. I started in 1940 and retired in 1980. I've been retired for four years now. Then I met my father-in-law Percy and started getting active, you know. Got elected, I didn't get elected committeeman then because actually the first political job I had was under one Paul Boatin. He gave me, as committeeman in the old, it's now the Dearborn Engine plant, at that time it was the Aircraft building where they make Pratt-Whitney motors. I worked there. That's where I was removed, by Reuther, he came in, Nelson Samp came in to the labor relations office, it was Whitey Saari, myself and Mike Casper. We were committeemen in that unit, in the Aircraft building. And Nelson Samp

came in to the labor relations office with a letter and he told the labor relations man that he wanted to see all three of us in the office. So in we go and he read the letter, from Reuther, demanding, telling us that we were removed from our jobs for the good. In fact I have some articles in there if you want to read them.

Q: In fact it was at the Reuther Archives, the letters that were in Reuther's file.

A: Yeah. So that's what happened there. Then after that, where'd I go to work then?

Q: What year was that?

A: I don't know exactly. My memory's not so good for these years. That's been a long time.

Q: Yeah.

A: I took these things last night out of the scrapbook that my children made for my father-in-law and some of this stuff is not dated see because when Percy's wife cut it out of the paper she just cut the article out without the dates on it, you know. I think that was around 1952.

Q: So the Aircraft unit was still producing ...?

A: They were producing Pratt-Whitney motors then.

Q: In 1950?

A: No, no. During the war but after that they began to move the Motor building over there into there and they were starting to go into peacetime production. At that time I was there while they were making the Pratt-Whitney motors and also when they reconverted to over to peacetime.



Q: Did they combine with the Motor plant at that time to be the Motor and Engine?

A: Yeah. They were combined. The Motor building was moving over into the Pratt-Whitney, what they call the, now they call it the Dearborn Engine plant. You've probably seen a lot of this stuff. Percy gave, in the archives he gave a lot of this stuff and my children made a scrapbook and we're trying to reorganize it now to what it should be because they gave it to him in 1970 and it's all about the break in the, what happened in the early days. Let's see here. I know I've seen that last night about, but I don't know what the date was.

Q: You might have some dates on the back of those.

A: Here.

Q: So you were just banned from being in office at that time?

A: That's all, removed from office.

Q: And then after the administratorship was taken away and the elections came up you were allowed to run again?

A: I was allowed to run again. It was only five of them that was out for five years. That was Gallo, Dave Moore, Nelson Davis, Ed Locke and Paul Boatin. Incidentally, my father-in-law was the defense lawyer at the trial for them at the Local. Percy, he defended the five at the Local. Ellsworth Hanlon was the prosecutor.

Q: Hanlon?

A: Ellsworth Hanlon.

Q: And who composed the trial that Stellato appointed or is that a different, there's two different times they were tried, right? First by Stellato and then by Reuther?

A: That I don't remember.

- Q: There was a trial committee and then there's the thing with the General Council did not accept the ...
- A: That's right. The General Council didn't accept it. They turned them down. Did you see the articles on that?
- Q: Yeah, but they don't say anything about who the trial committee was, consisted of, and what their findings were. They just said that the General Council did not accept their suggestion that the men were guilty.
- A: The trial committee?
- Q: Yeah. I assume it was composed of some right-wingers but they don't mention who those people were that composed that trial committee.
- A: Well, as far as I know...to tell you the truth I don't who the trial committee was either.
- Q: Well when Reuther came in and he did his administratorship and the investigation of the people he took out, who were the people that were investigating, deciding whether or not these people would be prohibited from running again and these people could run?
- A: Well there was an administrator named Jack Conway.
- Q: Um-um. He was the top administrator.
- A: He was the top administrator and I imagine that all orders, these things came from Reuther's office through him. That's the only thing that I could tell you that I know because it was all, the decisions were made by the Reuther and Conway right-wing group there. But I really couldn't tell you who the...
- Q: So when they came out with this decision that these five could not run again and the rest could be reinstated it was just a political rather than...

A: That's all, political decision. They picked out five guys that they figured were the leaders and the rest of us were just removed from our union jobs and we went back to work.

Q: That's interesting. You mentioned that you were first in the Gear...

A: Gear and Axle.

Q: Gear and Axle and then later you went to the Aircraft and then you were in...

A: I worked in practically every building over there. I went through, I worked in Motor building, Aircraft building.

Q: Well could you tell us little bit about the characteristics of the different buildings, maybe the differences in the men that were in there, the leaders that were in there. How the different units differed and maybe even if they differed in the proportion of Blacks or different nationality groups or women.

A: Well the women didn't come in until the war and they started hiring women after there was a big fight with the Ford Motor Company. They didn't want to hire women but they were forced to hire women because they picketed the local, the picketed the company and demanded that they be hired and they did and they started hiring a lot of them.

Q: The women picketed Local 600?

A: Yeah, they picketed the Local too and finally put pressure on them and they hired the women. But the Foundry was mostly Black. They had the dirtiest job. They were all Black. That was the Production Foundry and the Iron Foundry and the Aluminum Foundry they were all Black. The rest of them, there was a mixture. Tool and Die was practically all White. There was only a few Blacks in the Tool and Die.

Q: And that was a highly skilled unit?

A: That was the highest skilled unit, yes. And incidentally it was the most militant unit in the whole local of all the units.

Q: Why do you think that is? Why do you think that the Tool and Die was the one that was the leader?

A: I really can't tell you but they were very highly educated. We had leaders like Jim Couser, Frank Gallo, Lacey, and Orr, well educated.

Q: You mean outside of being skilled?

A: Outside, well no I mean well educated in their jobs as far as tool making goes and die making and pattern making.

Q: Did most of them get their education from the Henry Ford School or outside?

A: Most of them worked at the trade school. But they got their union education on the outside or they carried it with them from their, we had guys come from Scotland (trade unionism), England (trade unionism) and they were concentrated in the skilled trades. Guys like McCusker, Grant, W.G. Grant, an Englishman, McCusker, a Scotchman. We had Lacey who's an Irishman, Frank Gallo, a German.

Q: They all came from these countries and then learned these skills?

A: Maybe some of them were born here but most of them immigrated from different countries. They had a knowledge of trade unionism that was on a higher plane than the rest of the people in the local, the production workers, you know. They were able to articulate better, write leaflets better, organize better and they knew all these things about it.

Q: Well the Rolling Mill had some highly skilled workers too, right?

A: Oh yeah. I worked in the Rolling Mill just before I retired.

Q: That building seems to be one which is the farthest right of all the different units, that and transportation.

A: Yeah. The reason for that is that the Rolling Mill, my wife is laughing, years ago they traded, the company said look we have to have some relief in this Rolling Mill. We got to have 2,500 people go, that's such a long time ago, Percy used to tell me about it. He said we got to have some relief in this plant, he said, because we got too darn many men and at the same time the union under Gene Prado was raising all kinds of hell because they wanted comparative rates to outside steel which we weren't getting at all, you know. So they made a trade. They gave them the incentive plan, they laid off 2,500 people.

Q: What year was that?

A: Oh I don't remember the year.

Q: There about.

A: It was in 1948, '49, somewhere around there that they got, after the war was over, because up until that time you were under the War Labor Board. You couldn't get raises, you are restricted on the War Labor Board. That's what happened in the Rolling Mill and the only people that could get into the Rolling Mill was, say one of the workers died. The man had to go on a list somewhere in the plant with the highest seniority. In other words most of the people that worked in the Rolling Mill had 35 or 40 or 45 years seniority and they all wanted to get there because when you got there you got an incentive. In other words you got a regular pay plus when I started out there and that was in 1975, 1974, I was making on top of my regular wages \$125 a week over and above my regular pay. But I had to put my name on a list, on

a bid list and as people retired in my classification or died and they replaced them, that was how my name was moved up on the list and I entered it, as a matter of fact I resigned my committee job in the Tool and Die because I'd seen what was happening and I said well there's only one way out and that's to accumulate enough funds so that you can retire and I worked there for six years before I retired and I was able to put some money away and get the hell out of there and forget about it because the direction that things were going, the Japanese, I was writing articles and taking articles out of Fortune magazine and Wall Street Journal 15, 20 years ago about what was happening and posting them on bulletin boards for my people to read so they could be apprised of what was going on in Japan, smaller cars, and we were still making the gas guzzlers and if you could look, project it to the future you could see what's happening now as a result of all this. So I did that and finally I saw that as the population was going down in the plant, it was being reduced see, I was being gerrymandered out of a job because they were moving my district because we had right-wing leadership at that time and I was about the only one left in the left wing in the Tool and Die.

Q: That was in the late '50s and middle '50s?

A: That was up until let's see from 1974, 14 years back, that was when I was in a committee for about 14 years, twice elected unopposed in the Tool and Die which is very difficult to do and no matter who was in the leadership I still got elected. But at the end they started to gerrymander the districts around and they got me on all these high class Tool and Die makers that didn't want to be fighting the company too hard so I could see the handwriting on the wall so I put my name

on a list to go to the Rolling Mill. And an opening came, one of the fellows retired in my classification. So I went in and started working there and I resigned my job on the Tool and Die committee and they appointed somebody else to take it over and they had an election. But for years before that I had seen that we aren't going no place as far progress is concerned, we're not going no place. Time has born that out and as far as I'm concerned the labor movement today is a dead fish as far as progress goes because the only way they're going is backwards, they're not going forwards, because there's no jobs and the more the politicians yell, how can a guy get a job when there is no jobs, there's no capitalist to hire them. If nobody will hire them, there's no jobs for them so what else he's gonna do? This is the way our economy is. Some work and some starve and if you are lucky enough to have a job, if you call it luck, run after somebody to exploit you and if you haven't you got to run after somebody to exploit you. So this is the way it works. I got a good education. I didn't have much formal education. I went through the 12th grade. no college, which I regret. At that time there was no such thing, a family like mine going to college because all of us worked. There was five of us, and, it's been a rewarding experience.

Q: Now you say in about '48 or so the Rolling Mill went into this system of ...

A: Yeah. They got the same kind of incentive system, the tonnage, they call it. In other words, the amount of steel, it's like a speedup system. They pay, in other words, the guy who works next to you he's pushing you so that you'd get more work out so that they get more tonnage so they get their incentive based on the tonnage that goes out.

Q: Before that time say in the early '40s, did people in the Rolling Mill generally have high seniority anyways?

A: No, there was no rush to get in there because the wages were the same as the rest of the plant.

Q: Well even during that time it seems like they elected right-wingers.

A: They were always right wing because they had right-wing leadership from the beginning. They were Prado's, Nestico's, and the rest of them were all, Hanlan, Hanlan came from there, and the rest of them were all right-wingers but I had never worked over there until 1974 and all I knew was the kind of politics they played in the local as a general rule. They were vicious right-wingers, everyone of them.

Q: In the Rolling Mill you were doing things off a quota, above quota, you were getting a percentage...

A: Yeah, the more steel we put out the more tonnage and incentive they got.

Q: Now you were putting out a certain amount above that quota, would Ford raise the quota so that...

A: Oh no.

Q: They never do that?

A: No, they didn't do that. In fact I think that the people in the Rolling Mill had the softest jobs in the whole plant. When I went over there to work I was amazed. Every little department, no matter how small, had a refrigerator and a guy selling coffee. That wasn't allowed in the rest of the plant. In other words you couldn't sell coffee on your job or anything else and they had regular stoves. They had it pretty good.



Q: Was that an important aspect of production in terms of being able to stop the rest of production if you stopped the Rolling Mill?

A: Well I never worked on production. See I worked in grinding, I was a grinder and I've seen production work and I've watched it because I represented people in production buildings because part of the Tool and Die was in them. We had pride in the Assembly plant. I had represented the workers in the Assembly plant, the skilled workers. In the Glass plant we had machine repairmen, they were in, they maintained production. I represented workers in the Dearborn Engine plant, all skill workers in the Dearborn, except the maintenance people which is riggers, hookers, millwrights, people like that, but all Tool and Die people, Tool and Die makers, machine repairmen, cutter grinders, clerks. I represented all of them in that building and I represented a lot of the people in the plastic model makers in the Tool and Die building itself and I represented cutter grinders over there. I represented sweepers and I represented all the women clerks in the Tool and Die building itself. So I had a pretty good rounded crew. I had the Glass Tech Center out here in Oakwood. I represented all the people out there that was making windows of the cars.

Q: Were they always outside of the plant?

A: Outside of the plant, yeah, you had to go to different places.

Q: Even in the early years they were outside?

A: Yeah, always.

Q: I was trying to figure out for myself why there would be this preferential treatment to the Rolling Mill people in terms of their

conditions and later on their wages and all. You see any rationale on the part of the company for doing that?

A: No I can't see any rationale at all, the reason that it was done, but I know that was the concentration of the right wing, right there in the Rolling Mill.

Q: And then the other right-wing building is Transportation.

A: Transportation yes.

Q: Do you have any ideas on why that one was right wing?

A: No, only that the people that were in it were tied hand and foot with the right-wing caucus.

**END OF TAPE 1 - SIDE A**

A: ...Henry McCusker. As a matter of fact that guy got up one time at a General Council meeting and demanded that any delegates that went to the convention should be from the ACTU, that was Association of Catholic Trade Union members.

Q: You said that they had to belong?

A: They had to belong to the ACTU. If you reviewed Henry McCusker, you got quite a guy. He insisted that my father-in-law was not the first president of Local 600. Can you imagine? After we had documents, proof, all kinds of stuff, he'll still tell you that Paul Ste. Marie was the first president of Local 600. Right to this day and the guy's over 80 years old. Vicious right-winger, extreme right-winger, fanatic. There was only one more like him that I knew of and he's dead. His name was John Fitzpatrick.

Q: Oh yeah. I heard about him.

A: You heard about him, huh?

Q: Yeah. What about, I've seen Joe Berry's name around a lot in archives. He seemed to be a very active right-winger.

A: Yes. Joe Berry's the kind of guy who was more or less like an enforcer. He would come to a meeting when people were against the contract and like we had meetings in different high schools, McKenzie High School, and he'd come and we'd raise objections to the contract. In other words I characterized it at one time I said, you settle on a contract, at that time beer was ten cents a glass, for a short beer I said you guys settle a contract and you got enough guts to come out here on the stage and sell this contract to us. And he said look he said I'm telling you guys one thing. He said I want you to realize this. Whether you like it or not you're going to get it. This is the kind of guy Joe Berry was. He's related to Mike Berry. You know Mike about Mike?

Q: No.

A: He's a lawyer. He has offices downtown. At one time he was a big shot in the Democratic party and they come from Lebanon. In fact he was one of the ten famous men of the year, one year, and they sent him to Lebanon, his hometown. Mike Berry, yeah. I went to school with him.

Q: That doesn't sound like a Lebanese name. Did they change it?

A: Well I don't know whether they changed it or not. They used to live in South Dearborn and he rose up. He had a gang of goons with him. He took over the Democratic party in the 16th congressional district and a long story to that. In Dearborn it's a long story all the way through believe me. Ford's control, Mayor Kerry, Klu Klux Klan, they

used to run right down this street and we were Catholics. I was born and raised a Catholic. Now I lived next door at that time, in back of the house, in back of the lot we had a house. We had southerners running the school district here and they were all Murrays, Wangstons and all that group and they used to burn crosses at the end of the street here. We had a big dog, a real huge dog. Strongheart was his name. My dad used to keep him because they'd come around you know and make marks on the sidewalk and everything. I was just a young kid then and I didn't know anything about it but my mother and dad used to talk around the supper table see. One day the dog bit me.

Q: Bit you?

A: Bit me. He was a vicious dog, that's why they kept him, to catch any intruders that come along. He'd take care of them all right but he took care of me.

Q: Where did the Klu Klux Klan get its strength from?

A: Where?

Q: Yeah. Were there somebody...?

A: Redneck southerners that came into

Q: During the war?

A: No, not during the war, before the war. This was all before the war.

DR: I can't miss this.

A: That's my wife Deloris.

DR: I'm going to stay out here. Hi. I'm sick.

A: Well you can fill them in on things that I can't remember.

DR: The one thing I was going to tell her was if she had checked with the Dearborn Historical Museum.

Q: No, not yet.

DR: There's supposed to be, I know my father gave them a lot of information at one time.

A: Yeah I was telling them about it.

DR: Oh good. Yeah at one time, I don't know whether they still have it or not.

A: Here's her father serving a subpoena on Mayor Kerry. Mayor Kerry's holding it over his face so you can't see him and we had a Detective Slammer and Chief Carl Brooks that were real guys in this town and they welded Ford Motor Company power. And I've got to tell you something that's real interesting.

Q: Look at this, the smile on his face. He's enjoying this moment.

A: I got to show you, my kids were small when they made this scrapbook, I got to show it to you before you leave. They got a picture on the front of Percy leading them all to jail. He's going to jail and then on the back cover is a sweet victory. That is when the NLRB hearings were over and everything and they reinstated all of them. And there's a story I got to tell you about Dearborn. It's real interesting. I don't know if you can use it but at one time we had a mayor by the name of Clyde Ford. He was related to the Ford family. And the Communist Party in Dearborn got a hold of a guy by the name of Davy Jones. He was the leader of the Communist Party in Dearborn.

Q: This is in the '30s?

A: This is Harry Bennett's Communist Party, not the Communist Party that you read about. Harry Bennett said well what we'll do is we'll give them a Communist if they want to organize we'll give them a Communist. So what they did was get this guy Davy Jones, he was a self-proclaimed Communist. He set up beer parties in the empty fields at that time

all around Dearborn there was empty fields. Ford Motor Company gave away free beer. Davy Jones got up and told everybody what he was going to do, how he was going to change this whole system and how he was going to change the Ford Motor Company and everything. Two days before the election nobody heard of Davy Jones. He had left town, they paid him off, he left town, Clyde Ford got reelected mayor without any opposition. And this is how politics is played in this town.

Q: This was in the '30s?

A: This was in the '30s right, in the late '30s when we were organizing. And another thing that's important that I must tell you. Percy's told me a million times and I don't want to omit it. Deloris knows it too. We get the best contracts in the whole UAW at Ford's.

Q: The first one?

A: The first one and the reason for that is because there was so many stool pigeons that belonged to the union in the employ of the Ford Motor Company and the NLRB had all their names, National Labor Relations Board and the La Follette Committee. So Philip Murray told Percy, he said look Percy was demanding that we get these lists so we could publish these people and show every worker in the UAW who these stool pigeons are that were informing on the workers in the plant when they signed up for union. So in order to keep that list suppressed the company gave the union in the Ford Motor Company, our union, they gave them three bargaining committee on each shift.

DR: Full pay.

A: Full pay, full pay, full-time committee members. The check-off system and they paid every committeeman in the plant full time, eight hours

for just doing nothing. General Motors didn't have it. Nobody else had it in the whole UAW.

Q: The closed shop also.

A: Right. Had to close shop because this was the trade off they made.

Q: Now that, I haven't seen anywhere, that information. You know what Ford says? Ford says that he's being benevolent, good guy.

A: So they suppressed all these names and later on many of them became leaders in our union because only a few people knew who they were. And one of them was Joe Berry.

DR: Joe Berry! I wondered why he didn't mention that when you mentioned Joe Berry.

A: Lee Romano.

DR: Lee Romano.

A: In fact Lee Romano named her father before the un-American Activities Committee as a red and later was forced to retract it. And Percy sued Detroit News and they had to put in a retraction.

DR: No you mixed up there. That was when Reuther was shot.

A: Oh when Reuther was shot?

DR: Yeah or he did go back and forced a retraction from Lee Romano.

A: Yeah, he did.

DR: It wasn't in the paper.

A: It wasn't in the paper.

Q: So that during the period when Romano appeared in the left was really...

DR: Archie Accaicca.

A: Archie Accaicca was another stool pigeon.

DR: Shelton Tappes.

A: She interviewed Shelton.

DR: Well I'm sure you didn't know he was a stool pigeon.

A: She interviewed Paul Boatman too.

DR: He didn't tell her, he doesn't tell anybody.

A: He doesn't think we know it. Somebody got a copy of the secret proceedings from Washington.

Q: In the library they have just the public part which you know is about two pages and that's it.

DR: He was a star wasn't he?

A: Oh yes. If you interviewed him you could tell the type of person he is. He is a very flamboyant person. Lately he's been, he's smart, he went to Italy not too long ago and he's known in the town where he's at as Johnny Appleseed. He goes around planting trees and chasing all the fascists, what they call fascists over there on Gruner Highway, he's chasing them around and making big noises over there. But I don't know your political persuasions but mine has always been left since I've been in politics and I believe in progress and anything you can do that's good for progress I'm with you. If it's not good for progress, I'm not for it. You can go by yourself and if you want to go backwards, then you're in a helluva mess because that's where we are now. I see no progress being made in the labor movement. UAW started it, give-away, and it forced every other person that had any leadership in any type of union in this state to go around in the same way. Now we have conditions like we had in the air controllers strike. Now you have conditions like you had at Greyhound. Now you have conditions where they're using the laws to manipulate, shape like this Apex Drugs, used to be Cunningham Drugs and all these places are



changing names and either hiring the same people back for less money or if the people refuse they hire somebody else. All it is is a change of name and all it is the paperwork.

Q: Voluntary bankruptcies?

A: Right. They're using all the laws that they can possible do against the working people now and boy the way things are set up you haven't got a chance.

DR: You were talking about, I don't know if you said anything on this Buddy Battles.

A: Oh Buddy Battles.

W: They're just having a big hulaboo in the paper about it.

A: There's a good reporter in Detroit. Her name is Judy too. Her name is Judy is Pasternak.

W: She writes a good article.

A She writes good articles. In fact she called me on the telephone and interviewed me over the phone when her dad died and I had to call her back because I forgot that Doug Frazer got his first job on the international staff from Percy Lewellyn. Percy hired him when nobody else wanted him. And they hired Doug Frazer, Percy gave him a job as one of his associates at the Region 1A. And when that was printed in the paper Doug Frazer came to the funeral. If it wasn't printed in the paper, you never would have seen Doug Frazer. And I got a phone call while Percy was laying in state up here at the funeral from somebody and I suspect it was instigated by this Henry McCusker. A woman called the funeral parlor and the funeral director got a hold of me and said Mr. Roche somebody wants to talk to you on the phone. I thought it was somebody was inquiring where it is and wanted to see

Percy. Here this woman comes on the line and she tells me she's the daughter of Paul Ste. Marie and I must put a retraction in the paper or else she's going to sue me because Percy Lewellyn was not the first president of Local 600. Her father Paul St. Marie was the first president of Local 600 and she has the documentation to prove it. Well I was flabbergasted. Here I am upset, in a funeral parlor, and here this woman comes on the telephone that I couldn't know from a bale of hay telling me this you know. I told her I said well look I said we have documents too that prove that Percy was the first president of Local 600. And I said furthermore this is no time to argue with me about it. I said if you want to do anything about it you go right ahead but I'm busy taking care of a lot of business and details. I was flabbergasted. In fact I called Mike Rinaldi, the present president and I told him you got the charter in your office there, Mike. I said who was the first president of Local 600. He said well I don't want to get involved in this because Mike was a right-winger too. He was sympathetic to, well McCusker was right there. I figured it all came from McCusker but I can't prove it because I never heard anything more about it and that was the end of that. But worldwide our situation is pretty bad. First number one on the agenda we got to figure out a way to stay alive. Second, we got to figure out a way to make a living. And we're in one helluva mess all over the country and decisions are being taken out of our hands and there's no movement, in Africa, people are starving. You find the situation in the Middle East is unsolvable. It's unsolvable because of the conditions over there and also over in Latin America, San Salvador and those countries, very very bad. Problems is right.

Q: Earlier you were talking about the list of stool pigeons before the union got started. How did the NLRB get that list?

A: How did they get it? From testimony that the La Follette Committee garnered about the, they had a committee called the La Follette Committee. This committee went around investigating all these complaints that these people had and Percy testified before that committee and they knew who the stool pigeons were because the testimony came out you know before this committee but that's the way they were bought off. And Phil Murray ordered Percy, look he says we're going to accept this contract. He said we're going to accept it and he said we're going to even suppress the names of the people. Percy knew it was a mistake at that time but there was nothing he could do.

DR: He used to talk about it all the time.

A: He used to talk about it all the time.

W: That's why you have the labor leaders you have today.

A: That's why you have the kind of leadership because later on these people got elected.

Q: This other guy that you mentioned, Accaccia. Now he was left early too wasn't he?

A: Sure.

Q: So these guys were left without really being left?

A: Well it's the old game. They bought off. We had Joe Morgan, not Joe Morgan, Joe Hogan. We have him for president of Local 600 against Stellato. Straightforward, straight from the shoulder Joe. What happened? You won't believe what I'm going to tell you but it's the truth.

Q: Hogan was another?

A: Hogan ran against me.

W: No, Hogan wasn't a stool pigeon.

A: He wasn't a stool pigeon.

Q: Okay.

A: But he was a guy who when he got defeated was in opposition and we were looking for the next election and he Joe winds up on the payroll of Carl Stellato because what they did was eliminate the opposition by absorbing the leadership of the opposition. It's an old political trick; was very effective. We broke the back of Stellato after he'd been president for 17 years with a guy named Harry Becker. Now that's the guy that I replaced as committeeman in the Tool and Die. Becker was a district committeeman in the plant and it was unheard of at that time for a district committeeman to run for president of Local 600. So he used to come around to me all the time on the job and say what do you think, Ken. I said this is the time to take them on Harry. He said will you help me? I said sure I'll help you. Why not?

Q: This is in the '60s?

A: This was in the '60s. And boy we had a terrific campaign. They had debates between Stellato and him. We had all kinds of leaflets and at the last minute before the election Stellato had put all over Melvindale, Lincoln Park, Rouge Park. He had Black children, young Blacks, running around with leaflets telling them that if Harry Becker got elected that they'd have housing projects and all of these places for the Blacks. This is what happened. You wouldn't believe it but this is what happened, you know. And we still think the election was stolen. In fact we know it was stole. By 500 votes is what Stellato

got elected. But after that Stellato decided that look, he said, my days are over, one more election and I'm gone. So his caucus got together and they took your friend Dorosh and they proposed him, what we call the unity caucus. That was the only caucus in the local at that time, the unity caucus besides what we call our building caucuses, our Tool and Die caucus and that was practically the only one opposed to the local administration. So they picked Walter Dorosh as president and he got elected and he moved out went to the International where he thought he was going to be their next president of the International Union but he got fooled. They relegated him to a small, insignificant job down there which he retired from and Mike Rinaldi has been the Local president since then. Strictly right wing all the way down the line and at one time Dorosh was a very progressive individual but he was absorbed. Mack Cinzori the same way. Mack Cinzori went to jail with her father in the early days.

DR: Have you interviewed him?

Q: No, not yet. I called him but it was too late for an interview. If I come back again, I'm not sure if I will be, but if I do then I'll...

A: All this is part of history.

Q: So can you tell a little bit about your feelings on Stellato? I know that people have said that he was left to start with and then he runs on Reuther's slate in '50 and then immediately afterward he has the trial of the 5, and after the trial committee's report is rejected he sort of starts to cooperate with the left.

A: Yeah. He made his peace with Reuther at that time.

Q: And then he goes left again.

A: He would flip any way that the occasion called for. As a matter of fact, Percy was pressuring, he worked for Carl.

DR: First Carl worked for him.

A: Yeah, first Carl worked for him, then Percy was hired. Percy kept telling Stellato, look he says we have to fight for the 30-hour week, 40-hours pay. This is the kind of progress we gotta have. He said the workers in the plant are behind you. The workers will go for it. Carl said they don't want to do that. They like overtime. Percy said look, he said, this is the way you operate a union. Right, wrong, or indifferent what you think you should do is what you should do and this is years ago not lately because that's been a demand of the union from 1937 to shorten the hours of work. So Carl hemmed and hawed and then they had the tenth anniversary John L. Lewis gave to town. That was a big occasion. Oh thousands of people were there. And they had a chance and Percy told them at that time, he said look why don't you go for the 30-hour week. You can't lose. He said if you lose you'll be made, you'll be a hero. And he said if you win you're still going to be ahead of the game. But Stellato was never convinced of it and never went after it. He just played politics as usual within the UAW and was a good boy and finally his health got out. He got beat up one time out here some place.

DR: I think she wants to know what you thought of his politics.

A: What I thought of his politics? Stellato's politics? I was opposed to them from the beginning, all the way down the line. I never supported him, except one time. He ran for congressman against Lesinski.

Q: Now how do you think he got the backing of the Rouge workers after he had been on the International, he ran on Reuther's slate in '50?

A: Because he had a good following, a good political group and the opposition was practically nil. There was very few...

DR: He was a good Catholic and that was the year for the Catholics.

A: He was able to charm. He'd take an angry worker into his office and in five minutes the guy'd come out patting him on the back. He was that type of guy. He had much personal charm.

Q: Sounds like there's a lot of Catholics in the leadership that weren't with the ACTU.

A: Yes, there was, there was. The ACTU eventually died out because it was too much of an extreme organization. They couldn't get elected adhering to its policies and they had to survive as a, get elected because if they took the ACTU line they would have been dead ducks every one of them, see. You bet they would have wound up like Henry McCusker. But a lot of them changed. They became what you call middle of the road people and business as usual. Don't do this, don't upset the apple cart, don't try to do anything that will upset Reuther, don't try to do anything that will upset any of the business as usual routine that they have. This is the way they operate.

Q: So how, I can imagine if you were a Catholic, that you were on the progressive side, and you go to church and I've heard that the ACTU not only had their groups which met but also that they encouraged it in church and all.

A: Oh yeah. They preach it from the pulpit.

Q: So then there's all this independently-minded Catholics then that were not letting that influence their...

A: Some of them. I didn't know many. But I never went to church after I was 18 years old and before the union came in the preacher at St. Clemens, Father Oakly, he'd preach about the union. Father Coughlin was on the radio every Sunday. My parents listened to him faithfully. He was talking about social justice, demagogue, Huey Long and the rest of them, they listened faithfully and I used to tell them after I was in the Local 600 about what he was doing. They wouldn't believe me. They thought he was wonderful, him and his social justice and yaking about the Jews, Communist conspiracy. You know they'd be in a helluva of shape if there was no Soviet Union. They'd have to invent one.

Q: So it sounds like their influence didn't reach far with the workers themselves.

A: Not really. But the worker is a cagey individual. They're not dumb. They'll tell you, \_\_\_\_\_ you're right. Then they'll do something else, because they always want to be on the winning side in a lot of instances. There's some that will, militant people that will batter down a wall with you but they're few and far between. Now most of the workers I knew I got along with fine. They knew my ideas. They knew my ideology. They used to tell me be careful now, they're gonna get you and I'd say well I got you and this is the way it worked but it was a long forty years, a lot of crises, a lot of meetings, a lot of caucuses, a lot of talk and then you know something, forty years later not much has changed.

Q: You think that could have been, the story could have been different or the outcome could have been different?



A: Oh yeah, it would have been different. Percy used to tell me the Communist put Reuther up in power. He was never even a member of the UAW. He went to a convention, and who was that beside Bill McKie...

**END OF TAPE 1 - SIDE B**

A: What's his name, Nat Ganley.

Q: He was with Local 150 or something?

A: At one time Emil Mazey was a real militant guy.

DR: Yeah, a real firebrand.

A: A real firebrand.

DR: He started off very young.

A: I saw Emil he came to Percy's funeral and he was very mellow at that time because he was dying. He got a hold of me and he told me about the old days. And I told him how good he was in the old days, I didn't say nothing about the later days. I told him, I remember you, when you got up and fought for the soldiers to come back home.

DR: Did you tell them about Floyd Incompata?

A: Floyd Incompata and there was Charlie Regan. There was Stewart Maden(?) (Inaudible) A hypothetical thing,... He said I'm going to send over to the Soviet Union, bring your son and he said when Reuther gets up to accept the nomination he said I'm going to have this son march down the middle of the hall yelling \_\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_\_. Percy used to get a kick out of that, telling us that story because it was real funny. It was a lot of years ago.

DR: My dad was a member of the Socialist Party with Reuther in the '30s. He and Reuther and the Reuther brothers were all members of the Socialist Party.

Q: Now did a lot of the people who were Socialist, it seems like, with Reuther and Mazey and some of these people that were Socialist were the strongest right-wingers against the progressive later on.

A: That's the way Socialists work. They are apologists for the capitalist system within the labor movement. And they'll find something good about them no matter how bad they are. You'll find that out.

Q: Don't you think that stems from their...

A: It's like Wyndham Mortimer says, did you read the chapter in his book, you should read one chapter in his book if you don't read nothing else.

Q: Okay. Which chapter is it?

A: I'll show you, I'll show you the chapter and ... The article by Philip Murray in the Atlantic magazine in 1947. He mentions it in this letter he wrote and he says there's no class struggle in this country.

Q: Murray's saying that?

A: Murray said that. He quoted him, he said there's no fight and Wyndham says where the hell have you been for the last 50 years? What do you think you have been engaged in? What do you think unions are for? That's right. This is very interesting thing, what is happening is, to me it's very interesting today but very discouraging because I know it could be better. I know that the whole course, my father-in-law knew too, of the labor movement would be different if certain things were just, tip the, the scales were tipped in the other direction but unfortunately they were able to buy out every left-winger or get rid of them by persecution. One way or the other they were able to do that.

Q: So you think that these hearings, both the House Un-American Activities, and the other were devastating?

A: Oh yeah very effective. Have you read that book Naming Names it's about the Hollywood 10?

Q: Yeah, I've heard of it.

A: Victor Navasky(?). Very interesting book. It shows you how the pressure went from one to the other to the other. It was the same way in the UAW only on a different level. I had people that I didn't even know testifying against me before the un-American Activities Committee. Me and Hal Robertson were called down to the un-American Activities. At that time it was Kit Hardy. He was the chairman of the committee and I never did testify because for one thing they didn't have a quorum in order to hold a session and they got ahold of a guy who was a colored kid walking up and down in the federal court building there and Hal Robertson said that's the guy that's testifying against us, Ken. So I went over to him and asked him. I said I don't even know you, how come you're testifying against me? He said I ain't testifying against you, man. I said you aren't? I said well that's what I hear. He said I ain't testifying against nobody. I didn't even know who he was. So they called the committee together. My lawyer didn't show up. I hired this lawyer from the Goodman firm and he never even showed up. I just sat there by myself waiting for them to call the meeting to order but they never did.

DR: Kit Hardy had an accident.

A: Yeah. What happened was Kit Hardy got drunk and he ran over a kid and they postponed the hearings and disbanded them after that in Detroit and never did call me back again. And I've written in, all the rest of the people have got their, I've written in to the state police for

my records if they have, the un-American Activities Committee is supposed to have on me. And I never received mine.

DR: We've even had our daughter working on it.

A: I had my daughter working on it. I had the Civil Liberties Union working on it. I still haven't got it.

Q: What about from the FBI?

A: Nothing.

Q: You know that's the same thing that...

A: Lindberg got his.

DR: My dad got his.

A: Percy got his.

DR: People got them that didn't even ...

A: What they said that most of the stuff was deleted anyway, cross out, that it didn't mean anything even if you got it.

Q: Yeah. There's supposed to be legal processes by which you can get them to stop deleting.

A: They had a bunch of people, they had Toby Baldwin testify against me. Shelton Tappes testified against me.

DR: Milton Santwire.

A: Milton Santwire.

DR: He testified against you and me and dad and I didn't even do anything.

A: Lee Romano. And oh there was, who else, Shelton and Paul Boatin in a secret testimony in Washington, he was called to Washington. Archie Accaicca.

Q: Well you know in that incident with Tappes in his testimony he describes a Communist Party meeting that was sort of intimidating towards him and also he says that the FBI or whoever it was, was

threatening him in such a way that he was in a divorce and there was a custody thing and that he said it was personal rather than political forces that made him tell on other people.

A: That's possible.

Q: And then he also says that ...

A: The bottom line is (?) but it's possible.

Q: It seems like there were a lot of intertangled factors. Tappes says that if he had to do it over again he wouldn't. It's easy to say now but...

A: I've had people come up, Augie Santa Dinero, he testified, one of the guys in our own unit. He came back to work. He was off sick for a long time. He came back to work and he apologized to me for testifying against me. I said it's all right, I understand. No harm done. I'll never forgive Paul Boatin. I've talked to him, I see him at retirees meetings but I'll never forgive him because he knew better. Augie Santa Dinero is just a worker, not politically minded.

Q: With him was it the threat of deportation with Boatin?

A: Might have been.

DR: I can't remember all that he said. All I know is that he should have won an Oscar for his performance.

A: Well you can understand why it's done. I can understand why it's done, because of the conditions. The FBI was there. They came to my house. I refused to let them in but they went through other people's. Yeah, they were at our house when we lived in the back.

DR: I know about that but when we lived with \_\_\_\_\_ ? \_\_\_\_\_ people and we were having a meeting. I forget, who was the president, Stellato.

A: Stellato was president.

DR: Yeah and we were having meetings at the house trying to get an organization together so the girl's father that we rented from happened to be Armenian. So what do they do but they call his daughter down. The FBI, they mentioned, they never mentioned us but they mentioned associations, they mentioned names, and she didn't even know these people. And more or less threatened her father with deportation through her and it was frightening, you know. She was extremely upset. Eventually we moved, now they didn't ask us to, her father happened to be a very progressive man.

A: She worked at the Local for years (Ann Boatin?).

DR: Oh yeah and kind of tried to garner information from her by threatening her father and I don't know whether she ever did tell her father about this. I know that she asked us so we told her the best thing you can do is, don't answer their questions. Eventually they left her alone.

A: Everything was politics in them days. All the way from school board elections right up to mayor. She knows Mayor Young in Detroit. So do I. I knew him when he was organizing for the CIO.

DR: Matter of fact, if I lived in Detroit I would look for Mayor Young. I told that policeman we had a lot of White crooks for years.

A: Every Mayor of Detroit was a crook. Mayor Boles, Mayor Reading,... They're all crooks. Now that we got a Black mayor... He might be a little shady but he's no different from the rest of them but then he should know better with what has been done to put himself in this position. He has a better background. He should know better than to be dealing with these kind of elements and I don't give him credit for that because he put Watts on, extreme right-winger, vicious. He got

Buddy Battle on his payroll who's nothing but a, was a scab. Wound up as, he was a scab in 1940 and wound up as regional director of UAW. Then this Judy Pasternak from the Detroit Free Press has been delving into his finances and found out about all this money he had in his funds. She wrote about it in the paper and he hit the ceiling because he had around \$84,000 in the slush fund that he was using at his arbitration, at his own whim and will to buy Lincolns ...

DR: About sending some money to the family of the murdered Black children in Georgia.

A: Didn't send it. And knowing Buddy Battle it's all true. I knew him when he used to be the chairman of the Iron Foundry over there and on payday he would go around and collect the paychecks of all the guys and walked over to the credit union and cash them for them and bring the money back and charge them a half dollar a piece.

DR: He used to take their lunches and eat them.

A: And if they got sent home early he'd go around and collect their lunches. He weighed over 300 pounds and he used to collect their lunches and then he'd eat what he want and throw the rest away and say you don't want to take your lunch home, you're going home anyway. This was the kind of people that we dealt with and the kind of people today that they throw great big parties for.

Q: Well Young was a left-winger early on.

A: Oh yeah. Dave Moore knew him real well. They used to pal around together.

Q: What about this guy Crockett who was...

A: Crockett?

Q: Yeah.



DR: He was a heck of a terrific guy. I don't know what the hell happened to him. He fell a little off base there for awhile.

A: Yeah, he's a terrific man. He represented the, in Foley Square he represented Carl Winters, Billy Allen in the trial that they had in New York.

DR: Who were the other three?

A: Saul Wellman, there was Nat Ganley, Saul Wellman, quite a few.

Q: Another House committee or Senate committee?

A: Yeah it was a trial, these people were put on trial for conspiracy.

DR: He spent time in jail, didn't he?

A: Then there was Henry Winston and this was the trial they had at Foley Square. He went to jail for contempt of court.

Q: Is he still ...

A: He's Congressman.

Q: Is he still progressive?

A: Yeah. He votes the right way on the issues that come up. His son is a judge in Detroit, Crockett the third.

DR: Every once in a while people get he and his son confused.

A: Yeah but Conyers is a pretty progressive guy too. He had a dealership, I guess his father had a dealership, a Ford dealership in Detroit and he got to be a congressman. But you were born and raised in California?

Q: Yeah.

A: There's been a lot of students, Percy my father-in-law, was interviewed several times by students and they all seemed to have the same thesis. They want to find out what happened in the labor movement in the early days.

DR: We never read any of them.

Q: I've seen some references.

A: He came there to the funeral and we were talking and I said George, you know, I remember one thing about you George that I can never forget. I said you remember you had to account for every dime. If you ever misplaced a dime of UAW's money, them right-wingers would have been over you like snow and I said they would run you right out of the union if they found a dime misplaced. Now Mazey's the financial secretary, UAW loses a million in Colorado, nobody says a word. I said they lose a couple more in New Jersey and then he named a couple more places because he kept up on this too because I didn't know about it, where money had been lost by the UAW, invested and lost in bank failures. And I said you know something, I said George, he said yeah, I know. He says nobody opens their peep about this. I said there's a few of us that did but it's like crying in the wind. You just don't get any place. I was very active in the 60 now. Reuther was opposed to it viciously. We wanted retirement at 60 years of age and they didn't want that, 65, 66, 67, that was good. What they always wanted was something the workers didn't want but we got it anyway but they wanted mostly. Five-year contract, from 1950 to '55, we broke that contract. But each worker lost thousands of dollars because they put a cap on the cost of living at that time.

Q: How'd you break it?

A: How'd we break it? Pressure on Reuther. Intense pressure, all kinds of meetings, caucuses, resolutions, convention and finally we booked a five year contract.

Q: Did you have to live out that first five years or did you break it in midstream?

A: In the middle we broke it.

Q: Now how...legally...

A: Renegotiated another.

Q: How did ...

A: It took the cap off the cost of living, that's all they did.

Q: How did they go about doing that legally with Ford? I mean Ford probably, his interest was to keep it, right, five years?

A: Um-um.

Q: So how did Reuther go about it after he was forced to do this?

A: I really don't know.

Q: That's interesting.

A: I really don't know. He went before them and he said well this is the way it is I guess and he says this is what they want.

Q: Now at GM and Chrysler they had five year contracts too, right?

A: Um-um.

Q: But they kept theirs, right?

A: Far as I know they broke all of them throughout the whole UAW. They couldn't have done it just that one. Not in one place, they couldn't have done it. And this 60 and out they were opposed to that. They want to get out at 60 years of age. Thirty and out. That came from Flint. That was a very interesting fight because at that time Reuther wanted a profit-sharing plan and the workers wanted a 30 and out retirement. In other words, you work 30 years and you're out. Finally 98% of the people that at the UAW convention paraded for 20 to 25 minutes with all these jackets, placards and everything else and Reuther said well if that's what you want, I guess you can have it, 30 and out. Since then we have built on it. Now they're proposing \$1500

for pension in the next contract so I see they started a movement for it. But all these were ground swell movements that never had any impetus from the leadership. They were discouraged until the ground swell got so big that they had to move and to cede to these people.

Q: Did the people in foundry and those people who had the jobs that were more physically taxing, were they the ones that were most behind these early retirement plans?

A: No, all of us were but the Foundry got a better deal. They got a 25 year. They had demanded 25 years for working in a Foundry because of the conditions, the smoke, the inhalation and the conditions that they had in the Foundry were bad so anybody who worked in the Foundry for so many years, how many years was it?

DR: I can't remember.

A: Over 10 years I believe in the Foundry that they were entitled to a 25 year and out pension plan. The rest of us were 30.

Q: So what other buildings did you work in besides these?

A: I worked in the Gear and Axle building. I worked in the Tool and Die building.

Q: You didn't talk about the Gear and Axle yet. What were some of the characteristics of that building, whether it was highly skilled, low skilled, middle?

A: It was a production building. I was a cutter grinder and it was a production building. We ground all the tools for it. It was mostly a mixture between Blacks, Ukrainians, Polish, Lithuanian people, a mixture of that. It was a right-wing building. Pat Hamilton, Andy Ignasiak, a vicious, ACTU building. They had control of it but then they had some good progressive guys like Alex Simeon, Dave Moore

worked there, Vince Bazoki, and it was touch and go, left and right situation all the way down but the right wing always dominated.

Q: So in a building like that where it's 50-50 politically, what would the committeemen usually be, the same, some left, some right or ...?

A: Mostly right. There was very few left. I'd say about one-third, two-thirds, one-third. It was split that way. The top leadership was always right-wing. At that time the ACTU was very active in the beginning and they had a paper come out every week...

Q: The Wage Earner?

A: The Wage Earner.

Q: A lot of people subscribe to that?

A: Oh, at the beginning, yeah, but then it tapered off later on. People didn't pay no more attention to it and they changed to a more conciliatory position in order to survive politically.

Q: How about some of the other extra papers like the Socialist Workers Party had The Militant and then the Communist Party had The Daily Worker.

A: They'd sell it at the gates, bring it in the plant and sell it.

Q: A lot of people buy those papers?

A: A lot of people bought them, yeah. In the early days, later on, as things, disillusionment crept into the workers because they'd seen the factional fight in the local, they became disillusioned. Said what the hell's different, you're a left-wing or a right-wing and you could see it after the first, oh I'd say the first ten years that it began to really, at that, the high point of organization at the Rouge plant was when Lewis gave his speech at the tenth anniversary. He had that place jammed. He gave a good speech and he said here we are in this

country, all dressed up and no place to go and at that time we were rearming, at that time Truman was president, at that time Churchill had made his Iron Curtain speech in Fulton, Missouri and it was their opening of the Cold War. Opened the case after the fight was over. They started to initiate the Marshall Plan and all of these policies in Europe that they initiated. This was the opening guns and after that things changed. They started raising hell because the UAW executive board and the Local 600, the board, voted \$8,000 for Yugoslavia. That was a big issue over there. Oh boy the right wing was really played on that one. And then came the trials, then came the purge. They purged the Mine-Mill and Smelter Workers, they purged the United Electrical, Carey got in there, that guy was really something. Did you read the book Us and Them? Percy was a good friend of Matles.

Q: Oh really?

A: Yeah, they knew each other real well and he spoke very highly of Matles. I never knew him but it was a good union at one time. I think there was five international unions. There was Fur and Leather Workers, that was expelled, there was the Mine-Mill and Smelter Workers, Longshoremen, and I think Communication Workers and the other one that you mentioned, UE. Five of them, out.

Q: Yeah, that was a big step for the CIO.

A: Yeah. And then we found out that Reuther worked for the CIA, Victor Reuther worked for the CIA.

Q: How'd you find that out?

A: How we found out? Published. It was published. He was an employee of the CIA. Victor Reuther admitted it. I saw him one day. We were

standing on top of the bridge, the historic bridge over here at Gate 4, you know. I was talking to Victor Reuther. I said, well, he made light of it but I said well Victor, I said, remember Percy? He said yeah I remember Percy. I'm his son-in-law, cause I never new Victor personally. I knew of him. Oh, he says, yeah, when you see Percy say hello to him. I said I will. I said how are you doing. He said okay, everything's all right. I said I hear you've been to Europe, traveling all over, telling everybody how good it is in America. He says well, that's the way it is. I said I understand. I want to show you two something. Maybe you can get something out of it. If it would help you in your studies. This is something that my children made for Percy. (INAUDIBLE)

Q: When did they turn that around, the law in Dearborn that you couldn't pass out leaflets?

A: I was seeing it here, I have seen it here.

DR: Give me some of them. I'll look through them. Hand them over here. I know we just saw it last night because I said (inaudible).

END TAPE 2 - SIDE A

A: ...the event in-between. This is Percy in honor and they got a room named after him over in the annex of the Local, over on Picks Road. And there's several letters in here from John L. Lewis thanking him for the different things that he did for him.

DR: Where's Pardo. I don't think I'll be able to find it.

Q: You think that Lewis' influence was great in helping to organize?

A: Oh yes. There's no question about it. Financially he was a big help and Percy really had a lot of respect for John L. Lewis because in fact didn't he have breakfast ...?

DR: Oh daddy and Lewis were good old friends from days in Pennsylvania. Lewis' name was Lewellyn, same as my father and they were friends from the time my father lived in Pennsylvania.

A: In fact Percy took time off to meet, and Carl Stellato to meet with in Washington with Lewis. I forget what year it was.

DR: Well it had to be before Carl was elected president because as I recall Lewis told daddy something about beware of him, beware of him, of Stellato, something about him, beware. I can remember telling me about it later. Now that's part of it. I don't know whether I can find the other part.

A: This thing has been gone over. These are different certificates that he got, memberships, the international executive board member, international executive board member, representative and all this stuff here is his. Here's his cards.

DR: There's a lot of literature like papers they used to put out. What are they called?

Q: Ford Facts?

DR: No.

A: Leaflets. I want to show you one. Percy was running for president of the Motor building and Paul Boatin was supporting him, and we had a bunch of leaflets printed and we had them in my house and here the next day Paul told me not to pass the leaflets out. I said why. So the next day at lunchtime I find that Paul was out there at the sound trucks supporting Freddy Soretti, Percy's opposition.



Q: What was that all about?

A: Well, they told him that he wouldn't get very far. This is a picture of the crowd that was there on our tenth anniversary. This is a picture of it.

Q: And this is the one the International would not attend, right?

A: That's right. Wouldn't come near. Here it is right here. That's the old Local. Here's a picture of John L. Lewis at that meeting. If you have the time you can look through it and here's another one there. That's Stellato, Pat Rice, Bill Hood, and John L. Here's a picture of when Percy retired. Here's Dorosh, here's Percy. There's all kinds of literature in here from the days, the factional literature, you know.

DR: Here's some, I don't know whether you're interested in it. Delay warrants for 60 UAW, I lay it out here.

Q: Yeah, I'll take a look.

A: We go forward, not backward. This is a Ford Facts issue. Betrayal. Here's a good one. You should read that there. It's a laugh.

Q: Put out by the right.

A: Oh yeah.

DR: Oh, is that the one that's a Communist thing of you?

A: Yeah, that's it. Lewellyn, Johnson and Couser.

Q: Johnson? Which Johnson?

A: That's Bill Johnson. He's a labor mediator, isn't he?

DR: No, he's an attorney, also.

A: Attorney.

DR: Here's this Stellato unity plan unites left wing.

Q: What year was this put out?

A: I don't remember. Is there a date on it?

Q: No.

A: I don't know.

Q: I guess I could go back and see when these three were elected together.

A: Oh here's another one.

Q: What about these? Rank and file committee for good unionism?

A: They never sign their name, just put that. Larry Yost was the chairman.

Q: Well they're against Yost and they're against the left.

A: Yeah.

Q: So I thought Yost was in with the right.

A: No, he was a drunkard. He was what they call it at that time, a Trotskyite. He was a drunkard and we never heard much more of him. He got drunk one time and tried to force his way into the plant. The guards beat him up pretty bad and we didn't hear much more of him after that.

Q: He was pretty power, not powerful but he was leading a sizable movement during the war against no strike pledge.

A: Yeah.

Q: What were the feeling of the general workers during the war about the no strike pledge?

A: That's how Reuther got his power. The workers during the war were against the no strike pledge. The leadership of the union was for the no strike and that's R.J. Thomas. They were for the no strike pledge. And Reuther was militant, boy he was a super militant at that time. He was against the, we got a strike, we got to have a right to the

worker but he had the sympathy of the workers all right. At that time he improved the wages, the government was going, trying to get everything out that they could they couldn't afford the work stoppages. Then immediately upon getting elected in 1946 he started putting no strike pledges in the contract, negotiating five year contracts with no strike. There was a five year contract with a no strike pledge.

Q: So where did the leadership of Local 600, where did they stand on the no strike pledge?

A: Where did they stand? They stood with the international union at that time.

Q: And what about the unit heads?

A: The unit heads? Some of them were against it. The right-wingers were against it you know and they were agitated against it but there was not any big movement at all.

Q: Do you think that most of the leaders in the plant would go along with short stoppages and just officially say that they were in favor of the pledge but they'd allow small stoppages and slow downs and things like that to occur under them?

A: No. There was no stoppages allowed. They had them but the leadership came in and made them go back to work. At one time, what was it Percy was telling us about what happened in the Rolling Mill that several of the crane operators were overcome by fumes and at that time the workers on the job walked off. They walked off their jobs and the workers walked off in sympathy because these fumes were going up and making these people dizzy and giving them all kinds of fainting spells. They had a big meeting on it with the Ford Motor Company.

Percy was in on it. He said look he says what's the big idea, he says you people are insisting that these people work in these cranes when these fumes are bothering them. They said well they're supposed to work up there and we don't see anything wrong with it. He said well it's dangerous for them to go up there. And anyway the problem was solved by negotiation and they were able to get the people back to work by promising that the condition would be taken care of and it was at that time. But I don't remember exactly how.

Q: So in cases where people were objecting to the conditions...?

A: If it's your health and safety involved, you were perfectly legitimate in going off the job if your health is involved because a lot of times the company would put you in a position where your health was in danger even during the war. We had a lot of cases like that. That's the one I remember most.

Q: I read something about a lot of stoppages in the Aircraft unit where Yost was. Some of the stoppages that they described there are over things like two guys being disciplined for the no smoking rule and they had big stoppages and everybody would go out over that.

A: That was so too. Percy had a big story on that about how Bugus, he said look, the only reason that the people can't smoke is because Henry Ford doesn't want them to smoke. This was the old Henry Ford. And he said this is ridiculous. He says one man telling all these people that they can't smoke and Bugus eventually broke down and he agreed that the people could smoke. You couldn't smoke for a long time. Didn't even have doors on the toilets. That was a big issue. There was a leaflet about that. The toilets were such that the wash bowl over here and you'd be washing your hands and your hind-end would

be in some guy's face sitting on the toilet. I looked in and I went my God what the hell's going on here. I mean other buildings that I worked in they had doors on the toilets so people had some privacy and here I was going to work in a Motor building and find this condition. I said hey Percy what's going on here anyway. Why aren't there any doors on these toilets? I put a leaflet out. The next thing I knew there was doors on them.

Q: It seems like that would be a hard one to put the wording just right.

A: You had to use "commodes" and all that stuff.

DR: We used to walk out because of the weather too, if it was too hot.

A: Yeah or if it was too cold. I've seen them walk out in the Foundry when it was too cold to work. We had to put salamanders, you know what a salamander is?

Q It's a fish, that's all I know.

A: A salamander is what you call, it's a big drum or like a big oil drum and they fill it up with water and coal and they light it and it keeps you warm. We used to gather around them and worked in our jackets over there because they didn't have no heat and at one time it was so cold in there that it was really bad.

Q: So when the guys walked out or stopped over those issues during the war...?

A: They were short stoppages.

Q: Just short.

A: They were short. They didn't amount to anything.

Q: During the war did the union have the power to get those kinds of demands settled with short stoppages?

A: Yeah they got them settled. By and large they were all settled. There wasn't too much involved, too much of a problem on that.

Q: During the war when Ford had all these cost-plus contracts and hired a lot of people, what?

A: They scoured Pennsylvania. They had agents in the South, West Virginia. We had at one time 110,000 people working over there. They canvased these states and the people came in en mass.

Q: And who would they pick up from over there, just people unemployed?

A: People that weren't working, people who wanted a job, farmers, young men, old men, anybody that they could get. They went and man at that time the Local was really humming and the bars around here were really humming. These guys had come in from the south and they'd come in from Pennsylvania and at that time Dolores was working there and they were hiring people like mad. I think they'd take anybody they could get.

Q: Did the southerners have any ...

A: It was cost-plus. They were getting ten percent and they made a bundle.

Q: Did the southerners have any, different attitudes?

A: Yes. The southerners were definitely anti-Negro and anti-Catholic and anti-Jew, the same as they are now. They were no different. The Maintenance unit was what you call a real, real racist unit in the Ford Motor Company, the Maintenance unit.

Q: They were largely southerners?

A: Largely southerners. Millwrights, riggers, hookers, people like that and always rednecks. Rednecks from the South was in the leadership of that unit.

Q: Why was that? They had gotten the skills in the South?

A: I don't know whether they got the skills in the South. I don't think they did but they got them when they come up here because it doesn't take much skill to be a millwright. You carry a wrench around, a pair of pliers and things like that. Doesn't take skill. You move stuff on production lines and you move machinery.

Q: But did they cause much trouble on racial issues or did they pretty much keep to themselves?

A: Well they kept the unit pretty well clean. There wasn't anybody Black in their unit, one or two at the most in the Maintenance unit. You would never find any Blacks in the Maintenance unit. They were very, very racist. They go like this you know, such and such and so and so is running for office you know.

Q: What does this mean?

DR: We didn't know either.

A: I didn't know at first. They go like this.

Q: Like you're coloring your face.

A: Right. That's the way they believe.

DR: Or the expressions they used.

A: Yeah.

DR: We weren't familiar, we never used to talk like this ...

A: Jungle bunnies.

DR: Yeah, what's that. And they'd look at you like there's something wrong with you.

A: That was all new to us.

DR: It still was. I think their idea was that the Black, the Jew and the woman could do the same work but they weren't supposed to get the same pay.

Q: Oh boy. Was the Maintenance unit the only one that was largely racist like that?

A: No, Production Foundry under Horace Sheffield was just as prejudice the other way. They didn't want any Whites. They didn't want any Whites in there at all.

Q: Now Sheffield was a right-winger, right?

A: Right. Definitely.

Q: Now he...

A: He brought charges against Percy on an International Executive Board because there wasn't enough Blacks in the plant. Percy said we don't hire people that come in the plant. We haven't got that right yet, and he said well we got to have it. So Percy in the meantime he sent somebody down to the Local to get the records from the Production Foundry where Sheffield was chairman and he asked Sheffield how many Whites you got on your Executive Board, how many Whites did you elect on your Executive Board. How many Whites get promotions in the Production Foundry when you were chairman? They are all Black. He said we don't have any control over these things. We can't hire who we want. We don't have a hiring hall and he defended himself because this right wing goof was attacking through an oasis basis Percy, trying to discredit him at election time in the International Union.

DR: He even used the fact that we lived in Dearborn.

A: Yeah, we lived in Dearborn.

Q: Did Sheffield get a lot of right-wingers behind him in the Foundry? Because it sounds like that was a left-wing building early on.

A: Well it was partially when Nelson Davis was there. They had a left-wing movement in there. Leo Catrell was there. You have Nelson Davis



and they were pretty well respected in the unit. After the trial there was nothing left, Nelson Davis was put on trial.

Q: Was Tappes a progressive force early on?

A: Yeah. He was.

Q: So why do you think it is, just that there were no good left-wingers around afterwards, and that there the right wing started taking over?

A: Well let's say there was no active, very few active ones around. They were still there but they really were neutralized or working for the staff of Local 600. They were absorbed, let's put it that way. Some of them went to International, some went on the local payroll. The last big fought election was between the two groups, was the Becker-Stellato campaign. That was the last big one. After that Al Wilson ran, a decent guy, very nice Black ran for president. He was at one time the recording secretary of the Local. He's dead now but he was very decent guy and we supported him but it was a losing proposition. If you haven't got the people you can't win. If you haven't got the finances. In an election like that at the time we were running people we took \$10,000, you had to raise \$10,000.

Q: And how'd they raise that money?

A: Most of the people get donations from people in the shop.

DR: By giving dinners.

A: Throw different parties, dinners, things like that, raffles, Paul Boatin raffles over in the motor building. Nobody ever knew what happened to the money. So that's the way things worked and that's what we've done. They had a big trial one time over an election. It was Tommy Thompson's election wasn't it, when they caught PeteAiles(?) with the ballots in his pocket?

DR: Yeah, with the ballots in his pockets. A lot of those elections were stolen. They would go in with lead under their nails.

A: We knew when they canvassed the ballots and everything. They had all the tricks because my mother was on an election committee in Dearborn and she used to canvas the votes and she knew all the tricks and she'd tell me about how it was done you know and how they can mark the ballots. They leave places blank and you have lead under your...

DR: Nail. Yeah I used to do it.

A: Ford Motor Company used to come around, Cameron, his name was Cameron, he sent people around. My mother was active in politics here in the Democratic party and my dad, they used to have Me Too Club. They'd throw parties in the basement, ?. The company came in and my dad worked for Ford Farms and they would give her this to canvas the people in the neighborhood and say hey find out whether they're voting Republican or Democrat. My mother never turned the lists in, and she never canvassed anybody. She said well the kids got ahold of the list and threw them in the fire or tore them up and this and that. She had all kinds of excuses in the world not to turn these back because when they found out how you voted if you told your neighbor or if somebody like my mother or Miss Nordstrom, another one, was active in politics, if you were a Democrat at that time, you were fired.

Q: What was this Ford Farms? I saw a reference...

A: Ford Farms? That's where my father worked. He worked all around here, in fact he was at one time he worked at Fairlane Manor, a gatekeeper. He ran a tractor, worked for Big Fritz and Ray Ballenger. You probably heard about the illegitimate son. He wrote a book, Henry Ford's illegitimate son, that was Ray Ballenger's. And he plowed the

ground. A lot of this land around here is still vacant. It's owned by the Ford Motor Company and then they had Camp Legend at one time. It was right up here on the other side of Hubbard Drive where they had all kinds of young fellows, it was like a CCC camp working in the field. Then we had gardens. They give us a garden to take care of right over here where the central office building is right now. That used to be all plots of gardens that they gave us kids in school.

Q: This was in the thirties during the depression?

A: Yeah, while I was still a young kid in school.

Q: Oh so Ford is using this to show that he's giving to welfare?

A: Yeah. Every year they have a Dearborn Day where Ford used to come out to Dearborn Day and his wife, pass dimes out to the kids and they'd have ice cream. Dearborn they are at Ford Field.

Q: Do you think those types of activities were important in getting people to support Ford, and keeping the union out at the beginning?

A: Oh yeah, they was definitely, he had stores and you could go to his stores and buy food in Highland Park. You could go up there and get all your food at reduced prices and just about everything you needed. You could have money deducted from your pay for savings in the Ford bank and they'd come around to your house and they'd check your house to see if you were cooking the right stuff, if your house was clean. They sent servicemen around.

Q: I was looking at something. They have, in the Ford archives they have a sociology department...

A: Did you read the Flivver King? Upton Sinclair mentions it too.

Q: They had all these questionnaires and they ask people, you know, let's see, what was some of the things, what their religion, what their

ethnicity, what their age, what kind of shape their home was in, what kind of neighborhood and all. Did they do this to all the Ford workers?

A: No, just some of them. They pick them out at random and they go check. You never know when they're going to come or who they're going to be or anything like that. And then they had his village of Inkster out here, see. They used a lot of Blacks to try to break the union. They imported them from the south. They used a lot of Blacks. Refer to in a lot of these clippings and everything. They used a lot of Blacks. They had the Knights of Dearborn. That was the union that they set up in order to counteract the UAW, the company union. They used to hold their meetings right where Montgomery Ward store is upstairs on the old Schaefer building.

DR: There's some articles in there about the Knights of Dearborn.

A: Yeah, the Knights of Dearborn. That was a real rough time. Black Legion was around there at that time. You heard about the Black Legion. They were active. That was what happened then.

Q: How did the workers socialize? Did most workers know each other and live in the same neighborhoods? Or workers in different buildings. Did they know the workers in their own building?

A: No, no, a lot of them worked at the same company but in different buildings. Came from the same neighborhood. We worked around here, practically everybody worked at Ford's but in different buildings with different trades, did different things. Dearborn was a Ford town. Everything was Ford.

Q: Did the workers socialize a lot?

A: They did in political meetings and stuff like that, school board meetings. That was about it. They were organized in different groups like Catholics stuck together and the Protestants stuck together, the Socialists stuck together, how few there were and the different groups stuck together.

Q: Did ethnicity play a role with people, different language groups, nationality groups?

A: Yeah. You had the Ukrainians they had a club, they still have a club up there, the Italian group had clubs and then the Polish.

Q: What kind of role did they play politically? Where they generally...?

A: Very progressive.

Q: Progressive.

A: Very progressive, um-um. As a whole. In the beginning but not now. What was that group that had insurance and everything, Delores, that all these old times from the old country belong to?

DR: IWW?

A: No.

DR: No. What was that?

A: Mostly the Ukrainians had insurance plans and everything else and my gosh they were real progressive, liberal minded and they had good things going for them.

Q: Did they have any people that were in leadership of the Local, in the Ukrainian group?

END TAPE 2 - SIDE B

A: Paul Boatin was chairman of the Motor building at that time, Percy worked there and we had a good caucus in going.

Q: How many people would show up at one of those caucus meetings?

A: Two or three hundred sometimes. We used to have a progressive caucus that met at 12th and Claremont every week, every Saturday.

Q: Oh really?

A: Every Saturday and we've had sometimes two hundred, three hundred people but after a period of time, things were going good at first then you started to get dissension within the group about who was going to get what, what kind of jobs and what kind of policies you're going to pursue and everything. And after a while they just disintegrated.

Q: Now the units met once a month, right?

A: Once a month.

Q: What kind of turn out did they get?

A: At the beginning they had good turnouts, now they have nothing and half the time they don't even (inaudible). They used to hire schools to have meetings in because it was required by the Constitution that they have so many meetings a year of the whole local, I think it was two, at least two, to inform the membership about the policy of Local 600 and report to the membership what they had been doing. They would hire Cass Tech, they would hire McKenzie School.

Q: Were you in any other buildings at that time?

A: I worked in the Foundry for several years.

Q: Which Foundry?

A: Production Foundry. They called it, it wasn't jobbing, it wasn't iron, it was adjacent to the...

Q: Not Foundry Machine Shop?

A: Foundry and machine shop, that's it.

Q: Now I hear that they didn't have slates in that building.

A: Could be they didn't. Jack...

Q: Poole?

A: Jack Poole, he was chairman. Your memory's better than mine. Yeah, I worked there, but at that time they were part of the Local caucus group.

Q: What was Poole?

A: He was in the progressive caucus. He was a pretty good guy.

Q: So it sounds like they did have slates.

A: They had slates, they had slates. They uphold these slates. In practically every unit had one slate because at that time everybody wanted a political job within the union. The only ones that I say didn't and they should've were the extreme left-wingers. They should've pushed themselves more for offices instead of pushing somebody else because they push somebody else and then inevitably that guy just disintegrated and did everything that he wasn't supposed to do when he was supposed to do it.

Q: Why do you think they did that? Why did they not want to run themselves?

A: Because they figured well we're too far left and we figure that maybe this guy will do what's right because of principle, which was wrong.

Q: But who was this guy that should've been running you're talking about, somebody like Gallo?

A: Johnny ran. So did Bill McKie. But you got guys like Alex Simeon, Ed Locke for a long time never ran for office. Herb Lindberg.

Q: I never heard that name before.

A: He's from (?) Herb was far left for awhile.

DR: Do you think so? It must have been for about five minutes.

Q: Mike Hraber.

A: Mike, yeah, Mike Hraber.

Q: Whitey Saari.

A: Whitey Saari, yeah John Saari.

Q: Is he still around? I called somebody but it was the wrong person.

A: He comes over to see me once in a while.

DR: There's two John Saari's.

Q: There's only one in the phone book and that was the wrong one.

A: He's a good guy. He made a big mistake. He left the plant. He worked for the Glass plant. He went out there, went in with Boatin in the Marina business up north. He wound up up there full time \_\_\_\_\_ never got paid for it. He quit his job here and now he's out of a pension. He had to go to work at some non-union machine shop.

Q: Wasn't he there a long time?

A: Yeah, he was there a long time but you had to have 10 years, you had to have 10 years seniority and that was negotiated after he'd quit, not before he quit. He gets a small pension from the company, but very small.

DR: What's that other guy, the one that his brother was shot in the hunger March?

A: Oh, Louie Lenny.



Q: I never heard that name.

A: He was from Maintenance unit, good man. His brother was shot, Coleman Lenny.

A: The martyrs. Five of them. They're not far from Percy's grave.

Q: He said that was the day he became a man (Dave Moore).

A: Yeah. Vince Bazoki never ran for office. A good solid guy. A lot of them couldn't talk English very well. They couldn't express themselves very well, they couldn't articulate. They were not able to come across to the workers.

DR: Floyd Incompata.

A: Floyd Incompata. All these people.

DR: Veal, was it Veal Clough, a Black guy, one of the few Blacks that was an early organizer?

A: Good solid people but for various reasons, how about this fellow that, Davis, Davis, Roy Davis.

DR: Roy Davis.

A: Roy Davis. He was a good solid guy, never ran for office. He figured well somebody else will do a better job. They didn't know how to write some of them. Couldn't write grievances. They couldn't maybe read contracts because the contract language is, the first contract was all right, but after that the language was, it takes a Philadelphia lawyer to figure out some of, they are still fighting. About terms of the contract, we're on an umpire system. The company disagrees with me, what's in the contract, send it to the umpire.

Q: What do you think of that?

A: I think it's lousy. Half the time was spent writing grievances and going through the procedure of five stages when it could have been

settled on the floor level between a foreman and the committeeman. I settled most of mine that way. I settled grievances of a foreman that could have taken years to arbitrate and go through an umpire. What the hell's going on here? You want to run the company? Are you running a goddamn, I'd say shithouse. What are you guys doing anyway, you want to save money for the company or you want these guys, the moral would be broken to the point where they won't do anything for you. I said look, get them out of the way.

Q: So was there a difference between the committeemen that would be on the right versus left and where they'd be likely to settle? would some be more likely to try to push it up to higher stages?

A: No, they were all good committeemen as far as I know whether they were right or left. But the difference is that the left-wing committeeman would pursue a case that was, to its logical conclusion. The right winger would let it go and compromise it. They've taken dozens of cases together to get one case settled and throw the rest out. So what stage would that be at, like a third?

A: Third or fourth stage of the grievance procedure where they got complete control, see because after the committeemen write the grievance and they go through a second or third stage, the second stage you still got control over because you go through the labor relations office in plantwide or whatever building he's in. But after it reaches a third stage it goes through the region and they send a guy out to take care of these things, it's out of your hands. You have nothing more to say about it. And what's done with it is out of your hands. You can't say I appeal or anything else like that.

Q: So at the stage of the plant review board, is that where they would be doing the trades?

A: Sure, they would do a lot of them. A lot of good grievances were thrown out while others without as much merit were settled. It depends on the politics and the person and who it's gonna favor. Another mistake we made, bad mistake, was letting the retirees vote in our local union. We thought at the time that it was proposed that look, all these retirees were old-timers. They really understand the union and they were in it at the beginning and they know what a difference it could make. We found out after they were able to vote in elections that they were easily bought. They had parties for them. On election day they'd haul them over, they'd send cars out for all the staff. Would go out to all the homes and we'd see people coming in cars with two guys on each side propping them up taking them to the polls so they could vote. This is how they? They would tell me people send them letters at home that if so-and-so got elected for president of the union then Local 600 would lose their pension. And they had people scared, they were actually scared. If they changed the administration that something would happen to their pension and they would lose it or have it reduced, things like that. It was a mistake when it was made. It was an honest mistake. We all made it together because we thought it would be good. What year?

Q: Yeah, did they instate that?

A: What year the retirees were able to vote? Do you remember, Delores?

DR: What year did the retirement program go into effect?

A: 1950 I believe.

DR: I would say it was probably the next election.

A: Yeah, 1950 and shortly after that. Everybody felt it was a good thing that the retirees should vote.

DR: It turned out to backfire.

A: In fact I read lately that they, an old retiree got elected. He ran for office and got elected.

Q: Oh really?

A: Yeah. They couldn't run for any jobs in the units on the secondary level but they could run for local. A retiree can run and they can vote in the local election but not for the unit. They can vote for the chairman of the unit, vice president but not for district committeemen and things like that. Direct representation. You couldn't bring a retiree in to represent people in the plant. That was a mistake. But what are you going to do? At one time we had 110,000 people working there. Today I think there's less than 24,000 people working at Ford Motor Company and it's going to be less as time goes on because they're going into robots, going into robots, computers. A lot of machines are run by one man now. Even before I left Tool and Die we had one man run six Kellers with a computer. All he does is sit there and push buttons and the machine does the work and now it's more advanced and that was 1974. This is 1984, so that was 10 years ago. I've been out of there for four years. They tried to sell the steel mill to the Japanese but the Japanese wanted the company, to force the company, in order deal with the union before they would buy their share, take their share of the responsibilities.

Q: And they never did that?

A: No. The company couldn't get the union to go along with it. Although they did take a cut, they cut their incentive in the Rolling Mill and

they cut it further in the Rolling, twice, twice they cut it in the Rolling Mill.

Q: That reminds me of that decentralization that Ford started.

A: That was a long time ago. I can remember the big publicity at that time. That was in the '50s or something like that. Right after the war they started decentralizing. There's a picture some place of Paul Boatin sitting on a machine while they're hauling it off. I don't know where it is but there is a picture in the paper of Paul Boatin sitting on a machine while they're hauling it off, out of the Motor building, decentralization, would move parts of the plant to different states.

Q: Cleveland.

A: Cleveland, yes, and Livonia, they took parts to Livonia. You look tired. I imagine you are.

Q: No, I'm not.

DR: You remember how tired Susan was when she was a law student.

A: In fact I can't think of what I ate yesterday.

Q: You've been doing a good job here.

A: I can't remember the years, the dates. It's been so long and there's so many things happened and it just seemed as if they all run together. Sometimes your memory ... If there's four or five guys I'm talking to in a bar or something like that where you remember this and one remembers this, oh yeah, you remember this, and you know you can get it. But one person, me and Percy together would be talking to you. He could remember things that I couldn't. I could remember things that he couldn't, see, and then from a different point of view, from a different perspective you could get all of this. The people

that are getting laid off now are never going to get a job unless they have more than 10 years seniority.

Q: Well with all this automation...

A: And never going back to work.

Q: Did people who work at Ford's have their sons and daughters also work there?

A: Oh yes. My father worked in the Rolling Mill at one time at Ford's and he got laid off and he worked for Ford Farms and he got laid off out there and he went to work for the city. When he died he worked for the city. He never did retire. He worked for the city of Dearborn in the signal bureau, taking care of the traffic lights and all that. At one time he was a janitor over at Henry Ford's School here.

DR: Tell them about the Rolling Mill, about the big shots getting their sons into the mill.

A: Oh yes. We know several friends of my son's that their father worked in the Rolling Mill. He's head timekeeper. He got them both jobs. They both come down to see me and I said Alec, I says, continue your education. You're going to make big money, smart kid, both of them. You're going to make big money here but don't neglect your education. They go and tell my son well your old man tells us to keep on with our education. Look at the money we're making you know. And they'd hold it over Kenny. Finally the layoffs came. When the layoffs came they married. They had children. Now I guess one of them is divorced and having a custody fight over the children. The other one Alec he's in a helluva mess. He's got a big home up in Canton township out there. He's not really working, driving a cab, anything he can get.

DR: But there the big shots would get their sons into the Rolling Mill.

A: The only thing is education. If you've got education, there's computers, all these technical innovations that they're making. I could never exist in a world today with my knowledge with what I had because of the technical knowledge I don't have anymore. It's all gone beyond me. My son does computer work that I couldn't understand. He takes me down to the shows downtown at Cobo Hall and shows me all these new machinery and all this new equipment and all robot's like, you know. He takes everything and turns it around. This I wasn't trained for.

Q: Well like she'll be doing some other stuff with all this data. Without the computer it would take her forever.

A: That's the thing with computers. When you're in it and you master it, you're all right, you're in good shape because that's what it's coming to. There won't be any production workers pretty soon. Everything will be done by machinery. Very few. Banking, your groceries, everything.

Q: So many things that are in for the future.

A: Yeah, that's right. So the only thing we've got to do is worry about whether we're going to be here tomorrow or the next day. If somebody doesn't get trigger happy and blow the whole thing and the second thing is are we going to eat. Millions of people aren't going to eat in this world. They're going to starve to death because they grow too much. Ever hear of that poem "Crazyland"? Have you ever gone to crazyland down by the lonesome pike. There are the strangest people there. You never saw the like. The ones that are doing the useful work are poor as poor can be while those who are the idlers are always

in luxury. They raise so much in crazyland of food, and clothes and such, that those who raise it starve to death because they raise too much.

Q: Old IWW.

A: Old IWW, wobbly. Percy got a kick out of that. In fact we got drunk one night, me and him. We went into a bar and there was a pianist at the bar. He was playing songs that anybody wanted to request, see. So we asked him how about playing crazyland. He said what the hell you talking about, Crazyland? So we recited it to him you know, drinking along and we recited Crazyland. By golly the guy put it to music and he was singing that song and we had a ball that night. Boy we were pretty well loaded.

DR: Yes. I remember (INAUDIBLE). So at the funeral we asked the minister to lay low on the religion. He was not a religious man. And he said, Well I know that. And he says did he have any favorite poetry and he thought of it. I forgot about it and he said it.

A: Sang it so much.

Q: Were there very many wobblies around in Detroit near the Ford plant?

A: There was some when the old IWW came to work. They worked on the railroads. Some of them worked on the railroad. I didn't have any personal contact with them but I knew that they were in the plant, some of the old timers. Like that Roy Davis. He was an old Wobbly.

DR: Floyd Incompata was a wobbly, we used to go to wobbly parties when I was a kid. I didn't know why, I didn't know what a wobbly was until I grew up. It would be maybe 10 families and their kids, you know, wasn't huge amounts.



Q: Everytime I hear about the IWW I think about your grandmother who's never had affiliation for the union you know. How old is she, 80?

Q: She's 85.

Q: And Judy said did you hear of the IWW? And she said oh yeah the I won't works.

Q: How about the Unemployed Councils in the '30s? Did you ever ...?

A: No.

Q: You were too young to experience that?

A: I was too young. I went to work, I knew about them reading the newspaper and my mother and dad talking about them but I wasn't 18 years old until 1940. I was born in 1922.

Q: So they were active in the early '30s.

A: I knew there was a lot of unemployment because my dad was unemployed a long time. He wasn't working and they used to have hard time parties, especially for political parties, the Me Too Club. Everybody would bring something and they have a party in somebody's basement and then they'd contribute a quarter to a fund, or half a dollar to a political group that they were supporting for either school board or the Dearborn council or something like that. They used to have that going.

Q: You know that the Unemployed Council did those activities like when people would get evicted they brought the furniture back in.

A: Oh yeah. I read about them. That was in Detroit.

Q: Dearborn too?

A: Dearborn too yes. It would take, they'd evict somebody, put the furniture out and then the union guys, the organizers and everybody would come and put it back in or even neighbors sometimes would come and put it back in.

Q: Dave Moore said the sheriffs couldn't stick around forever.

A: That's right.

A: There's a lot of that. I didn't know about it personally but I read about it in later years. Talked to my mother and dad. I never knew that there was a depression. Everybody was as poor as we were, going to school, everybody, we take our peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and eat them for lunch and come home for a can of pork and beans or spaghetti.

DR: They were about two cents then.

A: Yeah, nickel or something. That was ... Once a year Dr. Keyes would come over and look at our teeth.

DR: He's a doctor, dentist and a lawyer.

A: He ran a hospital down here.

A: He was quite a figure in Dearborn. I never saw a real dentist until I went to work.

DR: Well he was a real dentist.

A: I mean he was a real dentist but if something was wrong with your tooth, he'd pull it.

DR: Remember the time when he wanted to leave his hospital to daddy?

A: Yeah I remember.

DR: For the UAW to do something with?

Q: Oh really?

DR: He was quite a controversial figure.

A: Oh yeah. Eugene Keyes. And then we had Mayor Hubbard which you know about and his history. He was a real racist. We had a Negro family move in here on my street. In fact the only family in Dearborn that was Black lived on this street. The Hill family. I went to school

with the girls, Barbara and her two sisters. I forget the sisters' name now but there was three girls and the father was, worked for the post office. He had some kind of job in the post office.

DR: They said they were American Indians.

A: And they claimed to be American Indians and we went to school and we had dancing classes over there and I danced with Barbara. I went to her wedding and Dick Welshin who lives at the end of the street. And when she got married we were invited to her wedding and they moved out later when the dad died and the girls moved away and then later on the house was vacant for years. It was in the second block. They removed it now. You won't, you'll see an empty space. And then Reverend Knight come in and moved into the house because nobody else would buy it because Black people lived in it. So Reverend Knight came in and he greeted them over at the school, at the PTA and all the neighbors looking at me and everything and I shook hands with him. Welcomed him. Susan went to school with his son Keith and they walked home together and neighbors would cluck, cluck, you know...

END OF TAPE 3 - SIDE A

DR: ...school with Keith, I said yes. They were 12 years old.

A: Twelve years old.

DR: And to show how unprejudice my kids were Susan come home and said we have a new boy in our class today and I said is he nice and she said yeah. I said was his name Keith. And the first we knew that they were black my neighbor Stanley come running down, Blacks moving in, Blacks moving in..

A: Yeah, got to get a petition to get them out.

DR: He said wait till I get my white robe on. So I told my neighbor I'll go in the house and ask Susan if he has tried to rape her yet or asked her to marry him and I'll let you know. So we explained to Susan. We said you must understand we have no objection, we expect you to be friends with Keith but you must understand that the sight of you two together are enough to bring people to violence. My neighbors next door are from the south and Susan I guess she took a lot of hassle, a lot of hassle. And I says well you have to stand up and be counted on some times. You are kinda young but I says you feel like you feel, I agree with you. And eventually they moved away. I think they were, they used to refer to these little kids our neighbors, what did Crona call them? The black cloud, he's sitting on the porch one night talking about the black cloud and here's the kids. I thought there was a storm coming.

A: When they moved in police cars blocked both ends of the street, the block that they lived on, there were police cars on both ends protecting them and this was Hubbard administration then.

Q: And what year was this again?

A: This was in ...

DR: Well Susan was 12 in 1966.

A: 1966.

Q: You mean the civil rights movement was ...?

A: They had police cars at both ends of the block and they moved in, I didn't know what was happening at that time really because I was too damn busy. I got it from the kids and her and Stanley when he came down. And we greeted them over at the school and all the neighbors

and all the guys, shook hands with Reverend Knight, welcomed him and told him he was welcome to the community as far as I was concerned and talked. He was a nice guy really. Well kept, well dressed and everything you know and he was very nice to talk to and everything but the neighbors down there made life so miserable for him that they moved out.

DR: One woman put up a confederate flag. Matter of fact ...

A: She was next door. Vicious.

Q: People that lived in Dearborn worked at Ford's, right, and they're working with Blacks but they would not accept them in the neighborhood?

A: No. I understand there's 84 Blacks living in Dearborn now but I'll be damn if I know where they're living.

Q: Who's counting?

A: The census published it in the paper. I hear that Woody Wills(?) lives in the Fairlane east but we're not allowed to go in there, we can't get past the gate. That's exclusive. We can't get in there, there's a watchman at the gate all day and all night. We tried to get in one time and see what it looked like because the place is beautiful. It used to be a sandhill when I was a boy but now it's fancy.

DR: I understand that Blacks go to Camp Dearborn now.

A: Yeah, Blacks go to Camp Dearborn. I see Blacks in the parks up here, playing in the parks. I don't know where they live.

Q: Dave Moore was telling us about during the war the government housing, all the people coming in and that the government was building housing

for some of the workers coming in and that Local 600 people were involved with the struggle for integrated housing.

A: Yeah, that's true, in Dearborn. John Gallo and Percy.

DR: Yeah, my dad ran for councilman, Walter Dorosh and my dad ran for council in Dearborn. Walter Dorosh and my dad were both in favor of housing for the poor which would have been integrated housing. They went were number Councilman six and seven on the ballot.

Q: What year is this?

DR: I would say probably '47, '48. And in West Dearborn which was where the \_\_\_\_\_ lived.

A: That's where cake eaters live.

DR: Yeah. When they passed out the slates out there they cut the two bottom numbers off, they had five. They cut Llewellyn and Dorosh off. In East Dearborn were the Ford workers who were born where slobs live, they passed them out like that. Needless to say, Dorosh and my dad were both defeated.

A: And it was common for Hubbard to make different speeches in different places and Percy and Walter they said what the hell, we make the same speech every place we go but you make a different speech every place you go. And he said that's politics. That's why I'm mayor.

DR: They used to ask Hubbard what would you do if a Black family moved into Dearborn and his standard answer was I would be the first one to greet them. Well then why are you such a racist? He says I want to get elected and there's none that live in Dearborn.

A: No Blacks in Dearborn.

DR: Yeah, none in Dearborn. But if they moved in...

- A: He said, I'm a Socialist. Look at Camp Dearborn out there, that's socialism for the people. He was something but he was a little...
- DR: You know it's difficult to believe that people still feel if a Black family moved down the street today, there would be the same reaction as there was in '66. Possibly even worse.
- A: Hubbard was a crook but everybody loved him. You can't find, if you go around this town you'd think that they're raising for a statue for him now. They love him. I've lived in this town all my life and I never seen one redeeming quality in him, only one time, one time when me and him was on the same side of the fence. He took a stand against the Vietnam war and we fought it. We fought, yes, and all over the communities and yes sir he was against the Vietnam war.
- DR: We were the only ones up here were opposed to the Vietnamese war and he opened his mouth and he says Washington go fight the war. So then we used to use Hubbard you know. When we got in an argument with somebody well ...
- A: Big fight in Local 600 over the issue, petitions and everything else. He even sent people down from the city to talk at our union meetings of why this war in Vietnam...
- Q: Did he come out early against it?
- A: Yea, right from the beginning.
- DR: Before it became popular.
- Q: Boy, that's surprising.
- A: I got all of the books by Frank Snuff that they took all his royalties away from him because he wrote a decent, very good book about the Vietnam war. If you get a chance, read it. Very revealing, very

revealing about the inside. He worked for the CIA and a very excellent book.

Q: Talking about Local 600 politics. Back in '48 when George Wallace ran for president under the progressive ticket was there much activity and in campaigning?

A: Oh yes, yes indeed. I won a bet over that with Rudy. Rudy come up and he said George Wallace won't pull five million votes.

DR: That was Henry Wallace.

A: Well Henry Wallace in '48, yeah, we supported Henry Wallace.

Q: You said George.

Q: Oh, I said George?

A: We took placards down to the Labor Day parade and Lee Romano sitting on top of a goldarn sound truck. I was holding a Wallace for president sign you know. He said get that guy out of the parade. I took the sign and I started running towards the sound truck and I said you son-of-a-bitch you, don't you tell me what to do with my signs. They left me alone. I walked all the way down Woodward with that sign but boy was he mad, he was boiling. But he was afraid because I was young then and I wasn't about to take any crap. I think I was about the only one in the 600 delegation that marched in the parade that had a sign. All the rest of them they made them throw away.

DR: But there was a good movement here, a good progressive movement.

A: Oh yeah, it was a good progressive movement.

Q: Within 600 there was ...?

A: Oh yeah. Big meetings downtown and we had a group going. We had a progressive group going. We had meetings, several of them, several of them.



DR: What was that guy's name? Richter, Irving Richter.

A: Irving Richter, yes. He wrote a book and Percy wanted to get ahold of it. I forget the name of the book but he was in Washington and he was on the inside of a lot. He wrote a book, he's a progressive guy.  
Irving Richter.

Q: Did you think that the campaigning for Wallace got the vote out for him in this city?

A: It got as much as it could out, believe me. It was effective. I think he got more votes ...around this section, not in Dearborn, in Detroit, than they ever expected him to get. We ran a good campaign on what we had for Wallace.

DR: A lot of hard work.

A: A lot of hard work. The energy expended, distribution at gates, all that at plant gates and everything.

Q: Did the progressive caucus within the union pretty much go for Wallace and the right wing for Truman?

A: Yeah.

Q: Or did the right wing sometimes go for Wallace also?

A: They didn't go for Wallace at all. Right wingers never did and never would. My mother and dad voted for Truman. They said Wallace ain't got a chance. You're wasting your time.

DR: We voted for McGovern.

A: We voted for McGovern too and you know he didn't have a chance either but after all he had the best program.

DR: We voted for McGovern and my mother and dad voted for Humphrey.

A: I'm afraid that this guy's going to get elected again the way things look. Reagan, your governor from California.

Q: Our governor ...

A: Cowboy. Him and John Wayne. Yeah they're going to fix us American... Well it's just like this. Everybody in the world is coming to the United States today, professional people from Cuba that wanted the Batista regime are immigrating here. You got all the people from Vietnam coming in here that were supporting the government there. You got all of the reactionary elements coming in here and Mexico's so poor the people are trying to come here to make a living and they're exploiting these people. Worse than sweatshops, worse than sweatshops..

Q: You see a lot of it in Los Angeles.

A: Intimidation, send you back and they're working for nothing and then you have the counteraction of the American people who can't get jobs and you just have one helluva mess today because there's no cohesion no place on anything any more. The unions are not effective any more because jobs are shrinking and as the technology improves and improves more and more you have two classes. The middle class is going to be eliminated like in other countries and you have the two opposing classes.

Q: Also as the skill levels of the people in the plants decreases because high technology has all the information and workers less and less skill.

A: Less and less, sometimes no skills at all. So there we have it. The situation \_\_\_\_\_? so you're young, you're knowledgeable, you tell me, what's the solution.

DR: Then you got Danny White in Los Angeles.

A: You have the Socialist Workers Party. We were split ten ways from our hind-end and fighting about all this crap that didn't mean nothing when actually to make progress you have to get together.

DR: With the rights it was always unite.

Q: That's the same way it is today.

A: They stick together like glue. Right wing held amongst themselves in their own caucuses for the jobs and for the gravy and everything but when it came down to a decision, they carried that decision out. Where the left, you'd find them arguing about, Art Fox would argue about...

DR: He was super intelligent.

A: The Soviet Union is wrong because they made peace with Hitler. Well sure they made peace but what the hell are we going to do about it. What are we going to do in Local 600 about the situation? This used to go on constantly and ...

DR: Haskel(?) was so intelligent. He was so far beyond the workers.

A: You talk about splitting hairs at that time.

DR: He was so far beyond the guy that worked with the shops.

A: We can't talk to that guy, he's a Trotskyite and a Trotskyite, they'd raise hell with her because she'd go off and talk with Toby, Toby's a Trotskyite. I used to get so discouraged and so disgusted because when you're trying to accomplish something you have to come to an agreement. You have to say well look we're going to do this to get it. We ain't going to have socialism tomorrow. We ain't going to have it next week. I'll probably be dead before we have socialism and so will you. Let's try to make it a little bit better, let's try to make a little progress here. But you know something the

indoctrination that some people have is incredible that they're inflexible and when they're that way honest to goodness you can't do nothing with them.

A: Factionalism was in the left at the beginning. At the beginning it was fine but then it started to break up into little groups and none of them were effective. They were eliminated one by one. They didn't care whether you were Communist, whether you're a Trotskyite, whether you're a Socialist. They didn't care, you're eliminated. What they didn't do the un-American Activities Committee cleaned up. I think they had more spys in the Communist Party in Detroit than they had Communists from what I've seen parading on these committees.

Q: When these left-wing people were inside the plant, did they talk to the workers about issues like socialist issues, like being class conscious or like that?

A: Some of us did and some of us didn't. Some of them went on because they were politically oriented. I always talked socialism to the people and told them look, this is what it is. They accepted me. Why I don't know but it was something I had to explain to them and could explain by my own experience in the labor movement and my own experience in life but they never resented it. I always got elected. I never been defeated after I got elected.

DR: He never had anybody supporting him either. You always ran independently.

A: Not only that. I don't care whether the right wing was opposing me or sometimes my own people were opposing me because they didn't agree, they said you talk about socialism. What are you talking about

socialism to the workers for? I said who else are you supposed to talk socialism with? Even my own people like Dorosh and Mack Cinzori.

Q: Yeah but you see his philosophy was that...

A: Oh I know his philosophy. You don't go over the wall.

Q: Yeah he would say that you don't go through the forest with a brass band.

A: Here's his philosophy, I'll give it to you in a few words. We live in a unperfect world. Nothing is perfect so we can't be perfect either. So why try. This is Dorosh's philosophy. I saw him, me and Mack Cinzori was sitting down one time. Here Dorosh was elected president of Local 600. He's standing on the rostrum next to Lee Romano, the stool pigeon who stooled on him and both of them were united, telling us how big politics are and I pulled Mack Cinzori, I said isn't something funny up there, Mac? He said yeah. I said doesn't it look peculiar to you that there's a stool pigeon standing next to the guy he stool pigeoned on and both of them are united, telling us what we should do in order to make things right in this world.

DR: Remember after Walter was elected he was never a stool pigeon, they red baited them right along. After he's elected president of Local 600 nobody asked him. He voluntarily made a statement to the press that he had never been a member of the Communist Party. Now that was just inconceivable. There was no earthly reason for him to do such a thing. We never could figure that out. What did Marie call him? You probably have met Marie O'Connor over at Local 600.

Q: Yeah.

DR: Well she's my best friend. She called him to verify it.

A: Yes sir, Walter could be anything to anybody. By golly he was too. You see I know so many of these people and I know the eternal workings of their mind and how they think and the patterns that they follow and the things that they do and I understand what happened to me. I should have been, Percy always said you should have been president of the Local. I said sure. I should have been but how could I be? That's impossible because, we got along fine, he was a good man. A lot of things we differed in, but he was a good trade unionist. He knew what was right and he knew the right things to do and he opposed moves around the board and all the hairbrained ideas that Reuther wanted to put into effect, and the politics that he played.

DR: Let's put it this way, your biggest disagreement with him was his favorite song was: "The workers flag of decency, is not as red as ..."

A: "Not as red as some people think." You would have enjoyed talking to him. He had a wealth of knowledge.

DR: The knowledge that I gathered from him through the years. I used to wonder if any of it would sink in.

A: Looking back I'm amazed that I have survived this long in this system with the things that were done.

Q: I'm surprised your daughter didn't go into labor law.

DR: He wanted, why she didn't, she had thought of that. First she thought of Sociology, she was going to be a Sociologist.

Q: But there are no jobs.

DR: No, no, she went to work, they had some kind of, she paid her tuition and went to work for a politician and she got credit for that. My dad told her he said you go to work for some damn politician. All you're

going to be doing is stamping envelopes and he wanted her to go into labor law and he said what do you say if I get you in Ernie Goodman's office. So he did and they found out that she had worked at the library and they said would you put our law library into order and she said they had a fabulous law library. So she did and then she says I know, they had a case of a, I think it was right when the age changed from 21 to 18 and you have to file within a certain period. Anyway this guy was premature and was put on oxygen and blinded. They used too much oxygen or something in the incubator and he was blinded. So they sent her out to see if she could find any advertisement advertising that this brand of oxygen was safe at that time. They had an investigator and she says I know they just sent me out to give me something to do. Well she says having worked in the library she was familiar with libraries and she walked in and she found one. This investigator had been looking for it for months. She walked in and she says I, here it is and they says okay and she come home that night and she went in the next day and they're all over her. And she says well I told you I found it last night but anyway when the case went to court she says that Dick Goodman worked maybe 4 years and he had gotten so involved with pictures and what a job it was for the guy to get around in his apartment and to go to work and he couldn't take his dog some places and they were offered a good settlement and she says you're not allowed to tell your client to accept the settlement or not. She says it's just not done. The guy turned it down and the jury didn't give him a darn thing and they had picked a poor Black jury and he never got a thing and she says here I see this big six foot two inch guy crying because he lost the case and she says I

thought that's for me. That's all she does is personal injury and product liability. She won't take anything else and she loves it but my dad wanted her to go into labor law. And why didn't she want to?

A: Well for one thing when they moved her out of the firm because they wanted to hire a Black and, the Goodman firm.

DR: That wasn't a personal injury firm anyhow.

A: And then she got a job some place else and she quit the other job because she didn't get along very well with the people and she was working with these shister lawyers, what were they?

DR: Sharver and Dunn.

A: Sharver and Dunn. Then she went to this other outfit and they were very nice.

DR: Several of her friends went into labor law and some of them have been very dissatisfied.

Q: Dissatisfied?

DR: Dissatisfied. I think that, she told me one day and I asked her. I says you know grandpap was disappointed. And she says well I know but I'm the one that has to work at it and she talked to him about it too, why she didn't. I can't really remember what her reasoning was.

Q: I heard that it's very difficult to get a job with a union because the funds are down.

A: Well it is.

DR: She, with the contacts, would probably not have any problems.

A: Now the labor movement today is, especially here, leaves a lot to be desired as far as leadership goes. It's like a business, you run it like a business. It's routine, one caucus dominates everything and makes policy.



Q: When did the caucuses disappear?

A: When Reuther came, 1946. They called it a unity caucus. They took in everybody. All the left wing they could get and all the middle of the roaders they could get. They made one bit unity caucus and then there was the rest of us were just all outsiders with our own little group and trying to change things in our own way but it was useless. When you got 800 representatives on a staff running around the convention floor pressuring people and promising them this and promising them that and that's what they had, 800 paid full-time union representatives on the staff of the UAW.

Q: How did the workers respond to red baiting? When Reuther came in they started ...?

A: Most of them wanted to get me hanged in the Aircraft building they were going to hang me because I wrote a leaflet attacking the un-American Activities Committee before I appeared there. I distributed it in the plant. Don Wade got it printed for me and I took it into the plant and I distributed it there. I told them it's the same old caboose with a different engine, that was the title, it's the same old caboose with a different engine and then I went on to explain what was happening and why this un-American Activities was here, what their purpose was and all, yak, yak, all the way down and I signed it and I distributed it all through my plant. So the next day I come in to work and here's Leo Nosak at lunchtime in the lunchroom where everybody eats lunch, huge lunchroom about half a block long. So he come up to me you know and he said you know something, Roche, you're going to get hung here. I says is that right, Leo, who's going to hang me. He said these workers here are going to hang you for what

you're printing. I said I don't see anyone hanging me. I don't see anyone coming near except you and I said I'll tell you something, I said the first one that's going to go before I do is you Leo. So I said you just bring on somebody to hang me and that's the last I heard of being hung or anything else but boy I was scared because I have seen a lot of his friends in the corner there, you know just waiting for him to give the word to give me the heave-ho and whatever they do to me because they were capable of doing it. But they never did. Leo talks to me now in pensioners meetings and tells me what a good guy I was. We're both pensioners now see. Him and Stanley Krawsowitz(?) and maybe Paul Boatin mentioned these people because they came from his unit. Victor Zuzak, he's a real...

END TAPE 3 - SIDE B

A: As a whole they accepted it, as a whole they accepted the red baiting, they were passive. They never would come out in the defense, only as individuals, they would say, well we don't agree with what is being done but they're doing it anyway, it doesn't make no difference.

Q: Is that because of intimidation you think?

A: Maybe intimidation, maybe self-preservation. Nobody wants to stick their neck out. A lot of people know what's right. You just can't get them to do it. They know it, you know it as well as I do, people aren't stupid. I don't care if they're workers or anything else. They actually do know what's going on, but because of religious, fraternal organizations, religious organizations, churches that they go to. They cannot move. They're in a straight jacket because to open their mouth and say hey, I don't agree with you on this, they are isolated, nobody wants to be isolated. I've been isolated in this town for a long time. This is Dearborn, a sea of reaction, home of Mayor Hubbard, biggest racist there is. I survived here but, so did she. I was born here, born and raised here. They say: Why do you live in Dearborn for? Hell, I was born here, right next door, 62 years ago in April. That's the way it is. Background was there, Roman Catholic background, labor union, radical labor union, radical, you're red, you're this, you're that, you're the other.

DR: Would you believe that it even affected the kids in school?

A: Oh yeah. The kids ...

DR: Fortunately they absorbed what was said at home and we were able to hold their own or fight back or he'd say you have trouble with your teachers and you can't straighten them out, I'll come do it.

A: Her father lost his job at the Local partially because I wouldn't support Carl Stellato. He'd come over here you know will you support Carl and I said no. He said well why don't you do something for me and support him? I said ain't going to support him. You do what you want. You can do what you want but I'm not going to support him. Got no use for him. All the stuff he's pulling. I said he's going to pull it on you too Percy. I said he's going to get you. And he did. He fired him.

Q: That was because you would not ...

DR: That's right.

A: Partially, because Percy had ideas that Carl didn't agree with either and he used to press him and tell Carl that he should do this and he should do that and he should do the other. Carl wouldn't do it. Combination of things and fired him.

Q: That was the late '50s when he got fired?

A: That was in, what year was that that he was fired?

DR: I was still working. He fired him twice. He fired him once and hired him back and fired him again.

A: He was pension director of the Local at that time and then when he retired, he retired in '67 or '68, he was 62 years old when he retired. He retired from the plant. He worked his last year in the plant and retired at 62 years of age. That's where he wound up. I wound up retiring in the Rolling Mill, he worked in the Dearborn Engine plant.

DR: He come over one night and asked me, I don't know if I ever told Kenny about it and he said could you find out some information for me about Becker, from Kenny and I said no. Did I ever tell you? I said no, I

can't do it. I says you're tearing me between you and him and I can't do it. I feel the same way he feels about Stellato. I said you were his friend, all he did was use you, and he's using you now. I said you looked at him like the son and he looked at you like a son-of-a-bitch. I agree with him. I can't do it. And that's the reason he was fired, that was the last time he was fired. The first time he was fired was over the red purge.

A: John Orr gave the eulogy at Percy's funeral, her father's funeral. He was wonderful. John was one of these guys that he was like the career diplomat. He was smart, smart as a whip. He knew the contract inside and out and backwards and upside down but he had a fault. He drinks.

Q: Was he awfully cautious politically?

A: Very. He wound up on staff at the region. That's where he retired from. Finally they just told him that they didn't need him no longer, he should retire. He didn't want to retire but he did. English labor movement background.

Q: Oh really?

DR: You can remember only so much, you know. Sometimes I think of all the kids ...

A: So many people, so many things, so many events, so many happenings, so many demonstrations, so many picket lines. My goodness, all through the years you know, Fregid Foods(?) and there was Stinson aircraft and went through all kinds of, we were out in our Local 600 we'd be on strike and Montgomery Wards.

Q: During the war?

A: Yeah well...

DR: Saunders was on strike at one time, weren't they? Montgomery Wards, that was a long one.

A: That was a long strike. Square D, that was a rough one.

DR: What was that plumbing place?

A: Kohler.

Q: Did people from 600 come over and picket?

A: Oh yeah, always. Every picket line at any place we went. All the left-wingers anyway. We'd go.

Q: Yeah, that must have been hard with all the activities with the time that it took you away from your social life.

A: You can ask her. She practically raised the family.

DR: I grew up with it and then I married it.

Q: Yeah. So you knew what to expect.

DR: No, I thought it would be different. Actually if you're involved, you may get tired of being alone with the kids all the time but you realize the cause and principle. It would be extra hard for the wife who didn't understand this. I had a union background. I'm not saying we didn't have our arguments over it.

Q: Do you think that that caused a lot of marriages to ...?

DR: Oh I'm sure it did.

A: Gone seven days a week. You got meetings at night, emergency meetings, caucuses, you put a leaflet out in the day, bring the leaflet home, proofread it and run over and print it and distribute it by the next morning.

DR: And then you saw there was nothing ever got any better.

A: Then you find out that well, for a while things did improve, union improved, we got good contracts and everything but in 1946, '47, '48

and '49 and '50, five year contract, after 55 everything politically disintegrated, even though the contracts kept going on and we were able to force concessions from the company because of the condition of the automobile industry was in... The last decent contract they got was in 1980, that's the year I retired, when they got a good 30 and out improvement, they got a wage increase and increases in a lot of areas and they got a lot of things cleaned up in the shop. After that was the last contract, after that it's all down hill. Concessions, more concessions and the concessions spread every place, all over the country. One place and I give the guy credit. I don't know him. He's from Canada at Chrysler. He said we are not taking any concessions. We want a dollar increase and they got it and he was one man on a 26-man Executive Board in the UAW but he had the workers behind him. I even forget his name but he's the leader of the Canadian workers for Chrysler UAW. He said we're not settling for a concession.

Q: That shows it can be done then.

A: He was one guy on a 26-man board and he up and he had his membership behind him. I've often said the guy knows what he's doing and the American workers were madder than hell because they've taken a cut and they're getting a raise over in Canada.

Q: Well back in the '40s it seemed like the left was behind a lot of the new things that were going into the contract like the pensions?

A: Right, pensions. 30 for 40, 60 now, yeah, fought for 60 now. We collected money all over the plant, all over the country. Started in Cleveland with 60 now, Pat DeVito, and organized everything, collected money and we had a movement within the UAW in order to get the 60 now.

The same way with 30 and out. That started up in Flint. I found it out from a Canadian baker, the guy that brings in Canadian bake goods, brought it in to me and here is a little article in there about this Local 599 in Flint going off, starting a movement for 30 and out, \$500 a month pension. I got a hold of that article. I wrote the guy in Flint, I forget his name now and he sent me all the literature that they had, buttons and everything, and I started over in Local 600. The right-wing, I was selling buttons for a dollar, me and Frank Cravens, two committeemen. The right-wingers in Tool and Die got together and they printed up 2500 buttons and gave them away for nothing and said Kenny and Frank are cheating you guys. They're charging you a dollar a piece for a button and we're giving them away for nothing, 30 and out. This is the way they tried to sabotage us.

DR: And you guys had that money in a bank account.

A: Everything was accounted for. We never cheated nobody out of nothing. We didn't get any money for ourselves. We used it for literature in order to further the 30 and out. But they didn't get away with it because the workers were wise to it. They said how come they're giving them to us. I said wasn't it last week, last month that they were telling you that 30 and out was not union policy and they didn't want nothing to do with it? I said how come now they're out here telling you that they're for 30 and out and they're passing out free buttons to you. See this is the way things work.

Q: The money for ...

A: Sabotage. They sabotage you from both ends. They tried to discredit us by saying hey, Kenny and Frank Cravens are cheating you. They're taking a dollar from everyone. They're using it for themselves. But



actually we were using it for, we weren't rich people. We can't grind out things.

Q: Where they get their money to do that, just from being in office?

A: From the unit fund. They control the unit. Don LeVale, Tom Jelley, all these guys.

Q: Jelley was on the right?

A: Jelley was Jelley. He'd go along with them. Mack Cinzori, an old leftie he was, wound up with LeVale Rea and Bob King. Bob King is financial secretary of the Local right now all right-wingers from Tool and Die. Jim Ronchero, all these people. Ronchero works for Region A.

Q: So Jelley was one of these ones that changed.

A: Oh yeah, he changed.

DR: He changed with what was good for Jelley.

A: Go along, get along, go along.

Q: He knew what side his bread was jellied on.

DR: That's very good.

A: This is the way it works in life. You might not like it but this is the way it is. Boy I'll tell you something you find out in life who your friends are and who ain't and you know something if you got a handful, five people in your whole lifetime that you can count on as friends, you're lucky.

Q: So who were the people then that held out the whole way through?

A: All the way through?

Q: All the way through.

A: Okay. Percy, myself, John Saari, Mike Hraber, Ed Locke, I mentioned Whitey, John Gallo, Bill McKie, Dave Moore he went with them, Nelson

Davis he stuck with us, he died, Veal Clough, Roy Davis, Leo Catrell, Herb Lindburg. Some of them are dead now, all of them are retired now. Alex Simeon, that's another one.

Q: Now is he related to James Simeon?

A: Not that I know of.

Q: Oh maybe that's James Simmons.

A: Yeah, Jimmy Simmons. He's an old-timer too. He's a good guy.

Q: Well let me tell you about this other aspect of my project that I'm working on.