ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #1

WITH

Kenneth Brown

President, GAIT

Date: August 14, 1974
Place: Washington, D.C.
Interviewers: Alice M. Hoffman
Greg Giebel

INTRODUCTION

Ken Brown, President of the Graphic Arts International Union, was born in Toronto, Canada, in 1925. He left school at the age of sixteen and apprenticed as a lithographer in Toronto in 1942. He became a member of Local #12 of the Amalgamated Lithographers Union. His father, Arthur Brown, was president of this Toronto local. For two and a half years during the Second World War Ken Brown worked in a topographical unit, then returned to Toronto to finish his apprenticeship.

In this interview which covers only his earliest years, Ken Brown recalls his very lithographic-oriented family and their desire to follow the trade rather than pursue a formal education. In relation to this, he goes on to contrast the Canadian view of unionism with that in the United States.

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HOFFMAN: May I ask you what your name is?

BROWN: Kenneth James Brown. Current title: President, Graphic Arts International Union. Born in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, May 12, 1925.

HOFFMAN: Were you the first son or. . . .?

BROWN: I was one of five children, the middle one of five children, four boys and a girl. The girl was the oldest in the family. Of the four boys, they're all lithographers. My father was a lithographer as well. My sister was married to a minister. I'm sure my father told you that he considered that as close to being a lithographer as you could get! (laughter) At least I've heard him say that.

HOFFMAN: On account of God is a lithographer!

BROWN: (laughter All things, he says, flow from God and the union, and he's not sure that it's in that order! (more laughter) Right! I was an indifferent student at school. I don't think school particularly interested me.

HOFFMAN: What kind of school did you go to?

BROWN: Well, even talking about elementary school. I just survived school, really. The things that didn't interest me were such things as mathematics and exact sciences. And the things that did interest me were history and reading, and consequently I was good in some things and lousy in other things and really didn't have too much interest in school. Although, if you put that in sort of the time context that it was in, I don't suppose very many of my contemporaries went beyond high

school. In fact, it was fairly rare to even get a high school diploma. In my case, as soon as I was sixteen, I was out of school in part because the administration at the school decided I wasn't really a constructive influence around there. They helped me out by kicking me out on three occasions.

HOFFMAN: I.W. Abel was kicked out of school, also.

BROWN: Oh, was he? (laughs)

HOFFMAN: He was a bad boy. You were a bad boy, too?

BROWN: Yes. My father had to come to the school on a couple of occasions to get me back in again, as I recall, but that was only a matter of keeping me around for another month, and then I'd get kicked out again. Finally, when I turned sixteen, I quit. I think it was really quite a disappointment for my parents, because they did think that I might be the one in the family to go on in school. I don't really know why they thought that.

HOFFMAN: Well, what about the quality of the school? I mean, why were you rebellious, do you think?

BROWN: I wouldn't blame it on the school system because there were kids that did go on and stay, so it had to be me. I've asked my mother why I ran away from home when I was twelve, you know, and she doesn't tell me why. I don't think she knows. So it's just a matter of being a kid that wasn't particularly interested or couldn't see where schooling fit into the scheme of things for me; or I didn't have much perspective. I'm damned if I know exactly what it was. In any case, by sixteen I was out.

One thing, though, that was an overriding influence . . . my father had been a lithographer which meant he was a craftsman. He hadn't gone to school beyond about seventh grade, I think, or eight grade or ninth grade; I've just forgotten. About the seventh I think. And yet he'd been by any measurement a very successful man so that we had that nagging in the background. Why school? My father did well. Why not follow in his footsteps? And so as each of the boys . . . my older brother, when he left school, he came into the trade. When I left school, I came into the trade. And my younger brothers, the same thing with them. I'm sure that in the back of my mine and probably in the back of the minds of my brothers was the same notion: that they'd be able to go into the trade in any case and spend five years serving apprenticeship, which my father frequently likened to going to school. So that I'm certain that had some influence on our thinking.

HOFFMAN: Well, as far as the quality of the school, though, do you think that, if the school--and I'm only assuming what kind of school it was--if they had been more pro-

gressive, more focussed or more oriented on your needs rather than attempting to force you to meet some kind of outside criterion or standard, that you might have been more receptive?

BROWN: I really don't think so. I think that there are other kinds of influences that determine whether kids go on to school that are more important than the quality of the schooling. The home influence is one. In the United States, about seventy-five percent more kids go on and get high school diplomas and go on to college than is true in Canada. The number of people that go on and get college degrees in Canada are a great deal fewer. I don't mean in absolute numbers, but I mean in proportion to how many go to school. So you have even that situation. We've noticed the difference between living in Canada and the United States, that in Canada--we were back there and my wife's been back there for the summer--the children of my contemporaries are not going on to college. If they are, it's a very rare situation. And yet our associates here in the United States, almost without exception, have children who are going on. Now, why?

I don't think that it's a matter of quality of schooling or the teaching or anything like that. I think it's an attitude in part about the importance of higher education. There's much more emphasis on that in the United States than there is in Canada. Now, if you go back forty years ago, or thirty-five years ago, in Canada, you can see that there really wasn't a strong push on among the children of people who were blue-collar workers. There wasn't a strong push to go on to school.

HOFFMAN: This may be a diversion, Ken, but it occurs to me now and I think it may be picking up a thread which we may elaborate on further, but I had occasion not long ago to have lunch with an officer of the Carpenters Union, of the Steelworkers Union, and of the Machinists Union. And I said that I had recently been at a convention of the Steelworkers Union and was impressed with the quality of the Canadian delegates, their ability to take even a position with which they did not agree, namely the Burke-Hartke Law, and argue more coherently, more logically <u>for</u> that position, even though they didn't agree with it, than were the American delegates, who in fact supported it. And each of these three men--from the Carpenters, the Machinists, and the Steelworkers--all said that was characteristic of their organizations too. The Canadian delegates were of a very high caliber and an intelligent and articulate group of people. That has intrigued me in the sense that what would account for that? One of the first thoughts that occurs to you is maybe there's a difference in the quality of the education system.

BROWN: But if the kids didn't go to school or didn't get beyond the eighth or seventh or ninth grade, then that can't be the. . . .

HOFFMAN: Then you're going to have to look for some other. . .

BROWN: Sure.

HOFFMAN: . . . explanation.

BROWN: I think part of it--and by the way, that's true in our organization. When you interview Len Paquette, for example, you'll find that he's a very bright, aggressive articulate guy. His head's screwed on properly, as they say. And he's undoubtedly going to be the successor to Vice President Clarke in Canada. At least if we have our way he will. Both Clarke and I feel that he's an excellent man. Clarke himself, Dick Clarke, is one of the very best vice-presidents that we've got.

GIEBEL: But not just on an individual basis. I look at the number of local mergers that have taken place since the mergers of the internationals, both the Amalgamated and the Photoengravers and now the Bookbinders, and it looks to me as if Canadian locals have much more clearly seen the wisdom of local mergers.

HOFFMAN: Have been in the forefront.

BROWN: Yes. Or educational programs or pension programs or whatever.

HOFFMAN: How would you account for that? We're talking about a phenomenon that is not unique to the Graphic Arts Union, but in general. I mean, you couldn't think really of four more different unions than the Graphic Arts, the Steelworkers, the Carpenters and the Machinists. They're all saying the same thing. They must be describing a phenomenon that is pretty general.

BROWN: Well, I think one of the reasons for it has to do with how Canadians see a union and how they see themselves in a union as contrasted with how Americans see unions and how they see themselves within a union. And in Canada there is a philosophical base to unionism, and people who belong to unions, more or less, are influenced by that. That flows, I think, from the British heritage and from the German heritage, I suppose, but particularly the British heritage. And you'll find that at local meetings, the parliamentary system at local meetings is observed so scrupulously in Canada, just because it's so. Yet I've been to meetings here, and they really don't seem to have any understanding of rules of order. I think that, again, is a part of the parliamentary heritage that they have. Well, now in that structure the more articulate people come to the fore.

HOFFMAN: Emerge, yes.

BROWN: I really think that's part of it. Plus the fact that there is a commitment to some ideals of unionism. I think they're stronger in Canada among Canadians than they are in the U.S. I think many members in the United States are temporarily residing in the union at least in their own minds until they own the company that they're working for or until they found their own company. But you'll find a much greater willingness in Canada for people to be considered a member of a union as his role in life.

HOFFMAN: More of a working-class identity, I think.

BROWN: I think so.

HOFFMAN: And this might explain why people don't go on to school in the same way as we do.

BROWN: Yes, yes. Well, that goes back, of course, to the British system, the screening system they have to determine whether a person supposedly is capable of going on. Consequently, a lot of people are culled out and never do go on to school in Britain. Well, then, they're the parents of the kids in Canada who decided not to go on to school. Well, it's an interesting. . . .

GIEBEL: So you inherited, as a young boy, not only a father who was a trade unionists and in the craft that you eventually took up, but you inherited a philosophy that was perhaps different than what many children of the same kind of background--father and interest in pursuing the same craft--would inherit in this country. Do you feel that you have roots planted not only in the American and Canadian labor history, but also in the British?

BROWN: Yes, oh, precisely. Very much so, as a matter of fact. In my earliest activities in the local, after I became a member of the local, I was to be the delegate to the CCF--Cooperative Commonwealth Federation--which is the Socialist Party in Canada, and it was labor's political arm in Canada. Then all of my earliest experiences were in the labor-political field, but not just political activity, but alignment with a political philosophy. All of my earliest experiences in the local were in that area. I was a delegate to the various conventions of the CCF; I went to the labor history courses that they held at the University of Toronto which were for the most part--in fact entirely--set up for union people by leaders of the CCF who were on the staff of the University of Toronto. So I have a vivid recollection of those kind of sessions on labor history. So there was this sort of dual influence, not only in the trade and the union, but the political field as well.

GIEBEL: Well, now, you left school at sixteen and apprenticed as a lithographer in Toronto?

BROWN: Yes.

HOFFMAN: Was this your father's local?

BROWN: Right. My father was then the president. That was 1942 and my father was president of the local union. He arranged for me to start as a feeder on a press at the Davis Henderson Company in Toronto. I was only there for about six months before it was clear to the company and to me that I wasn't suited to be an apprentice or a pressman. I had really no talent at all in things mechanical. So then I moved from that company. My father then arranged for me to go to work as a feeder in the company that he was employed in--Samson Mathews. I stayed there for a month or so in that job and then moved on upstairs into the camera department and the plate department.

My father's fine hand can be seen in the fact that my brother was in the same company with my father, my older brother. He was moving to Ottawa to take a job in a litho company, so my father moved me into the plant so that I could step into my brother's job. I stayed in that company for a couple of years, a year and a half. During that time I joined the local union, and then I went into the Army. In the Army I was in a litho unit, a topographical unit. So I stayed right at the trade for the two and a half years that I was in the Army. Then when I came out of the Army, I came right back to Samson Mathews and finished my apprenticeship.

HOFFMAN: Where were you stationed while you were in the Army?

BROWN: Oh, let's see. I did my basic training in British Columbia and then went overseas to England and then was assigned to a mobile map reproduction unit in France and Belgium and Holland and Germany. When the war ended, I was just outside of Rotterdam, I think it was, in Holland. When the European war ended, I promptly signed up for the Japanese war because they had a point system for rotation. I had so few points, as compared to everybody else in the unit, that I figured I'd be doing guard duty in Berlin until I was age fifty at least. (laughter) Because, you know, in the Canadian Army the guys had started in the Army in September, 1939. So they all had points galore, and I was Johnny-come-lately, with one year overseas. So I signed for the Pacific and they gave me thirty days leave, shipped me back to Canada; and while I was back in Canada, the war with Japan ended.

HOFFMAN: Fortunately.

BROWN: That meant that I was home ahead of everybody else! (laughter) There were only two guys in our unit that joined.

HOFFMAN: It's better to be lucky than smart! (laughter)

BROWN: My mother, when I got home, just about died when she found out that I'd signed up for the Japanese situation. My God, her son had survived the European war! Why did he ever do this? I said to her, "My gosh, since I managed a soft berth during the war in Europe, I was confident that I'd find one in the Japanese situation anyway!" (laughter)

HOFFMAN: So what was the trade like, printing maps under wartime conditions? What were the shops like?

BROWN: Well, when I was in England, we worked in a regular litho plant; but when we went to the continent, we were in a mobile unit. They had all of the cameras and plate-making and stripping and presses all mounted in trucks. Motorcycle drivers would come whistling in with the aerial photographs, and our topographical guys would interpret them and come up with flats. We'd do the camera work and make the plates and put them on the presses and run them off. In a day or so they'd be delivered to the front lines again. It was very interesting. We were generally about five to twenty miles behind the lines. It was a fairly comfortable existence. We had air conditioning in our trailers because they had to have that sort of thing for the camera department, and the unit was considered super in that they had a high priority from the point of view of a selection of personnel. That meant that the unit was staffed mostly with members of our local. We've got photographs that appeared in a magazine back during the war with about forty of us all from Local #12, Toronto, or from Montreal #27 or Ottawa. So they were all lithographers and members of the locals.

GIEBEL: Did they recognize you as an apprentice in the truck or how did that work out?

BROWN: Yes. I had a pretty good standing because everybody knew that my father was then the vice-president of the international for Canada. Quite frankly, a lot of people knew that they were going to be looking for jobs back in the industry, so I had sort of a pretty good status.

HOFFMAN: Ken Brown was somebody that it was obviously a good idea to be friendly with!

BROWN: Right, right! But I was only about eighteen or nineteen. I think I turned twenty when I was in Europe. As far as the trade was concerned, the work was not high quality or not particularly difficult. So the limited experience I had had in the shop back in Canada stood me in pretty good stead. It was repetitious, you know. You weren't doing brochures on one hand and posters on the other hand. All you were doing was map work. Once you really zeroed in on that, it wasn't too difficult. It was a good experience, though, very good experience.

When I was in England I worked in a British map reproduction unit. There were only five or six Canadians assigned to this, and all of the lithographers in the plant were members of the British trade union. We five were all members of the Canadian lithographers union. Bob Edison, the president of Montreal, was one. George Green, who was a plate-maker in Toronto, was another. We three, plus another three or four fellows, were assigned to the British unit. So we had some delightful experiences. But it just sort of went hand-in-glove. You were a lithographer and you were a member of the union and you were in the map reproduction unit. That was a logical extension of the first two things. That you were going to come back to the trade, all that just. . . .

GIEBEL: And how were the British fellows that you met? Were they in a similar situation?

BROWN: Yes, oh, sure. They were temporarily out of the shops during the war. This was really a good bit of duty, as they used to say, because they were working as they did in the shops. The only difference was their pay. But because we were lithographers, the craft was considered such that we had to have adequate rest and we were never given any guard duty or anything like that. So it was a nice kind of duty to be stuck with during the war.

HOFFMAN: So at the end of the war in Germany, you returned to Canada?

BROWN: Went back into Samson Mathews, the same shop that I had worked in when I joined the Army, and finished my apprenticeship.

An amusing incident: when everybody was trying to get out of the Army, one of the ways to get out after the war ended was to have your former employer write a letter on your behaf. So the president of the company, or the general manager of the company, wrote on my behalf to the Army to assure them that there was a job waiting for me when I came out. So that facilitated my getting out. But he was cute enough in the letter to say that there was a job available for me at precisely the wages and working conditions that I had enjoyed at the time that I had enlisted! (laughter) A fellow by the name of Harry Saunders, was general manager. Two and a half years later he was still making sure that he didn't have to give me a wage increase! So at a cool twenty-six bucks a week, I went back to work in the trade!

HOFFMAN: Regardless of your experience in the Army. What kind of a shop was this?

BROWN: Very good shop. High quality. They produced some of the best quality work in Toronto. In fact, in Canada it was known as a high quality shop. They did posters for cigarette advertising and cosmetics and the clothing

industry. An excellent shop. My father had been the superintendent; I think that was his title. When they first went into litho, they hired him. So he sort of grew with the litho in the place. So it was a good place to learn the trade, but more important, it was a good place to learn about unionism, because I worked with my father, who was president of the local. The man who became president after him was Norman Harlock, and he worked in the same department that I worked in at Samson Mathews.

HOFFMAN: Now this was the camera department?

BROWN: In the plate department. I worked the camera in the plate department. After the war, I came back into the plate department. My father had become international vice president; Norman Harlock had become president of the local union. He was in the plate department at Samson Mathews so I worked with him. After Norman Harlock, the president of the local was Bill Shirsten, who was a pressman in Samson Mathews. So not only did you have an apprenticeship in the trade, you had an apprenticeship in the union in that the top officers of the local were working in that plant.

I think there were only about twenty lithographers in the whole place, so that every noon hour and every coffee break and every session after work was devoted to discussion of union affairs, which was a rare opportunity for a young man to be a part of those kinds of discussions every day. Lots of people belonged to the local union, but there wasn't anybody else who was able to sit with the officers every day and talk about what was going on in the local union. So that had a good effect, in the educational sense, in setting my thinking about the correctness of the union and its objectives, a very good effect.

END OF INTERVIEW

Kenneth Brown

Interview #I

Index

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #II

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HOFFMAN: /At the end of the last interview we were/ kind of tracing your rise in the local to becoming local union president.

BROWN: Okay. So when I came back from the service, there were quite a number of fellows that were in the same unit that I was in overseas because it was a map reproduction unit and they were in the local. So it was kind of natural for the "young" group to start becoming active in the local union. The litho industry was beginning to expand, showing the first signs of real expansion, immediately following the war; and there was heavy immigration into Canada from Western European countries. Many good lithographers came in, so the local began to expand. The infusion of good trade unionists from the European countries, I think, was very helpful--from England, from Germany, from the Scandinavian countries.

HOFFMAN: So you were really a cosmopolitan local.

BROWN: Yes. The reason I think it was particularly good is it did two things: it supplied craftsmen for an expanding industry at a time when they were needed; it permitted the local union to retain its traditional apprenticeship ratios. So it served everybody well, but it was also an infusion of good trade unionists into our local. In other words, I think it has had, in an ongoing sense, a strengthening effect on the local. So that about that time I began to attend committees on the local, and then I was elected representative to the Toronto District Labor Council--the kind of jobs that not too many people wanted to bother with. But I also went to school, you know, trade union school, once a week or whatever it was during that period. I was very active in the C.C.F. Party as the local's representative to the C.C.F.--Cooperative Commonwealth Federation--attending their

conventions and so on. So that my earliest activities in the local would be typical, I suppose, of anybody who sat on committees. . . .

HOFFMAN: Well, I'm not sure they would be typical because it does sound to me--and please don't hesitate to correct me if I'm wrong--but it sounds to me as if your activities were labor movement activities rather than exclusively trade activities; that is, you were involved in the Central Council and you were involved politically. That's not the same kind of training that your typical business rep has.

BROWN: Yes, yes. Well, that's an important distinction to make, then. I hadn't quite thought about it as compared to other people. It just seemed to me to be the normal thing to be doing. But that was my earliest activity in the local--committees of the local and then the Central Labor Council, then the political side.

HOFFMAN: Was the Central Labor Council an active organization?

BROWN: Yes, it was. But it was dominated by the Building Trades, as I recall, the Building Trades, and then the Steelworkers had a very active man, Murray Cotterill, and Dave Archer--I've forgotten which union he came out of. It was a fairly good council as those councils go. I think frequently they tend to become sort of protectors of the status quo.

HOFFMAN: Right.

BROWN: I think the Toronto Council was a little more aggressive on social issues than a good many other councils that I've heard about.

Then I was elected to the negotiating committee. That goes a little further than it sounds in this respect: In Eastern Canada they have a contract, a single contract, covering Toronto, Montreal, Hamilton, London, Ottawa, and Halifax, Nova Scotia, and we negotiate one contract with the employers, covering all those cities. So that when you go on the negotiating committee, you're involved in policy development for the whole of Eastern Canada and for implementation of that policy through bargaining. It's quite a broadening experience.

HOFFMAN: How long had this been in effect when you went on that negotiating committee, this kind of eastern industry-wide bargaining?

BROWN: Oh, well, let me think. . . . Yes, it probably had been going on in terms of a formal contract since about 1940.

HOFFMAN: So it was relatively new?

BROWN: Yes, it was. And undergoing all of the usual problems because you had small locals and large ones and you had some people full-time working for the unions, but most working part time. It's an interesting study the way that developed over the years, because at that time you had a full-time international vice-president and I believe one representative for Canada. And the chairman of the multi-city bargaining was the international vice-president. Of course, he happened to be my father. But that was a very broadening experience.

Some of the officials of the other locals, Montreal particularly, the new leadership in those locals, were also fellows that I had been in the Army with, who were in the topographical survey or map reproduction.

HOFFMAN: Like who?

BROWN: Bob Edison, specifically. Bob is president of the Montreal local--just retired--for about twenty years. Pete Bosky was very active. Of course, on the Toronto committee Ivan Tutelov was very active, and he too had been in the same unit. So that we used to get together on two fronts. But that was only a reflection of the business of the fellows returning from the service and becoming active in their local unions.

I was also elected to the local council, the Toronto Local Twelve Council; I sat on that board for some time. I've forgotten now just how long. I think at one point I was elected financial secretary. . . no, vice-president, for the local. I don't think I was ever financial secretary. I think I was elected vice-president in about 1952. So I suppose the pattern was to work through committees, to be involved in the political side, to be involved in the negotiations, and then to be elected vice-president of the local, which was still a non-fulltime position. There was only one full-time office in Toronto.

HOFFMAN: Maybe we ought to back up just a little bit and talk about this major pension strike.

BROWN: 1949?

HOFFMAN: Right.

BROWN: I don't know that it had anything to do with pension. The major issue was money, representation for the union, and health and welfare. I was not on the negotiating committee at the time of that strike, so that I wasn't as directly involved in the policy side of it in 1948. I was still in fairly minor jobs, perhaps on the local council, as I recall, and on some committees. I was also on the first committee of the unemployable benefits plan, which started in 1943, every member of

the local putting a quarter a week into a fund with the understanding that, when there was $25,000, we'd form a committee and set up some kind of pension. We called it unemployable benefits because under the Canadian law, if you called it pension, we would have come under supervision of all kinds of laws that would have been burdensome. So we called it unemployable benefits. That's another whole story, but that's been a highly successful plan and still is in existence today.

When I got back out of service, I went on the board, which is the very first board that was formed, and of course, became the chairman. We actually designed the by-laws that are in existence today and, more important, set the tone for having it properly studied by an actuary once a year so as to run it in a businesslike fashion.

The strike in 1949, when it began I was working in a trade shop in Toronto and wasn't with any of the companies that were actually picketing. I was fairly active in the local and on the council, as I recall, at that time, not on the negotiating committee. So that I worked at the bench all during the strike in one of the companies that was not on strike. There were the usual amount of problems as to where the work that we were doing was being shipped, and so we had terribly hostile atmosphere in the plant between the management and the people. Every now and again we'd hear that management was attempting to ship some of the work to one of the companies that was attempting to break the strike. Of course, we would be doing all we could to prevent that. So it was sort of watching the strike from the sidelines.

I was involved, however, with the business agent of the local in an effort that we made in Buffalo, New York where a company was supplying materials to some of the struck companies in Toronto. We were directed to come over to Buffalo and meet with the company president and try to persuade him not to get into the middle of our fight.

That strike, while it's clear in everybody's memory because it lasted for about six months and covered Toronto and Montreal and Hamilton and London, was not one in which I was involved as an officer of the local. Consequently my participation in the strike was not on the level, let's say, of Vice-President Dick Clarke, who was at that time president of the Montreal local and who would have a much different picture of it than I would, in that he was so deeply involved.

HOFFMAN: Okay. Well, now, you were vice-president of the Toronto local. Who was president at that time?

BROWN: Bill Kennedy. The Toronto local in that postwar period had some very severe and bitter political fights. It's amazing that the local maintained such a high level of representation and integrity in the face of such bitter

political fights. As I say, the postwar group was coming back, and a new full-time position had been created. Different people were contesting for the position, and they very foolishly set up a system where they had a president of the local, not fulltime and a business agent, full-time. That meant that the president had the title and had the ego and no direct involvement on a day-to-day basis. But that didn't alter the fact that he felt that he should be telling the business agent what to do. The business agent, on the other hand, was a very strong-minded guy, deeply involved and having to take orders from a man who was not so deeply involved. So finally we did have a blow-up. The president, who was not full-time ran against the business agent and defeated him, and after six months resigned because he couldn't stand the gaff. So Bill Kennedy became president under those circumstances. He was the vice-president in this period; he became president. I became vice-president. That was kind of an exciting time as far as politics were concerned.

HOFFMAN: Now, were these kind of one generation against the other?

BROWN: No. They were all--everyone of the people that I mentioned--had all been in the Army and come back.

HOFFMAN: So what was the nature of the political dispute, then?

BROWN: The creation of the full-time position.

HOFFMAN: I see.

BROWN: That was the key. It was the fading dominance of the largest company in Toronto, at least as I read it now. The largest company in Canada was the Rolfe-Clarke-Stone, by any measurement of big companies of perhaps two or three hundred lithographers. They had provided much leadership and dominance in the local for a good many years, as you can imagine. The president of the local came out of Rolfe-Clarke-Stone and had their support; the business agent did not.

HOFFMAN: Now, you mean, when you say "had their support. . . "

BROWN: Had the support of the people in Rolfe-Clarke-Stone. They got that single group, yes.

HOFFMAN: Who worked there, right.

GIEBEL: How large was the total membership at that time?

BROWN: About 700 members, if I recall.

HOFFMAN: So a bloc of two hundred votes was pretty important.

BROWN: Yes, if they were activists, it pretty well set the stage. So that's where the struggle was: who was going to run the local and how was it going to be run, and responsive to what? The business agent was a very aggressive guy, the full-time man. The president of the local out of Rolfe-Clarke-Stone was an intelligent, mild-mannered "Clark Kent" who, like so many other people in this life, who are intelligent enough to know the problem, intelligent enough to see the solution, but don't seem to be able to implement it. Whatever that other essential ingredient of being a leader is, he lacked that. He could analyze the problem; he could see the solution, but he didn't seem to have the guts to make the solution.

HOFFMAN: Now, what was the solution?

BROWN: Well, on <u>any</u> issue. You name any issue that the local was up against.

HOFFMAN: Oh, I see. I thought you meant the solution in terms of the power of the business agent.

BROWN: No, no, that characterized his administration. He just didn't have the kind of strength that you need to implement a solution, whatever it was. So that when he finally was pressed by his supporters to run against the business agent--which he did--he defeated him, to the job full time and then in six months resigned. Which I think was the final piece of evidence that he didn't really relish the contest, because it's a hostile atmosphere you're in--the members on one hand, employers on the other hand.

HOFFMAN: Right. You can't be anybody's good guy.

BROWN: You really can't be. In a local union, you know, since I was the president for half-a-dozen years, you do ninety percent of your business with ten percent of the members. They're either the activists in the local or they're the people in trouble. The front row at every local union meeting is filled by the guys who are unemployed or have a bitch. They're all there, confronting you. Well, you've got to be a certain nature to take that gaff every day. This guy didn't like that stuff.

So that what we did was change the system and made the president a full-time man. We experimented with this other system. As a concession . . . the reason we set up this business agent/president business, was a concession to those people who thought that an all-powerful president, full time, would dominate the local, and they wanted to preserve their right to have a chairman who was not full-time, who could run the meetings impartially and so on.

HOFFMAN: Who came from the bench and so forth.

BROWN: Yes. Great theory, but in practice is not worth the powder to blow it to hell.

HOFFMAN: Now, was this changed after you became president or before?

BROWN: Before. Bill Kennedy became the first president, full-time. And I was vice-president of the local. Bill had a very stormy term of office, very stormy. He had all these young guys like myself breathing down his neck. He felt surrounded and beset from all sides, mostly in the political sense. I guess his constituency--he was a pressman--the press department represented about fifty percent of the local, but were not the activists in the local generally. The activists were out of the preparatory end. Some pressmen were active, but generally speaking they came out of the preparatory end. The reason for that, they always said, was that in a pressroom it's too goddamn noisy to talk! (laughter) But in the plate department and the camera department, all you did was lean around and talk about union affairs! (more laughter) So you couldn't become a union official out of the pressroom and be well informed. That was the theory.

HOFFMAN: They didn't have as much time to cook up political plots!

BROWN: That's right.

HOFFMAN: Okay. Well, why don't we just quickly insert a sentence as to how you decided to run for president. Then, after lunch we'll take up some of the issues that came up during your presidency.

BROWN: There had been--you mentioned pensions earlier--there had been a very interesting, spirited set of negotiations where we launched the Canadian pension plan while Bill Kennedy was president, and we had negotiated this first employer-paid plan, a very modest beginning, I think seven cents an hour. When we went back to the members to report out, they blew us off the platform and rejected the package and we had to go back again. I was on the negotiating committee and vice-president by this time. We had to go back again and smarten up the package. That was one of my early experiences in having proposals rejected.

HOFFMAN: Now, this was going to be an employer contributory plan?

BROWN: Contributed, not contributory. Employer-paid, strictly employer-paid. I'll always remember those negotiations because it was a great first time, when I was a part of a committee that was recommending something that was rejected, and it's interesting that, even though I had been a strong spokesman in favor of acceptance, not long after that I was elected president of the local. So nobody seemed to sort of hold it against

you, the fact that you were on the wrong side of a particular debate. They didn't seem to hold it against you; they seemed to understand. It was also a great experience for me in that that's one time when I could see that if you negotiate something you had to get up and sell it. Your job was only partly done when you've negotiated it. Presenting it to the members was every bit as important as negotiating it.

Bill Kennedy, shortly after those negotiations, resigned in the middle of a term and I decided to run. I was already vice-president of the local. The biggest thing against me was my age because I was only twenty-eight at the time. In our local you had to be around a long time before anybody listened to you. Fortunately I had lost my hair at an early age and looked a little older than I was. So that's how I became president, a very interesting election.

HOFFMAN: Did you serve out Bill Kennedy's term?

BROWN: Yes.

HOFFMAN: And then ran?

BROWN: Yes. I won that first election, as I recall, by nine votes.

HOFFMAN: So you didn't have an exactly overwhelming mandate.

BROWN: No, but I drew comfort from that because I figured there's only way to go, and that's up!! Only one way to go is up because if I tried to placate various segments of the membership, I'd soon wind up without even those nine votes. So I decided just to run with it.

HOFFMAN: Right. Okay. Fine.

(Interruption for lunch break)

HOFFMAN: I think I had said something about it's not exactly being an overwhelming mandate! (laughter)

BROWN: Right. So now we get into the business of the time frame, I guess, of when I became president. Right? I should have mentioned that I attended my first convention of the then Amalgamated Lithographers while I was vice-president of the union. That was in Toronto, as a matter of fact.

HOFFMAN: While Blackburn was still president?

BROWN: Yes. John Blackburn was president. That was in 1943, Royal York Hotel. Things that I recall about that convention: one, Walter Reuther was a guest speaker; two, the Photoengravers were meeting the same week in

the same hotel, and Matthew Woll, I think, was president then. That I'm not certain of, but I believe it's true.

HOFFMAN: Now, this was before disaffiliation from the AFL? What year did you say this was?

BROWN: 1943. I don't think it was before, no.

HOFFMAN: No, because it was in 1945.

BROWN: We were still in the AFofL, I guess, at that time.

HOFFMAN: What's causing my ears to come to a point obviously is that Walter Reuther was in speaking to the convention while you were still affiliated with the AFofL.

BROWN: Yes, okay. And the other speaker was Wayne Morse, Senator Wayne Morse. Right, that was in 1943. That was my first convention. I had been elected a delegate to the previous ALA--Lithographers--convention two years earlier, which was held, I think, in Dallas, Texas. But at the same time, the then Canadian Congress of Labor was holding its convention in Vancouver, and it was decided that as vice-president I should go to that convention. The point being that my first convention was in 1943, at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto.

The significance of my recalling Reuther being there was that obviously he made quite an impact on me. Secondly, the Photo-engravers were meeting in the same hotel at the same time and we did exchange. . . . the international presidents. . . . Blackburn went to their convention and Matthew Woll, I believe it was, came to ours and talked, which was an indication of the very good relationship that there was. I don't think that had been arranged in advance. I think it was almost an accident.

HOFFMAN: Just fortuitous, yes.

BROWN: Yes. Not much else occurred in that convention of great significance. There was a resolution submitted curiously enough by the Toronto local, calling for election of a vice-president for Canada by Canadians.

HOFFMAN: Oh, boy! (laughs)

BROWN: And that's what, twenty years ago?

HOFFMAN: More than twenty years ago.

BROWN: Thirty years ago? What is it?

HOFFMAN: Well, twenty-five or thirty years ago.

BROWN: Yes. It was submitted and roundly and soundly defeated at that time. I think the reason for it being submitted since it came out of the Toronto local, had to do with the desire of some people to get the Canadian vice-presidency under the thumb of the Canadian locals. It had nothing to do with any noble sentiments with respect to relationship between Canada and the U.S. or Canadian nationalism. It was purely a political venture at that time. I only mentioned it because it's now reared its head again for totally different reasons. I think for totally different reasons! I'm not so sure! (laughter)

HOFFMAN: Okay, well, now, you find yourself a rather young president of a large and vigorous local.

BROWN: I think we were about the tenth largest local at the time. That's a guess, but I think it was somewhere around that, which meant that we had some standing in the total picture as far as unions were concerned.

HOFFMAN: Just as a personal question, if you don't mind my asking, did you consult your father for advice? Or were you kind of, you know, going it on your own and getting advice from other sources?

BROWN: If you talk to anybody in Toronto, they are absolutely convinced that my father had a grand plan that, when I finished my apprenticeship, I became a salesman in the industry and after being a salesman for awhile I came back into the trade and then was active in the local and then became vice-president and so on. Anyone would tell you that it was a grand plan, that this was all part of the training that I was supposed to be undergoing to take some position in the union.

My father and I did not at any time ever talk in specific terms about my future. I'm certain, however, although I have no specific recollection, I'm certain that I did ask him about running for office, for the presidency, the full-time job, because, you see, that was a terribly important decision. Everything else was just a matter of identifying yourself as a member of the union and being active; but when you decided to run for the full-time job, that was a key decision. I'm sure that I talked to him about it, and I'm quite sure that he said, "Go ahead," although I don't have a specific recollection. I'm absolutely sure that I would have talked to him about it, as I have discussed with him over the years almost any key decisions with respect to the union. Yes, the answer is yes.

HOFFMAN: Was that a factor, perhaps, in your getting elected? That some people said, "Well, he's young, but after all he'll have good advice."

BROWN: Yes, I have no doubt that being a Brown and having a father who was president of that local union back in 1942 and 43, or whenever it was, and then becoming an

international vice-president in 1943 and '44. . . yes, the answer is I had a leg up, a helping hand. I don't know that people ever analyzed it, except that the Browns were very much involved in the local union's affairs.

HOFFMAN: Right. Okay, well, what were some of the negotiating issues and organizational issues which confronted you as the local union president?

BROWN: The very first thing we ran into, of course, was our drive to go to the thirty-five-hour workweek, I guess. That would be it. We made that a bargaining objective--the thirty-five-hour workweek. We were successful. So that was the number one thing that came on the scene right after my becoming president, the shorter workweek. The United States had already achieved it, by-and-large, and we set it as an objective for Canada. I was obviously fairly influential in determining the objectives in Eastern Canada--president of the largest local--and aggressively presented my ideas so that the shorter workweek came out as a very important issue. Beyond that we'd already established a health and welfare plan, so that we were talking about refinements of the contract. We'd already won our major battle with the employers in a six-month strike about whether the union would survive or not, so that wasn't the issue any more. So that the shorter workweek was the number one drive, and we plowed ahead on that and won the issue. As president of the Toronto local I became the spokesman for Eastern Canada in the sense that I presented the arguments before the employers on the question of the shorter workweek.

I don't think that there were any other new concepts. In fact, I know that there weren't any other new concepts that we dealt with other than the reduction of the workweek. Oh, you know, we added to the vacations, and we added to the number of holidays, and we perhaps varied the overtime provisions and strengthened the contract language; but that's a part of every set of negotiations. As far as new concepts, the shorter workweek.

HOFFMAN: I think we have to correct a date. You became president in 195. . .?

BROWN: 1954.

HOFFMAN: In 1954 while George Canary was president. That was my mistake. I said your first convention George Canary was president, right?

BROWN: No, you said the first convention John Blackburn was president and that's correct, because I was vice-president, non-full-time vice-president of the local at that time.

HOFFMAN: Oh, all right, okay.

BROWN: And the following year, 1954. . . .

HOFFMAN: George Canary. . . .

BROWN: Ooops! Wait a minute! The following year I became the president of the Toronto local.

END OF TAPE I, side 1

BROWN: Well, here was this great political fight going on and the word seeping into the membership that, God, they're fighting like crazy on the top and Ed Swayduck proposing to me that I become the president. I felt very strongly that there needed to be an orderly assumption of authority as per the constitution. Now, it's just like in any kind of revolution that's going on, if the people get the feeling that out of left field leadership is popping up, that doesn't give them a very comforting feeling. So I turned it down, said "No." I felt strongly that the first vice-president should take the presidency. And that's when we then said, "Okay, you become the assistant to the president, and then we'll put you in position." There was nothing more said about it again at that time. But there wasn't very much of a broad understanding at all.

HOFFMAN: Right. I don't think this conversation that took place in Cleveland is widely known.

BROWN: Oh, yes? Ed Hanson, the vice-president of the New York local, and I, walked out of the meeting. We walked down the hall. He says, "Ken, you're out of your mind." I said, "Why?" He said, "Those chances don't come by twice. You get 'em. . . ." I think he said, "Grab the ring when it's on the way by" or something like that. I said, "No, I don't agree. I'm not talking about whether the chance will come back again for me, but I think it would be unwise for us to be a party to this kind of a take-over of the organization in the face of what we've seen in this meeting."

GIEBEL: So much easier, just as hindsight, to make you a political target, to view you as someone that, in a moment of crisis, would grab for power and. . . .

BROWN: It would have been brutal, really. Even if we could have swung it, it would have been a hell of a way to come in. I had, thankfully, the sense at that time. . . .

HOFFMAN: Well, you would have had to come in as George Canary's executioner, for one thing.

BROWN: Yes, in a way, that would have been the role. It would have. Chicago was so upset. There was no way that Swayduck could have gotten a cool agreement out of them. So I take full credit for having told Swayduck at that time, "Uh-uh, nothing doing. It would not be good for me. It would be unwise for you to be a party to it, and I don't think it would be good for the organization." You can reverse that if you want to: it would have been bad for the organization. So that's when the big move was made to put Pat Slater in with the clear understanding that he would fill out the balance of the term.

HOFFMAN: So you spent one year as Pat Slater's administrative assistant?

BROWN: Yes, assistant. Right. That's right. Used to run the Council meetings when he was president. It was funny. I had to make up the agenda and get all the material ready. We'd start the meeting and I'd give Pat all the stuff. I used to sit immediately to his left, as I recall, in the board meetings in New York. He'd say, "All right, we'll take item number so-and-so. Well, Ken, go ahead on this one." Right? It's a long week and a difficult week, the Council meeting. It's extremely difficult for the chairman. It's no mean task to chair a meeting of that number of people for a solid week. They're not puppy dogs. All you have to do is let up a little bit, and they jump on you. As the week would wear on, Pat would get tired. He even had occasions when he'd literally be asleep in the chair, you know. He was a man of seventy-two, and there was no reason for him to do anything otherwise. His adrenalin wasn't flowing. (laughter) They were interesting days.

But I told you that the attacks began. The first Council meeting--I know we're going to come back and pick up at this point about when I became president--but the first Council meetings I attended, I used to come in late all the time. I was relaxed and not worried, so I'd come in late for the meetings. The word was already running around. . . . Oh, I ran this first meeting and it went very well, and Swayduck was already by this time saying, "Imagine that! This guy's got so much talent. Just think, if he went to bed early, how good he'd be!" (laughter) That was the first meeting! That was only the beginning! (more, loud laughter) But they were starting to process and flash and cut from day one. The playboy! "Imagine, if this playboy went to bed early, what he could do!" (laughter)

(Interruption in the tape. Part of the interview is not recorded.)

HOFFMAN: (in mid-sentence) . . . philosophy.

BROWN: Well, I don't know which comes first. I would say that I went to the Chicago local to meet with them because of what I knew about them as individuals and the impression that we had about the Chicago local. That impression was, as I think back on it, that here's a big local, a stable local, a local that has been a strong and good force within our union internationally, as opposed to the highly political, volatile kind of thing that you got out of New York.

Now, if you're a new president and you really wanted to learn, you wouldn't go to New York, because you'd get handled if you went there. If you went to Chicago, they would treat you with courtesy; they would tell you what you wanted to know; and they wouldn't spend their time telling you how stupid you were and how great they were. Chicago, you just felt, was the kind of place you could identify with. They had that reputation as a local union. So it came easy for me to go to them, and I have no doubt that I also talked with my father about which locals could I find the best administrative arrangments, which locals would I find the best reception. So I went to Chicago for those reasons.

HOFFMAN: Well, that's interesting, because at the time that you became administrative assistant--we may be jumping ahead of ourselves here--but you certainly did so with Swayduck's support. Right?

BROWN: Yes.

HOFFMAN: And some people thought you were Eddie Swayduck's man.

BROWN: Yes.

HOFFMAN: You're saying that, even at the very beginning, you had a certain amount of independence. Is that the right way to put it? I mean, why would people think you were Eddie Swayduck's man? Maybe that's a better way to ask the question.

BROWN: Well, that gets into a whole new field, because what you have to first say is that I ran for the International Council and was elected. When I went on the International Council--it's true today as it was then--it was a great experience for me. It was the great awakening. I suddenly saw my job in its perspective, a local union. Every other local union was facing the same kind of problems that I was facing, and it was extremely helpful to me to sit around the board table and hear discussed the very questions that I was facing. It was most helpful to me. What came out of that, of course, is that the dominant force on the International Council was Eddie Swayduck, far and away ahead of anybody esle. The then president of the international was George Canary, who was just so different from Eddie Swayduck as to be

unbelievable! And the new president of the Chicago local was Harry Spohnholtz. Harry, in his newness as president, wasn't what you'd call a strong force. He inherited the Chicago local and he ran it the same way as Canary essentially; that quiet, steady, don't-rock-the-boat, don't break-too-much-new-ground. But be of great integrity, be good for the union. Swayduck was totally different. He was a bombastic guy. I don't think he had great intellectual depth. He sure as hell had drive that ran out of his ears, and everybody else's ears, and good perspective about how to make things happen.

Well, I frankly was drawn to that kind of a man. When I saw that shaping up on the board, it came easy to me to just say, "Wow! This is something I've never seen in my experience." How would I have seen it? I worked in a shop and became president of the local; all of a sudden I saw a whole new dimension with respect to how to make things happen.

GIEBEL: You participated in the Technological Committee?

BROWN: Yes, right.

GIEBEL: And that's an important committee for the union and probably important for your own visibility. How did that come about?

BROWN: Well, one of the things that happened, of course, in the very early stages, was that Swayduck was really clever as hell at latching on to people that he thought he could use or he thought had talent. Take your pick which comes first. I don't know. In the very early stages I didn't have any difficulty participating in the International Council. I found out soon enough that almost all of the people there were about the same as I was. They were local union presidents with their problems, and I dug in and started to participate. Swayduck had this great idea of creating a Technological Developments Committee because of the tremendous change that was occurring in the industry, that our need to keep abreast of those changes and, equally important, to cast the union in the role of one that was welcoming change as opposed to resisting change. All of us were familiar with the ITU's reputation of throwing the wrenches into the machinery to hold back new innovations, and Swayduck correctly said, "Let's cast our union in the other role, because ours is an expanding segment of the industry. We don't want to get hung up on apprenticeship ratios. We want to bring more people in. It's a competitive business within the graphic arts." I think he was one of the first people who made that point clear to me, either he or Ben Robinson, the lawyer. That it's an industry within an industry and we're competing with the pressmen or the letterpress segment. We're competing with gravure. Luckily ours was an expanding segment of the industry.

So the creation of that committee became very important in its establishing the way people characterized the old Lithographers Union as a union that welcomed change. We could afford to

welcome change because new jobs were resulting from it. But he had the vision to do that kind of thing. By that time I had become fairly active on the council, and he asked me to be the secretary of that committee, which gave me prominence and got me more deeply involved both with the New York local and on the council level. When we had educational conferences, as secretary I would be reporting out for the committee. So, you know, my name became, not a household word, but at least well-known in the circles of the union through that committee.

GIEBEL: Did you travel throughout. . . .?

BROWN: We had committee meetings in all different parts of the United States. We didn't have much involvement with local unions, no, really not.

HOFFMAN: Were you involved with the development of the schools?

BROWN: The schools weren't even. . . . No, the schools didn't come along until 1962 or '63.

HOFFMAN: Oh, I see.

BROWN: No, the schools weren't in the picture at all at that point. This is all prior to the schools. This was in the fifties. Yes, we had committee meetings. I got to know many industry people because of these meetings we held. Swayduck was the guy who was sort of the architect of all this; and Ben Robinson, the lawyer, was the man who refined everything that we decided to do so as to make it more palatable. So it was like a triumvirate. Swayduck was the guy with all the drive and zip and go; Robinson, the lawyer with the intellect. So they then adopted me. I don't know what other word to use.

What they really decided was that, as part of their theory of maintaining control of the organization, they'd put Canary in the office as president, they wanted to get him out of the office of president. Maintaining a vacuum in the leadership of the international, if not essential, certainly was terribly important to their control.

HOFFMAN: They really didn't care that George Canary didn't move to New York.

BROWN: Oh, I don't think they wanted him to at all. It would just have made it more bloody because if he'd moved, then when he got thrown out it would have added to the problem. No, no, they were more interested in maintaining the vacuum in the leadership. So that from the day that George Canary became president, they began to attack him. Just the first day, the very first board meeting, they began to attack him. Then as any good planner knows, you've got to have an alternative if you run things down. So they began to build me as the alternative.

That's really how it all started. They began to build me and promote me. Being secretary of that committee, and appearing at educational conferences and so on, was all part of their plan to build me, make me president.

GIEBEL: Was it ever discussed in the open? I mean, was it ever that much of a formulated thing? Or was it just a kind of innate feeling that Swayduck had as a political being? Was it ever brought out more open than that?

BROWN: Than what?

GIEBEL: The discussion of building, and the vacuum and. . . ?

BROWN: No, no, never, never ever! I had discussions with him and with Robinson many, many times about his view of Canary's inadequacies, and I shared that view, by the way. I had many, many discussions with Robinson as to what my future was with the organization. There was no question about their talking to me openly about becoming president. There was never discussion about their role in the matter except to the extent that they knew they were in a position to make me the president but never what their motives were. Because I had the benefit three years later of becoming president, and then they started the attack on me the day after I became the president.

HOFFMAN: Were you surprised? Or did you expect this?

BROWN: I didn't expect it. I hadn't thought it through carefully enough to expect it. As soon as I saw it, I recognized it for what it was, because I had also been a party to the same kind of thing for the past three years.

HOFFMAN: In other words, as soon as the attack began, you said to yourself, "Ho, ho. They're going to try to make me into George Canary."

BROWN: Oh, precisely! And what follows from that is that "we must line up the next alternative. So in the process we'll turn over presidents every three years, and we continue. . . ." Because in the chaos and vacuum they would continue to wield all the power. So that became apparent but not until I became president. Up until that time I was convinced that what they were doing was absolutely correct, making me the president! (laughter)

HOFFMAN: Right, right. (laughing)

BROWN: All right? But at no time was there discussion about their motives. During all that period Ben Robinson, who had far and away the best perspective. Ben Robinson, being the lawyer, the General Counsel to the international

for twenty years--I'm jumping way ahead now--but I used to lunch with him at the Yale Club and he'd talk to me about the history of the union. He did really give me a fantastic understanding of the history of the union and what role different people did play, from his point of view, granted. But he did that.

HOFFMAN: What were your frustrations with George Canary?

BROWN: Well, he wasn't a 'doer'. George was a custodian, and that's not my nature and wasn't even then. It wasn't long before I could see that he didn't want anybody to rock the boat or anything. George just wanted to be the president and, as I say, a custodian. All projects of any excitement or vigor that differed from things in the past, he didn't take to at all. More than that, as I learned later, he was a terribly conservative man. Maybe what I've just said describes it--terribly conservative. He didn't believe the union should be involved in politics. It's said that he was a Republican and supported Republican. . . . I don't know that that's true. But everything else about him would indicate that it's true. Everything!

So that as I saw him, as president. . . . God, I remember one example where we were redesigning the letterhead for the union. Big deal! Good God! Whistling into the council meeting, with art work done by some Chicago artist, for a new letterhead for the union. In the first place, the art work was horse-shit, you know, it was lousy stuff. He was an artist, George was. More important, to be bothering the council about that kind of nonsense when we had so many things that were happening in our organization right then. An explosion occurring in lithography, veritable explosion occurring--new plants opening up right and left and the need to be putting on organizers and getting after and capturing that new growth. Nothing was coming down on that; nothing at all!

So that my disenchantment with him was just simply based on the fact that he was terribly conservative.

HOFFMAN: He was not presenting programs or platforms to the convention?

BROWN: Not to the convention or the council, not at all. There was nothing. His term of office is not distinguished by a single thing. My remembering his redesigning the letterhead is about the worst thing I can say, you know. He's a very nice man, but as international president he surely left us in a vacuum.

HOFFMAN: Well, how did you feel about this whole broohaha, you know, about the headquarters in New York versus Chicago?

BROWN: Well, I was deeply enough involved in the intrigue by that time, having been the anointed person for Swayduck and Robinson, as to know what was going on. The whole

thing was designed to undermine Canary. There was no other purpose at all. They had no intention whatsoever of moving the building to Washington, but only to aggravate the hell out of Canary. There was nothing else to it.

HOFFMAN: Did Don Stone know that when he was sent down here to Washington to look at buildings? Did he have any notions that he was on a fishing expedition?

BROWN: No, not at all, not really. Don was never a confidant of the Swayduck-Robinson clique, never. So Don was just acting out his role, which was fair enough. There was no hope that it would be moved to Washington. In the first place, Canary didn't want it to move to Washington. He wanted it in Chicago. Swayduck didn't want it moved out of New York. So how, with those two big power bases, was it ever going to get moved to Washington? So we went through a nonsensical exercise all designed to permit us to buy a building in New York. It really came down to that! (laughing)

I don't know if you've heard the wild story that the building in New York was purchased and the picture appeared on the cover of the magazine before the thing was signed. The then editor of the magazine, Pat Donnelly, was a creation of Swayduck's, and she was just a party to the whole deal to have pictures taken of the new building and. . . . .

HOFFMAN: Yes, now, how did Don Stone get blamed for that?

BROWN: Well, Canary hated Stone with such a passion that anything that went wrong he assumed that Donald did it. The truth of the matter was that Pat Donnelly was, as I said, the creation of Swayduck, and Swayduck engineered the whole damn thing. Stone was not opposed to that, by the way. He was a willing--what is it--handmaiden? (laughter) He didn't want to move from New York. He did what he was supposed to by coming down here. I don't think Donald and I have ever talked about this, but he came down here and looked at buildings; but he didn't want to move from New York at all. So when they located a building in New York, which was a good buy, good real estate proposition for us, he acquiesced to all of the shenanigans that were going on at the time.

HOFFMAN: So all of this was done, then, without convention action and a lot of the members out in the field got their journals and discovered that. . . .

BROWN: We bought a building.

HOFFMAN: "Guess what, folks? We're in a new building!"

BROWN: "The decision has been made to stay in New York, and we bought a new building." Sure. That's absolutely right. As in so many things, you have to ask yourself, "What was his motive?" Okay? What was Canary's motive? Well, Canary wanted it in Chicago. Okay? What was Swayduck's motive? What was Robinson's motive? My God, Robinson didn't want the thing down here in Washington, because he'd been General Counsel for twenty-five years and had a paternalistic attitude about everything, was very close to it. You've heard perhaps the story that when Blackburn was president, Robinson used to come and open the mail. I guess it was Blackburn, I don't know.

But to move the headquarters all the way down here would be the first step toward the beginning of the end for Robinson as General Counsel, because it wouldn't be long, it would only take one change in leadership, and they'd be looking for a General Counsel here. So Robinson wasn't about to see the headquarters moved. No, no, that was just one more of the shenanigans that were going on, designed to aggravate, to embarrass Canary and to drive him to what ultimately happened--to resignation.

HOFFMAN: Well, this all comes to a head at this. . . . For a long time we used to hear about the Apple Valley Conference and couldn't quite figure out what the Apply Valley Conference was, because we didn't have the council proceedings. We only had the convention proceedings.

BROWN: Oh, have you read them?

HOFFMAN: Since then we've learned more, but I would think it would be interesting. This all comes to a head there?

BROWN: Yes. Oh sure, when Canary first resigned. You see, I was in on meetings with Swayduck and Robinson where plans were being made deliberately to provoke Canary to a point where he'd resign. There was just no question that was the plot and the plan. I was important in the picture because, when they provoked him to resign, I was to step in and fill his spot. So that I was privy to kind of six sides of the situation. The Apple Valley thing, of course, was just. . . . The buying of the building, the rejection of whatever Canary came up with. Gee, I'd have to think about some of the things that he recommended to the council that Swayduck just attacked him on, and by this time the bulk of the council was voting against Canary on virtually everything. So everything he brought up was voted down. He pretty soon stopped bringing up anything, and he spent all his time commisserating with his few friends.

Now Swayduck knew he had the upper hand, and the Apple Valley Conference was the culmination of that thing where Swayduck attacked him for incompetence and provoked his resignation, although knowing George Canary, he had decided to resign before he ever came to the Apple Valley Conference. Not only decided to resign, but I'm reasonable sure that he had discussed with Harry Spohnholtz his

going on the staff in some capacity. That may be an unfair assumption on my part, but that he had decided to resign before he ever went to Apple Valley, or that he had decided to resign at an appropriate moment, I'm absolutely clear.

HOFFMAN: What caused him to revoke his resignation?

BROWN: Because he doesn't have very much between his ears! That's what caused it. Anybody who would resign as he did and then. . . . Because the timing was all bad for George's resignation. The Apply Valley Conference was in May. We had an educational conference coming up later. God, we didn't want to go to that educational conference, which was the between-year conference, between conventions, in Cleveland, with Canary's resignation hanging over our heads because that would give all of the people that were unhappy with the political shenanigans that were going on a chance to have a forum. As it turned out, they had one anyway. But it became essential in the strategy--this is strictly Swayduck and Robinson--to get Canary to withdraw his resignation and run the educational conference and then wipe him out right after the conference. That was just talked about that openly.

HOFFMAN: One of the issues seems to have been. . . . I'll summarize what my picture of it is: it seems to me that Swayduck and Robinson were urging disaffiliation and then by the time you get to Cleveland were blaming George Canary for the disaffiliation. Is that a fair statement?

BROWN: No, it isn't. In part it's true. What happened was disaffiliation came over George Canary's expressed antagonism. He was not in favor of disaffiliation. That was not his nature. He was not capable, however, of resisting the Swayduck-Robinson thrust and the sentiment on the board, which was "The hell with them! They're supporting the Printing Pressmen, and Meany gives us nothing but lip service. And if we were free of all these restraints, we could organize like crazy!" George Canary, though, wasn't in favor of that at all.

But when we went to Unity House in Pennsylvania and made our case, Canary was supposed to make it. He really made a bumbling, hardly articulate. . . .

HOFFMAN: You went along on this famous trip to the Poconos?

BROWN: I was there, yes. Oh, sure. Yes, the bus ride. We were meeting in the Sheraton Hotel in Philadelphia, and then we got buses. Oh, we went, and it was all prepared statements. Canary was supposed to make a statement. George Meany very quickly cut Canary off and threw us all out of the room. Well, Robinson and Swayduck promptly blamed George Canary for an incompetent, inadequate presentation. That's all. George's heart wasn't in it in the first place. Besides, he wasn't what you

would call an articulate spellbinder. Far, far from it. Here were about six guys who wanted to be doing the talking, but they could not because George was president; he had the title. No matter what he did, they would have run him down.

HOFFMAN: So, in other words, what you're saying is that if Eddie Swayduck, or even Ben Robinson had made the presentation to the Executive Council, they still would have disaffiliated?

BROWN: Yes.

HOFFMAN: But they would have disaffiliated without being sent from the room like little boys with their tails tucked between their legs.

BROWN: Even that might have happened; even that might have happened. But the public presentation of the question would not have been a condemnation; it would have been "that son-of-a-bitch Meany." But because Canary didn't handle himself too well, why, they saw this as a further opportunity for condemning. But George was against disaffiliation. By the way, I think George was right. I think disaffiliating wasn't a very smart thing to do. I think that we were led and misled by Robinson on the question, and Swayduck for his own reasons, but Robinson particularly misled on the matter.

HOFFMAN: After all, you could have continued raiding without being thrown out.

BROWN: Yes, there were ways, right. George Canary, I don't think, totally understood it, but his instincts were "don't get out of the House of Labor." For that I give him full credit. I think he was right, absolutely right. But by this time he'd lost control of the council; and he couldn't argue the question very well in any case.

GIEBEL: I wanted to ask a question about the motivation of Swayduck. Was his motivation at some point to be president? Did it eventually become obvious that he was not going to be president and therefore he had to become kingmaker and a power behind the throne? Or what exactly is the motivation here? It plays such a crucial role.

BROWN: I think the fact that he ran for international president, what, on two occasions? He ran twice. So that for him to have run and been defeated and run again, he wanted it so badly he could taste it. But after the second defeat I think he. . . . Oh, years passed, and a variety of things happened, and he decided he'd rather be kingmaker, that he could have his cake and eat it, too.

END OF TAPE I, side 2

BROWN: [When Swayduck] was introduced as the President of the Amalgamated Lithographers, you know, he didn't bother to make the distinction that he was a local president. Oh, he wanted so badly to be the president, but at a point, somewhere along the line--and it was prior to my getting involved--he had been defeated twice and decided he'd rather be the kingmaker.

GIEBEL: Was an additional problem with being a kingmaker the fact that New York was losing some of its overwhelming influence on the international because of the ALA expanding so rapidly on a national basis and printing moving away from New York? Not totally, but the balance of power begins to swing a little bit more towards the nation rather than being so influenced by New York. Was that a problem with the role of a kingmaker for Swayduck?

BROWN: Well, it was a problem, and one that he didn't recognize in the early games. He really thought that he could run as president of the New York local and win anytime he wanted; he found out, of course, that he couldn't. I think what he figured out was that he had to have a base beyond New York. Being a kingmaker was easier, then, provided he selected somebody out of Chicago local, i.e., George Canary. When he wanted to get rid of John Blackburn, he tried; he ran against him twice and missed. So then he persuaded Chicago to run George Canary, and then with Chicago and New York. . . . Boom! Out went Blackburn!

Yes, the diffusion of the voting strength made Swayduck realize that he just couldn't run anytime he wanted and take over. So his first move was to pick Canary and that blew Blackburn out of position again. I don't think at any time, however, did he entertain after that, notions about becoming president. I think it was quite clear to him that he couldn't be, just could not be! So that he, reluctantly probably, decided to be a kingmaker. That's why I say that the vacuum in leadership was so important to him.

HOFFMAN: So having gone to Chicago, he next turned to a large Canadian local.

BROWN: Canada, as it were, yes! Right! He couldn't go to Chicago again. They were now antagonistic as hell. So he correctly found somebody from a place that did not have Chicago's antagonism. Right.

HOFFMAN: Well, this Cleveland National Policy Convention was one of the most stormy, I think, of the history of the Lithographers, and some people have said to us that they felt that George Canary might have been able to recoup his losses and really grab hold of the power. Do you agree with that?

BROWN: Yes, but it would have only lasted for a month. He had the delegation right there, but he didn't have the guts to do what it took to win the day. Even if he had, a month later he'd be right back in the same problem again, because he couldn't have that delegation together once a month. That delegation only got together once a year. He had to live with the International Council in between times, and they would have ragged him right out of office so fast his head would have spun. So I think he knew that. It's all very well to have people say, "Get up there and fight, George." But a month later, when he's all alone, facing a hostile group again. . . .

HOFFMAN: Particularly when he's in Chicago and everybody else is in New York.

BROWN: Right, in New York, yes. I think on that count he was very much wrong. You can't be president of this union or any union, in my opinion, and effectively represent your position when you're physically removed from the day-to-day contact with people, and physically removed from the administration, and physically removed from what makes it all happen. I think he made a fundamental error there. Whoever said that, I think they're absolutely right. George could have won the day, but it would have been a Pyrrhic victory.

HOFFMAN: Yes.

BROWN: He would have won the day, but a week later he would have been right back with the problem, with Stone administering the union, Swayduck and Robinson plotting, and the balance of the council board generally not in support of him. Right back. So it's academic whether he could have won that day or not; at least in my mind it is.

HOFFMAN: In your view, what were some of the consequences of disaffiliation? I mean, you said that you felt it was a mistake. What difference did it make?

BROWN: Well, the reason for disaffiliation was supposed to be that it gave us a free hand to organize. Obviously that meant organizing the printing pressmen. You see, the industry was rapidly expanding, and there was a conversion occurring. Conversion is exactly the right word--a conversion from letterpress to offset. Many, many companies--the conversion occurred--the companies said, "Well, we'll retrain the printing pressmen and put them on offset." Consequently, we didn't get control of those plants. Many other plants, it wasn't a conversion; it was the establishment of an offset division. For a while there was a large group of people in our union who felt that all printing pressmen would happily leave their union and join ours if given an opportunity. That smoke in a pot, that smoke in a pipe, there were lots of people in the Printing Pressmen's Union that did want to

change unions, but not in any really meaningful numbers. So the reason for getting out was so that we'd have a free hand. We were out for a few years and we had a free hand. We didn't organize enough printing pressmen into our union to make a baker's dozen. I don't know what the numbers are, but they certainly weren't particularly important.

Now, if that was the reason for getting out, the price of getting out was to disassociate ourselves from the House of Labor, which tended to further insulate ourselves from trade-union questions. I think that was very harmful; I think it set us back years. At the very time when we should have been raising our eyes and looking around and saying, "Hey, we are in this situation, surrounded by this, which in turn is surrounded by that," we did exactly the opposite! Got out of the House of Labor, drew a circle around ourselves, and said, "Not only can we survive well-insulated like this, but we can even expand our horizons."

HOFFMAN: Well, now, for example, in the whole metal decorating kind of a business, which over the years the Lithographers had had various kinds of meetings with Phil Murray and involvement with the Steelworkers and there were various jurisdictional disputes in the can industry, what effect did disaffiliation have on that? Do you feel you lost some of that capacity to make some contact with the Steelworkers on those kinds of issues?

BROWN: There's no question about that. However, by that time the metal decorating field, the picture, was pretty well set. There was not great expansion occurring in the metal decorating field. And because of those earlier agreements made by some genius in our union a good many years ago, we did gain entré into all of those plants. There was not much change occurring in metal decorating and we could even survive a lousy relationship, and it didn't hurt us.

HOFFMAN: How about the Paper Workers and the Toy Makers?

BROWN: Now that's different! In those fields offset was coming in rapidly and we shut ourselves off, effectively shut ourselves off from any agreements that we might have been able to make. Now, one could argue, "Well, you couldn't have made 'em anyway." Well, we didn't even have the opportunity to make them because we shut ourselves off. So I feel very strongly that the decision we made at that time was wrong, that it was a throwback to the days when we thought we had control of the industry and could call our own shots and didn't give a damn about anybody, you know. I think it was a mistake.

Unfortunately there were quite a number of us--I say "us," including myself--who didn't have that kind of perspective that permitted us to stand up and fight hard enough on the question. You see, politically and in debate on the council level, it was easier

to say, "Oh, the goddamn AFL-CIO doesn't do anything for us anyway. We're spending $32,000 a year in per capita. What do we get for it?" You know, that was an easy, comfortable kind of an argument. When that sort of argument was used, it was easier to go along rather than to argue the intangible benefits of being a part of the House of Labor. So that we all went with it; we all went with it. That's why I say I think it was wrong. I think George Canary's instincts alone caused him to say, "This is not good for us. I'm not sure why, but it's not good." You know?

HOFFMAN: (laughing) That's not a very effective argument!

BROWN: Not a very effective argument; he didn't say, "I don't know why." He just said that he didn't think we should, but in effect that's what he was saying, "I don't know why, but we shouldn't."

HOFFMAN: Then obviously you had all kinds of struggles with respect to the label after that?

BROWN: Yes. Well, actually, a curious thing happened with the label. Getting out of the AFL-CIO helped us with respect to the label. See, we were never a part of the AFL-CIO union label apparatus; we were never part of the Allied Printing Trades. Thus we were always competitive with respect to the label. But we had mixed feelings at all times. We wanted to promote our own label; we did not want to attack anybody else's label, you see?

So when we got out, that permitted us to let all of the sort of blinds up and say, "Okay, we don't have an obligation to anybody else's label now except the Amalgamated label." So we launched a promotional campaign for the Lithographers' label that I think, in the light of what other unions have or have not done, was a very effective one. It resulted in the old Amalgamated label being reproduced on more printing than any other label. I really think that's true. Now, I can't support that, you know, I'm unable to tell you what the dollar volume is. But I've heard a number of people say to me that the old label did turn up in a lot of places. So I don't see where it was a problem as far as the label was concerned, quite the reverse. I think it removed the last barriers to our coming flat-out in promoting our own label. Flat-out! And we did.

No, I think the label situation, strictly from the point of the Amalgamated Lithographers, was helped by our getting out, but let's qualify all of that by saying that the whole label program has been approached by our union and by the Allied Printing Trades in such a horse-shit fashion! I seldom use those expressions, but such a negative, asinine approach as though people were begging for a chance to put the label on! There are a limited number of people who want the label. Only those people who are soliciting the public and the public might look for the label. But the notion that anybody would put the label on their work to tell somebody that

they were producing a union product for any reason other than business reasons is really silly on the face of it. And yet our whole approach was that everybody wanted the label. Well, they don't want the goddamn label! They just don't!

HOFFMAN: Right.

BROWN: So instead of promoting the value in the use of the label in terms of the person who was buying the product, we went around saying, "We have a label. We'll license it to you if you're a good boy." If I were a printer or a purchases, I'd say, "Drop dead! And a number of other things as to what you can do with your label." (laughter) But our whole concept, you know, was down that road. And it still is today. It's not any different today. That's why I have no time or truck with the whole label question.

HOFFMAN: Yes, well, it's an interesting kind of dinosaur holdover, or artifact. I mean, historically the label meant something. For example, the Cigar Makers' label meant something in terms of the sanitary conditions under which a certain cigar was produced. So that you could educate the buying public to look for that label so they wouldn't get TB or something.

BROWN: Hm, which did have some meaning. . . .

HOFFMAN: Yes, which had meaning.

BROWN: . . . to the person who was purchasing the product, right.

HOFFMAN: Or the garment label which also indicates something about. . . . I mean the Garment Workers are, for example, interestingly enough, saying today, "Don't buy Formosan raincoats because who knows what itch you might get from them!" (laughter) But it's a little hard to say, you know, in terms of the printing label. (laughing) You know, just what benefit it's going to be to anybody if they should read a book or. . . .

BROWN: Oh, yes, that whole label question is something that really almost amuses me. I know after we merged with the Photoengravers and we came into the Allied Printing Trades and thus owned one-fifth of the label, I thought about it, "Well, God, if we're in it, we're gonna have to do something about it." So we prepared a batch of resolutions. One called for a revision of the ancient by-laws; one called for calling for a national conference--which they'd never had--of all local allied councils. . . oh, golly, I've forgotten, but there were five of them. I went to the first Allied meeting and presented these resolutions and got lip-service from the Pressmen, got an interesting agreement from the Bookbinders, got the usual nothing from the Stereotypers,

and got a vote of "No" from the ITU without explanation! (laughs) All of them were voted down, you know, one after the other. Oh, we wanted to change the four-fifths rule to a majority rule, a variety of. . . . anyway, they voted them all down.

We did have one conference in Chicago of the Allied, the first one in their history, and they adopted eighteen resolutions which were all submitted to the Board of Governors, and the ITU voted against every single one of them. Eighteen of them: no, no, no. I've never been to an Allied meeting since.

You know, I'm willing to work and try to make the thing viable, but when I found out that they weren't even interested in debating the merit, but simply voting no, then I thought, "What the hell am I mixed up in this for?" Wasteful, time-consuming, expensive. So I've never been to one since. Other guys go to them.

HOFFMAN: What advantage is there for the ITU, for example, in their participation in the Allied?

BROWN: Oh, it's very clear, very clear! It's job protection. You see, they had a provision in the Allied that says that no label can be granted to a company unless there were more than two or three unions in the picture. They've since been gradually revising that, but they had that for years. Now the technological change was throwing typesetting out of plant after plant after plant, but if a company needed the Allied label, then they would keep a couple of typesetters in the place in order to retain the label. So it was a job protection device. Just as simple as that! I give the credit to the ITU for at least knowing what the hell they were up to! They knew what they were up to; they were strong proponents of the Allied because it was a job protection device. So, you know, due credit to them. The other unions didn't see it. I really was shocked by it, but that's what it was.

HOFFMAN: In other words, the Bookbinders didn't understand what was really going on.

BROWN: I don't think so at all.

HOFFMAN: Well Mr. Connolly perhaps saw the Allied as a forum for his talking about one big union.

BROWN: Yes, he sees it now. I don't know that he did then, but he believes--like in the George Canary sense--for the unions to be together is good. For them to be talking together is good. His instincts are good. So that I think he sees it in that sense. He also felt that it was, in a pragmatic sense, a way of keeping a good many schoolbooks produced in union binderies, so I'll give him full marks on that. And that was an important part or segment of their organization wrapped up in the production of schoolbooks. So it wasn't all just altruistic with him. He had his head screwed on.

But again, you know, taking apart the motives of each of the unions--the Pressmen had one motive, the ITU another. The ITU had the secretaryship of that Allied for a hundred years. Never let it go until just recently. The reason they let it go is because it has no meaning any more. They're almost out of the commercial printing plants for practical purposes. The moment they saw there was no job-protection value in it anymore, they dropped it.

GIEBEL: To put some of this into historical context, this relationship with other internationals, at the time of the Cleveland meeting, can you recall what your experience had been with other internationals? How much were you aware of it coming out of your presidency and out of the council?

BROWN: There'd only been one meeting that I knew about that had been arranged, and I've forgotten who gave the impetus to the thing. But the meeting was held, I think, in Chicago. There was a committee named, and I think perhaps Ted Brandt was there, and Gus Petrakis as vice-presidents and a couple of other people. It was held in George Canary's "Chicago office." The reports I've had on it were all bad, that Canary was not interested in. . . .Ah, the impetus had to come from the council, not from Canary, so he was forced to hold the meeting. They said that he was just barely short of being discourteous to the leaders of the other internationals, and I assume it was the Photoengravers. That's the only thing that had gone on that I'm aware of in the period from 1958. From about 1958 that was the only meeting that went on.

HOFFMAN: Well, right about in this period of time there begins to be some discussion and some movement between the ALA and the ITU with respect to some attempt at a joint organizing campaign.

BROWN: Yes, right, right. I've forgotten exactly who made the initial approach on that one. Our council was by this time, though, beginning to talk about the need of changing the relationship with the other unions. I think there was some talk about merger, but not so much, because I don't think on the board there was a high level of understanding or perspective about what was occurring in the industry. But that we needed to minimize the aggravation between unions, that much, I think, was clear. An approach was made to the ITU and we had some meetings. The full board met with them and everybody made the usual expressions of desire to cooperate and so on. The ITU for their part made the same expressions.

A decision was made to set up a fund of $50,000--$50,000 by each union--for a joint effort in any area where it was agreed that an effort should be made, whether it was organizing or bargaining, or what. So we each put up $50,000. There were meetings and negotiations, and an agreement was drawn. Then it was decided

to name a committee, two from each union, to kind of implement the terms. Preceding that time there were some small subcommittees, I think about five, or four, from each union. I think I was on the subcommittee, along with Robinson and Swayduck and a couple of others, and we negotiated this agreement about the $50,000 and how it would work. Then the subcommittee was named, and they named Sandy Bevis, who is now president of the ITU, and Ike McLoughlin, who was assistant to the then president of the ITU--I guess that was Elmer Brown--and Jack Wallace, vice-president, and myself. I was then assistant. Or was I a councillor? Maybe I was a councillor then. I wasn't assistant, right. I was councillor from Toronto. Now, here's where Swayduck's influence, you know, his hand, is evident. . . .

HOFFMAN: His fine hand! Bringing you along.

BROWN: Right! As a councillor from Canada. All of a sudden. . . Bang! I was on the committee. Just like that!

Jack and I worked on that committee for about a year. We tried to resolve some very tacky situations. The most important one was Vancouver. I don't know to what extent you want me to go into any detail on this kind of thing. The ITU had negotiations going on in Vancouver in five shops. They were attempting to expand their jurisdictional coverage to take over paste makeup and ultimately what they called short-form jurisdiction in their constitution, which took it through to everything but the burning of the plate. That meant all of the jobs that we had except the actual plate! (laughter) And they were threatening to go on strike, and we met with them--Jack Wallace and I--several times. Finally, we met with them in Toronto for four days and nights, and we reached agreement with them. Then we wanted to reduce it to writing. The agreement essentially. . . . Gee, there's probably copies of it around somewhere. The agreement essentially said that over a period of time those who needed retraining out of the typesetting department would be retrained on a basis of one to them and one to us. One would join their union; one would come into ours. The theory being that what we needed to concern ourselves with was the job security and stability of those people in the plant. And since all of the effect was on the side of the typos, not on our side--we were getting all the jobs--then we had to decide how to allocate the new positions. One to them, one to us, one to them, one to us. We reached agreement.

At four in the morning, when we said, "Okay, let's put it all in writing," they came back and said, "Nothing doing." We found out that it violated their constitution, the agreement did. They'd reached agreement with us, but they checked and said that it violated their constitution. So we shook hands, and in bad grace each of us left the room. . . . Four days!

The strike started. It lasted for five years. They lost all the jobs in Vancouver, and our local president, Earl Kinney took them all over, the whole thing. Here they had a chance, you know. That's my construction of the situation, and Jack Wallace would say the same. I don't know that they would. Here we had a chance to resolve the matter with peace, jobs for those people who were affected by technological change, and an allocation to the union. This union would get. . . oh, no, we agreed that they could stay in their own union but that that union would get one job and this union would get the next one and that union, one, on an alternating basis. All new jobs created, we'd share them equally. We didn't have to. We were going to get them all. We <u>did</u> get them all. They struck, and the strike went on for five years.

HOFFMAN: Why was it contrary to their constitution? Was it <u>really</u> contrary?

BROWN: Yes. Because the constitution of the ITU provided for the short-term language which gave--from God--to them the jurisdiction up to the burning of the plate, and any agreement that violated that was contrary to the constitution.

HOFFMAN: Right, they just couldn't go along with it.

BROWN: So that kind of knuckle-hit it.

HOFFMAN: Did the political structure of the ITU play a part there, do you think? You know, you have the opposing party sitting there waiting in the wings to see what. . . .

BROWN: For anything. Yes, sure. But, of course, that's only a cop-out, you know. In the final analysis, that's a cop-out. You haven't even got the guts to reach some kind of agreement, even if it violates your constitution. Stand up and say, "This is correct. This is the best."

HOFFMAN: "We ought to change the constitution."

BROWN: "We ought to change, or something." So it's a cop-out, and I don't have much regard for that. I really don't.

GIEBEL: So what you're saying to us is that both with some tentative meetings, like Canary with the Photoengravers and your own participation on this subcommittee with the ITU, you were beginning to kind of see and test relationships with other internationals within the industry? So by the time you get to be special assistant to the president, you have already a certain sense that there is a movement in this direction, that it's inevitable, as far as you're concerned?

BROWN: Well, tie that with my being secretary of the Technological Committee where my perspective was being vastly changed by virtue of meetings with industry people, seeing what was on the drawing board. I had really an unusual opportunity to talk with other unions, to meet with companies, to see what was happening to the industry.

GIEBEL: Was your Toronto experience also important in that you did have pretty good cooperative relations with other locals in Toronto? Am I right in . . . .?

BROWN: I didn't have any contact at all with the presidents of the other locals except at the annual dinner dance. The ITU president came because he was a nice person. I never saw him or talked to him from one year to the next. The president of the Photoengravers Union, Les Young, we had named him on a couple of committees where there was an arbitration or something like that going, so we did have a pretty good relationship with the Photoengravers. With the Printing Pressmen, Bertie Churchill, as I recall, we used to invite him to our annual dance. I'm not even sure he came. I had no contact with him whatsoever. That doesn't mean it was a bad relationship. It just meant that each of us was going our merry way in each of our unions, going our merry way and there was not so much conflict as to make it impossible to . . . .

HOFFMAN: But you didn't have the kind of conflict that was going on in Vancouver?

BROWN: Oh, no, no. None at all. The Printing Pressmen in Toronto were not a very aggressive group; consequently, we got away with a lot of things that we perhaps shouldn't have. Or if there had been a more aggressive guy in the Printing Pressmen, we would have been into conflict with them.

HOFFMAN: Well, I think that brings us up to the 1959 convention where you become assistant to Pat Slater. That may be a good place to stop. I don't know.

BROWN: Yes, what happened at the convention in Portland, however, had all been determined.

HOFFMAN: Choreographed! (laughter)

BROWN: Choreographed, right. Orchestrated, as they say, in advance. Not so much that anybody had thought it all through, but that by that time I had been put in the position as assistant to the president. I'd already had time to get around the country and go to the local meetings so that when I went to Portland. . . .

HOFFMAN: How wide was the understanding that when Pat Slater took over and moved in as vice-president temporarily. . . .

BROWN: As president.

HOFFMAN: As president, I mean, temporarily, and you were made his assistant, how wide was the understanding in the union that that meant that you would run then for president?

BROWN: The only clear understanding that there was, was that Pat Slater would step in and only be there for a limited time, until January of 1960.

HOFFMAN: Well, he said that publicly, right?

BROWN: Yes, that much was very clear. When he agreed to do that, there was no clear understanding then as to who would even be the assistant to the president. As a matter of fact, I'm told that he tried to have Ken Schaeffer appointed as assistant. Or it might have been Phil Zeiger. I've forgotten. But he made the mistake of doing that without double checking with the powers that be. Then he wound up with me. So there wasn't any broad understanding beyond that.

At the educational conference, when George Canary resigned, there was a quick meeting called, and Swayduck offered me the presidency. Right there on the spot! Okay?

HOFFMAN: Yes.

BROWN: Right there in Cleveland. When the stuff was going on behind the scenes and everything, when Canary was getting ready to resign, he--Swayduck--offered me the presidency in effect, because he was saying, "We'll give you New York's backing, and I'll make sure you get enough around the country to be elected." And I turned it down. I don't know how widely that's known. I simply took the position that it was too soon for me, that the organization needed--and I recall these words very well--an orderly transition to make clear to the members that. . . .

END OF TAPE AND APPARENTLY END OF INTERVIEW

Kenneth Brown

Interview #II

Index

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #III

With

Kenneth Brown, President
Graphic Arts International Union

Date: February 26, 1975
Place: Washington, D. C.
Interviewers: Alice M. Hoffman
Greg Giebel

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with

KENNETH BROWN

Date: February 26, 1975
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HOFFMAN: I heard a story about you, Ken, when you first became president. There was some consternation expressed to your father in a bar, you know, "My God, where is the union going? Here we are with young Ken not really dry behind the ears yet and he's Swayduck's man. What is this going to mean?" And your father replied to this person, "Don't judge him by what he seems to be. Give him a chance. Judge him by what he does."

The person who told us this story obviously became a believer. So I think it would be interesting if you could talk a little bit about January, 1960. Here you are, the youngest International Union president. You've assumed the title perhaps, if not the power, at that point. So as you looked at the situation, what did you feel needed to be done? I mean, what kinds of chapter headings of tasks did you set for yourself?

BROWN: Well, I think you'd have to look back just a little bit at my own experience in order to understand my attitudes about some things. Having been a local president, full time, since I was twenty-eight, and then having come onto the International Council and having an opportunity to get some perspective about how the organization functioned and what some of its problems were, its strengths and some of its weaknesses, and coming from a local union that was, by any measure, a good local union, strong local union, well-steeped in tradition and solid trade unionism, I had a fair degree of confidence about the future, even though I was very, very young, and even though I was aware of the fact that I had been hand-picked for the position. The confidence did flow from my own experience as a local president and what I had observed at the International Council while I was a councillor and while I was assistant to the president.

The political situation at that time wasn't as clear to me as it became, for obvious reasons. We were in the middle of some interesting history right then. The first sign that began to

cause things to drop into place for me came very shortly after I was the president. At a council meeting Swayduck began to step up his attack on me, openly, if not at the first council meeting, undoubtedly the second one. He began to establish for everybody else that he was the guy that called all the shots, and he had to make it clear to everybody in the room, in case there was any doubt, that this was so. He began to attack me on approving contracts that did not, in his opinion or in Robinson's opinion, measure up to certain standards.

For example, we had a strike in Philadelphia in 1960; I believe it was 1960. It ran for a number of weeks. I was involved in the negotiations that immediately preceded the calling of that strike, and involved in the negotiations for four days and nights in the settlement of that strike. We felt we made a good settlement by, again, I think, any measure of what was happening around at that time. It was a successful strike, if you can find a successful strike, because it went for four or five weeks and the lines were tight, the city was shut down. After four or five weeks a settlement was reached, and that's that!

The attack began immediately following that settlement, on the settlement. When the final moment came and we had a couple of language problems to be resolved, I got ahold of Robinson's office and cleared some of the language through his office before making the settlement. I did that because that had been the pattern in the past. Where anybody made a settlement and it wasn't cleared by Robinson's office, that was the basis on which you were attacked immediately at the next council meeting. I had seen that.

So when the report came up at the next council meeting on the settlement of the Philadelphia strike, there were signs that had already been unofficially let out, that there was going to be an attack on me for being a party to the settlement. And there was, only it was on economics; it wasn't on the language. I had cleared the ground on the language question. They didn't dare attack that. So they attacked it on the basis of economics, which was absolutely ridiculous because it was a good settlement.

What came clear--and a very hard thing to realize--was that part of Swayduck's strategy in pressing so hard on other locals to call strikes or to prolong strikes was wrapped up in the fact that the city of Philadelphia draws about forty percent of its work out of the New York market. And it's true [that] they had lower labor costs than New York had at that time, so there may have been a slightly favorable labor-cost balance for Philadelphia. But this strike and the subsequent settlement did a lot to improve that situation. So the basis of the attack, then, was that I had not leveled the labor costs, which was a ridiculous objective after the fact. Nobody ever suggested we could.

So that was the pattern, right there, that began to start clicking in my mind. Why are these people attacking me so soon after taking over on an issue that I understand as well as they understand? And I know they understand it! They know damn well that we can't close that labor cost differential in one contract!

GIEBEL: Can I just interrupt to ask, do you think it was ever the intention of New York to have people close it all in one gap? Didn't they traditionally run their region in terms of dominance by negotiating as fine a contract as they could out of the New York market and then demand the other satellite cities to catch up, rather than go in, as perhaps Chicago or San Francisco would, with some kind of unanimity in relationship to their satellites? Minneapolis and St. Paul, Kansas City, St. Louis all seemed to be much more in cohesion with what Chicago was attempting to negotiate. At least, that's what I gather. There was a different relationship between New York and its satellite cities than Chicago maintained with its satellite cities.

BROWN: Yes, but there was also quite a difference at that time between the rates in New York and its satellite cities and the rates in Chicago and its satellite cities. Those satellite cities in the Midwest were closer to Chicago's rates, so they could afford to have a kindlier attitude. Swayduck was always shrill on this question, and in part with good reason, because there were major printing companies with tremendously different labor costs around the fringes of New York. So he was quite shrill about it because of this rate difference. It's true that the Chicago leadership tended to be more generous in their understanding of the weaknesses of smaller locals and their inability to bargain as effectively as Chicago. That was the attitude of George Canary and Harry Spohnholtz and, I believe [George] Gundersen as well. They tend to be a little more generous in their understanding. Swayduck was never. He was just shrill in his demands upon the satellite cities.

I think the significant thing, though, when you start asking yourself, But why the attack? Why the attack on this issue when we were making some progress? There's a letter in the record that I wrote to Swayduck in response to that attack where I argued that coordination of negotiations was the key and that it would take some years before we were able to bring about uniformity of rates in major competitive centers, that it couldn't be done overnight, and that to try to do it overnight would, in fact, be a mistake. That was the whole thrust. Well, he wasn't interested in that. We were already, within a few months, to a point where we were exchanging letters and telegrams. It was really quite amazing. I recall well that first summer when the question of collective bargaining came up and he just kept right on with his same approach as he'd used against George Canary, as he'd used against John Blackburn, in its intensity and the same level of vigor. He wasn't as nasty with

me in the sense of the kind of words he would use with Canary. He would call Canary inept and incompetent and that kind of thing. He didn't use those kinds of words with me; he used other words, but not those. That's the only distinction you could draw, and it's a distinction without a difference. (chuckling)

HOFFMAN: When you asked yourself the question, "Why is this happening," how did you account for it?

BROWN: Well, two things came out of that. One, the point I've already made, was that there was an advantage to him in his long-range plan for his local by having disruption, strikes. If he can't have the same labor costs as Philadelphia, at least a strike would cause the work to come back into New York, and it would take a long time for it to get back to Philadelphia again. That's a pretty crude, harsh way to talk about Swayduck, but I'm convinced that that was absolutely so, because I saw evidence of it as well when I was assistant to the president in the San Francisco strike. Swayduck was involved with his not-so-fine Italian hand, and his involvement was designed to prolong the strike, not to settle it. So that when I saw that, and when I saw this in Philadelphia, a very short time later, that much came clear.

The second thing that came clear was that they were not about to permit any International president to develop a base of his own. He wasn't going to wait for me to develop a base; he was going to start undermining my position from Day One. That meant that, at the very next convention, he very graciously would permit me to run again and then start the attack immediately right after, if necessary. So that you were constantly beholden to him. I saw that they were going to preserve what I have chosen to call a "vacuum" in the leadership by their attacks.

Robinson was a party to that same kind of thing, although he constantly played the role with me during that period of "Well, I don't understand Swayduck. You know him. He's just Eddie. Don't take him too seriously, Ken ." That was Robinson's role; he was sort of trying to keep me from biting the bullet and fighting the bastard at every turn of the road. So Robinson's role then was as a peacemaker. I think Robinson also realized that another fantastic political upheaval in the organization would probably bring them down, curiously enough, because there was great and deep resentment about what happened to Canary, resentment toward New York, great and deep resentment. All I had to do was stand in a corner and be president for a couple of years, and if they tried to bring me down on any other basis, on any just straight political attack, I think they would have brought themselves down in any case. It would have been true no matter who was the president, no matter who was the president.

So once you turn the corner in your own mind about the motives of somebody, once you turn that corner, then you tend to be a good deal more realistic in your appraisal and evaluation of them in the past and in the current situation. But as I said, there have to be a couple of clicks that occur; and those clicks occurred pretty damn fast, and they accelerated the rate at which they occurred by their own contact.

So the political machinations began. They took all kinds of forms. The first thing they wanted to do was discharge a long-standing determination to boot Donald Stone out of office. Boy, they were rubbing their hands with glee! They were going to have me be a party to that very quickly and called a meeting with Chicago, New York--Swayduck, Spohnholtz, Robinson, [Leon] Wickersham, and myself. The plan was to run Wickersham against Stone, and Spohnholtz was a reluctant participant to that. He disliked Stone intensely, but he didn't really have much stomach for political in-fighting; that wasn't Spohnholtz' speed at all. So Swayduck was busy engineering this arrangement that if New York and Chicago got together and ran Wickersham against the secretary-treasurer [Stone], that would do it. I'm sure Nick talked to you about that. I don't know that I need to go into any detail about it.

We [Wickersham and Brown] went from the hotel back to our own hotel, walking along the street, and both of us had real serious doubts about what had just happened. We expressed them and finally agreed that I would call Spohnholtz and tell him that we were not going to get in on this. Spohnholtz then expressed his concern about the whole thing. Well, it was then only a matter of telling Swayduck the deal was off, which infuriated him, because it was one more of his little plots that didn't come off.

There was another one--I've just forgotten how the detail went--where we were going to create an executive vice-presidency and Wickersham was going to take that position. The International officers at the time--the vice presidents--rebelled; they really rebelled on that one because they saw it as diminishing their own relative importance and standing. They rebelled! We had an officers' meeting and I remember it was quite a fierce one. Swayduck saw an opportunity--it was a classic example of his kind of machinations--an opportunity to shaft me, so that when it came before the Council board, he, who had joined with me in the design of this plan and all the background music had been set, did a back-flip at the Council meeting and supported the officers. But the real reason he did it was because he was mad at Wickersham and me for having frustrated his attempt to get rid of Stone in the earlier one.

But if you can imagine just going from one day to the next on this kind of stuff! We often used to say at the time, "Gee, one of these days I'm going to get a chance to run the union!" Because we were spending all our time in strategy and plotting and whatever.

HOFFMAN: Why do you think he wanted to get rid of Stone so badly?

BROWN: Well, I think Stone knew where some of the bodies were buried. Stone was never a fan of Swayduck's in any real way and was never a willing partner to what Swayduck was doing. Swayduck always felt that Stone, in his own quiet way--not openly, but in his own quiet way--was resisting everything that Swayduck was trying to do over the years and sort of undermining his plotting and planning. That just infuriated him, because Stone wouldn't debate with him. That wasn't Donald's speed. But he would just let the crap flow by him, Donald would, and then go about his merry way quietly undermining some of the projects that Swayduck had worked on. That, I know, infuriated Swayduck.

But I know it was two things. Stone knew the history too well, had been too close, had seen too much. That was another thing that contributed to the decline of Robinson, particularly because more people were around for a long enough period of time to understand what he was doing. You know, as long as there was a constant turnover, he was a very impressive man, highly intelligent, well-informed, had a better perspective about the organization and the industry than anyone that I came in contact with. So that he could take you very readily for a period of time, three or four years. But the more people were around for a longer period of time, they began to see through him. This was one of the problems with Stone; he always had a great reservation about Robinson, and he always caused this silent resistance to Swayduck that annoyed Swayduck so much.

Well, once the battle was joined, then it was only a matter of time as to which way it was going to go. I dallied with the idea of saying "To hell with it!" I was thirty-four years of age and I could have gone in a variety of directions at that time had I wanted to. And here I was getting caught up with the kind of political fighting. . . .

HOFFMAN: What do you mean by "a variety of directions?"

BROWN: Well, I could have gone into industry, in some job in industry, very easily. But here I was caught up in the worst kind of political fighting on a highly personalized level. People didn't discuss issues; everything was people, which I really wasn't crazy about. I have learned to work with it, but it never thrilled me at that age. So I had some pretty hard decisions to make myself. In fact, I took a little time off, a couple of weeks, and did a little sorting in my own mind and decided that I was going to fight them.

HOFFMAN: On what basis? What made you decide to fight them?

BROWN: Well, I suppose there were a lot of things. I don't know that I pin-pointed anything. It was primarily a matter of knowing that we had a good union, knowing that there were a lot of good people, knowing that I was in a good position to swing a lot of weight. I did have some ideas about bringing about mergers, and I would be tossing all that aside and turning it back over to these same characters that had been manipulating the organization for so long. Plus the fact that I had a great deal of confidence in Wickersham. I wasn't standing . . . .

HOFFMAN: Alone.

BROWN: . . . alone, which is an awfully important thing. In other words, my back was covered. You need that kind of a thing when you're going to get into a fight like that.

HOFFMAN: What was the basis of your confidence in Wick?

BROWN: Well, we had a concentrated course in getting to know one another. For over a year we commuted from our respective cities and lived in hotels together. So not only did we work every day when we were in New York, we ate together and lived in the same hotel. So that we really got to know one another in a hell of a hurry and under stress and in a whole variety of ways. So that it wasn't long before it became quite apparent that I had an associate of some unusual qualities, and apart from being intelligent and willing to take on considerable responsibility and variety of work load, he was also personally a very decent man. So we got all that jammed together in about a year. It was like coming to know somebody over a period of ten years.

HOFFMAN: Right. What about your relationship with some other people now? When you first begin to assume power, you right away find yourself involved in the San Francisco strike and you go out there and you start to work with Ted Brandt, who was certainly recognized at that point in the union's affairs as more or less a Swayduck supporter. Did something happen in the San Francisco strike that made you feel that Ted Brandt was a possible ally and supporter of the union and not of Swayduck?

BROWN: No, not at the time of the San Francisco thing, particularly. Swayduck was brutal in his treatment of Ted Brandt. He referred to him in disparaging terms, you know, that he had been in too many prize fights and got his brains rattled. No one was able to see Ted and his abilities because you always had this cloud in front of you of this constant barrage and abuse that Swayduck heaped on him at board meetings. Everytime that Teddie opened his mouth, Swayduck would make some nasty remark about it. So Ted had a particular problem in getting

serious consideration as a person and as an officer of the organization. I didn't see it particularly in San Francisco because we kept Ted out of the way completely. He was just one of the people around there. So it was quite a while before I came to feel that Ted Brandt had certain abilities that were useful, especially useful in a union. He could make a basic appeal to people emotionally. We used to kid him that he was a closer; he was the kind of guy that would go in and wrap something up, a set of negotiations or whatever. We always referred to Ted as the "closer," and it was true. He would move to wrap things up and brush aside a lot of the things that he called "all that crap." But it was effective; it was effective in some situations particularly where you had some strength. In a local union or a set of bargaining where you had strength, Ted was particularly effective in that kind of a role. His New York background never made him very effective in Texas or places where they talk about Yankees and talk about New Yorkers and automatically drop them into a category and you just never get onto the first page with the employer.

So it was some time before I came to appreciate Ted. Ted also worked at being a go-between between Swayduck and me. He was constantly saying, "Now, Ken, I'm a lot older than you. I know you're a smart guy and all that stuff, but I want to tell you a few facts of life." Ted would lecture me, you see, about anything--what he thought I was doing right or wrong. So it took awhile for our relationship to adjust.

Gus Petrakis is a very nice man and he was the opposite to Teddy when it came to bargaining. Gus used to penny the employer to death. He'll move a penny, and he used that expression--a couple of pennies, move a penny. He'd been a representative for a good many years in the Midwest and had a good relationship with the employers, which included playing golf with some of them. He saw them all as nice people, and the last thing he ever wanted to do was call a strike. Consequently, Gus had behind him a whole trail of one-shop negotiations where the people were not satisfied that they'd gotten everything that was there. Gus just believed it was better to have an even relationship with an employer over the years; more the Midwest attitude with respect to collective bargaining, as distinguished from what you've got around New York.

GIEBEL: So there was a Western [Printing Co.] strike during this period, too. I think it was around the early sixties that Poughkeepsie went out?

BROWN: Prior to that.

GIEBEL: It was prior?

BROWN: Yes, it was 1954, as a matter of fact. I was on the council when just the tail end of the Western question was still being kicked around. I'm fairly sure it was 1954.

So with Petrakis there was always a fairly pleasant relationship that ran on for a good many years, right up until recent times when it got a little tacky. In those days the relationship was fine. Gus wasn't making any waves with anybody. Chicago sort of cast a protective umbrella over Gus, so we didn't expect too much from him at Council meetings. Gus wasn't an effective guy to articulate his own ideas. So you didn't expect too much out of him at the Council meetings, which also meant he came under fire from Swayduck in a disparaging way.

Who else was around? Jack Wallace. The relationship was always fair with Jack in those early days. I think all of them, of course, viewed me as an upstart and potentially a threat to them because of my relations with Swayduck and with Robinson. They knew that there had been almost a syndrome in the organization where somebody's head had to be put on the platter every so often. I don't know what syndrome you'd call that! (laughter) But it was one I made sure was brought to an end very promptly!

HOFFMAN: It was not going to be your head!

BROWN: I think they saw me as being a party to that and wondered next where the axe was going to fall. So they were careful in their relationship with me, but they weren't confidants of mine.

GIEBEL: There seem to be all of these people out in the wings, kind of waiting for someone to put together an alternative; Spohnholtz and you over the Stone issue were able to establish some credibility that you weren't simply going to fall in line behind Eddie Swayduck's next call. Were you finding that you were able to make some appeals to Brandt and to Spohnholtz and to Wallace and to Stone, on the basis that you were going to forge a new direction?

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE

GIEBEL: They didn't talk a great deal about this. They were all pretty effectively isolated from each other, as I understand it. How do you start to put this together?

BROWN: Well, nobody talked about it as an issue in the early stages, because it wasn't wise to talk about it openly. Swayduck's whole strategy, and Robinson's whole strategy, was to keep everybody divided and keep a vacuum. Or, if they couldn't preserve a vacuum, to dominate the leadership. No one of the officers felt strong enough to even talk about it. Every-

body's idea was just 'keep your head down and don't make too many waves.' But I did start to call meetings of the officers during my predecessors' days, both Slater and George Canary. It was customary to call a meeting of the officers at the time of the Council meeting. They'd get together one evening or something. Well, that was little more than a social get-together and wasn't effective at all, so that Swayduck never saw that as the beginnings of collusion against him.

But I began to call meetings of the officers in between Council meetings, and that was really the start. When we started comparing notes and got a little easier, they with me particularly, once they figured out that I wasn't going to join in any wholesale removal of the officers, I think they began to relax a little bit more. I couldn't tell you when that became evident to them. I suspect that it came about at my first convention, which would be 1962 in Miami. In that convention they saw the beginnings of the fight with Swayduck that I was waging openly; I wasn't using them at all, wasn't calling on them to join me in it. I was working through allies in the locals, Chicago particularly, and Philadelphia, and wherever. After that convention I think the officers saw that I was willing to fight, that I wasn't placing undue demands on them, and that I wasn't directing any campaigns against them. I think once that happened, then all of a sudden they felt willing to be identified with me in any kind of things. In the Council meeting it began to show up.

HOFFMAN: Well, it seems to me that one of the things that happened is this move to say to Ben Robinson, "You cannot be general council for both the International and for Local One. You cannot serve two masters." And I'm wondering if you could give the background or the orchestration for that, why you came to that position, what kind of effort, if any, beforehand you might have made to build support for that position within the Council. It seems to me that was a pretty successfully waged battle.

BROWN: Yes. Well, you have to bear in mind that in all of the battles with Swayduck, I said that Robinson was playing the role of the friendly advisor and "Don't pay any attention to Eddie. He really doesn't mean it. He still thinks the world of you." He used to say, "It's like a fantastic love affair that's having its problems." (laughter) You know, I almost tired of hearing that kind of stuff from people.

But, in any case, as the struggle with Swayduck increased in intensity, Robinson, who was counselor to both groups, was being called upon now to give advice to both groups. I began to get the feeling that he was giving advice to both groups and not necessarily the same kind of advice. Several little incidents occurred--when I found out Swayduck had been meeting with Robinson on precisely the same issue and then meeting with me. There's a

vague stirring in my mind of a council meeting once when somebody overheard Robinson and Swayduck having a discussion on an issue that I was going to be meeting with Robinson about later. When he met with me, he didn't talk to me about [it].

HOFFMAN: This was somebody in the hotel room next to them?

BROWN: Well, that's another story!

HOFFMAN: That's not the same story?

BROWN: That's not the same one, no. They were having lunch in the patio and didn't realize they were being overheard, and I think it was one of the officers who came to me and told me what had been said by Robinson. I was meeting with him later in the day on the same issue, and he talked differently to me. So the conflict was clear; it was apparent. I began to see things like that.

So, as I say, when the fight intensified, then I had every reason to be saying to my associates, officers, councillors, privately and individually, "If we're going to have this kind of a battle, I'm entitled to the kind of counsel that is clearly serving myself and the International. I cannot have somebody that I'm in doubt about with respect to his objectivity in the matter, and it's clear that his loyalties would go first to Swayduck.

I had meetings with the officers about it, and they were all in agreement. They didn't want to lose Ben; everybody wanted him; they all wanted him. So I said to the officers, "Well, okay, what I'd like to do is meet with Robinson and tell him just that--that 'we want you to work for the International; we don't think it's possible for you to serve both parties, and we'd like you to work for the International'."

GIEBEL: Was the issue clearly drawn then between the question that there was going to be a battle joined and that you needed separate council? Or was it simply a question of removing the relationship between the New York and the International counsel? Or was it a little bit of both?

BROWN: Well, it was a bit of both. I must tell you that there were different things going on. I was working on several things that had to do with the business of removing New York's influence and control. Not just the lawyer, but there was the matter of Pat Donnelly, who was editor of the magazine. She was clearly Swayduck's appointee for practical purposes and responded to him more than she did to anybody else. There was a matter of the trustees and the constitution. The trustees came from the New York Local. There was the matter of the

Referendum Board. The Referendum Board came from the New York Local by constitutional definition. I was busy cutting off all of these automatic links. There was the matter of the public relations counsel, who was also public relations counsel to Swayduck. I fired him.

So I was doing a lot of things like that to shake out all these sort of "fingers of control." But Robinson was the key one; that was the key one. All the rest wouldn't have meant anything if I couldn't have straightened out the problem of Robinson. So I was working on all of these things at the same time. Had I said to the officers and the councillors at any time that I'd be in favor of firing Ben Robinson, the whole program would have fallen on its face. We had to take the position with the officers, with the individual councillors, that we were doing everything we could to get Robinson to just work for the International union.

We had a meeting; Wickersham and I had a meeting with Robinson and I proposed just that to him. I said, "It cannot go on. In my opinion, it's impossible for you to objectively serve both parties." He insisted that he could. I said, "Well, not in my opinion. And I'm proposing to you, Ben, that you make a decision. I'm formally proposing to you that you come to work for the International exclusively, represent the International exclusively."

That was an unpleasant meeting. Ben didn't want it, and he didn't want to give me an answer. I finally had to press him for an answer, and he told me that he could not leave Swayduck's local, representing them, and did not feel that he should be compelled to drop the representation of the International either. That's when we had the Council meeting and I forced the question to a vote. As you know, I think there were fifteen votes in the Council, and it was eleven to four in favor. We put the question, as I recall, to Robinson that day--that the general counsel not represent any locals. I've forgotten just how it was framed, but that was the thrust of it. He brought Matty Silverman with him to the meeting. That was up in Mt. Gabriel Club in Quebec. They fought it behind the scenes. They fought it; they worked on councillors; they worked on John Petitti; they worked on Ed Donahue. There were a few people I didn't know which way they would go. There were four I knew absolutely would go against me. That was Swayduck and Hansen out of New York; Ted Meyers, and Newton Quick, the councillor from Schenectady, I believe it was. They were all dependent on Swayduck for election to the Council. So there was no way they were going to jump ship from him.

Then, on the other side of the coin, equally strong the other way, was Chicago and the Canadian councillors and the Mountain councillors. Well, no, we weren't sure about Donahue; we weren't sure which way he'd vote. And we weren't sure which way John Petitti

would vote. Everybody else was in the clear, so there were only really two votes that we were afraid of. Now, bear in mind, this is the first time that the officers were required to declare themselves in direct conflict with Swayduck, the first time I'd ever asked them!

HOFFMAN: But you were pretty sure how Don Stone would feel, and Jack Wallace?

BROWN: Oh, yes. I'd met already with the officers and lined them up. We'd even gone so far as to say, "Not only do I want your vote, but I want each one of you to express yourselves, each one of you! This is an issue where everybody's got to be on the record, nobody laying back now." And everybody spoke. But I demanded that of them as the price for being party to this whole thing. But this is the first time they were ever required to come hard up against him.

GIEBEL: As we look back at it now, Robinson's refusal to accept moving to the International, was that predicated on the fact that he thought he could still have both, or because he never would have left Swayduck?

BROWN: Well, it's both. He, I'm sure, felt that he could have both, and he also knew that he couldn't have left Swayduck under any circumstances. I think they both knew too much about one another to ever be on the outs, far too much. So it was both. He just didn't believe what was happening to him. He was confident that after twenty-five years as the general counsel, this whippersnapper [means himself] would be brushed aside and they would retain Ben Robinson. It's absolutely fascinating!

I gather that you've been told the story of how we listened to the plotting in the next room on the morning when Robinson and Silverman were plotting how they were going to attack me and attack the issue at the Council meeting later that morning. So that we had the advantage of some of their strategy.

HOFFMAN: You'll always feel fondly of that hotel for its thin walls!

BROWN: Absolutely! (laughter) As I recall, their plan was [that] Matty was to go on first and then Robinson later. So I just went down and told them, "Ben, you're the one who is going to do the speaking." Here's the Council sitting there waiting for the meeting to start, and I had Robinson sitting on the edge of a ping pong table. I said, "Ben, tell me what you're going to say." He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "What are you going to say? We're having this debate, and you've asked for time on the agenda. Now, what are you going to say? It's my meeting, and I don't want people in here unless I know what they're up to." Well, he'd never been talked to that way in the

organization. And I was quite clear that I just wouldn't let him open his mouth unless he told me what he was going to say. Of course, I knew what he had plotted to say, which helped! (laughter)

Well, then he was so infuriated that he just said, "Well, I'll just say a few words." And he really did say a few words and wound up by saying, "Ken, you can come and swim in my swimming pool anytime you like." That was his gracious exit.

But what they did do immediately following the meeting was to prepare a lengthy document--I don't know whether you've seen it or not--and mailed it out to every local. They were confident at that point in time that there would be such an uprising, a welling up of grave concern over the fact that Brown is kicking out the general counsel, that they sent this vicious statement out to every president of every local. We heard later that they were shocked, and it was the thing that really finished them: only one letter of response came into Robinson's office, only one. The master stroke! They really thought they were going to have me impeached, and there was only one letter of response [that] came in. I think Matty Silverman told me that, which was devastating to them.

So that once that happened, then the fight was clearly joined; from there on it was a matter of the officers getting a good deal more confidence as officers. Quite frankly, up to that point any vice-president who crossed Swayduck would be out of office at the next convention. They just couldn't afford to cross him. He had twenty percent of the membership in his local, and he delivered the highest ratio of ballots of any local, I think, in the entire International. That meant it was way out of proportion! Chicago would turn up about half of its membership, and then they'd split. So the only other large bloc of votes was ineffective when it came to counteracting Swayduck's.

HOFFMAN: Ninety-five percent of his local would vote very quickly.

BROWN: Yes, and they all voted the way he wanted them to. So that he had that kind of power, and people were fearful of it, with good reason. Because it had been demonstrated that he could remove a president, that he engineered the end of Ed Stone as vice-president.

HOFFMAN: Well, if I could just take a minute to be a little bit philosophical here. It seems to me that, if you look at labor history, there are a number of unions in which the general counsel has played a very, very important role, a policy-making role, in the early history of the organization. That is not so true as it once was; there is much more of a recognition. But just after this business that you were involved in with Ben Robinson, for example, this same kind of thing

becomes a big issue in the Steelworkers Union as to what is the role of Arthur Goldberg. Is he actually sitting there conducting negotiations and engaging in collective bargaining on behalf of the Steelworkers Union? And if he is, how come? Because he's not responsible to the membership as an appointed staff person. This becomes a big issue in the election of I. W. Abel as president.

I'm wondering if you or the councillors saw the issue in that kind of way. That here's Ben Robinson and he certainly ought to be doing what the president of the union tells him to do, even if what the president tells him to do is wrong. The president should make the mistakes, not the general counsel. I wonder if that kind of feeling was developing. In other words, were you anticipating something which I see as sort of coming to be a general movement in the direction of clear understanding or what a staff position ought to be?

BROWN: Well, I've long felt very strongly about the business of elected versus appointed people; long felt very strongly about the use of professionals, whether it be a lawyer or an actuary or an advisor of some kind. That they have a place, but that place has to be adjacent to, not on the same level in the organizational structure, but a line that runs out to them. They are not a part of the policy-making apparatus of the organization and should always be kept in that position. I didn't have any trouble at all with that.

If you read Fred Munson's history*, the problem was that we had a growing organization. Robinson apparently was willing to provide the intellectual guidance to the organization that was needed at the time--needed today for that matter--but at one point in time he was able to provide it and maintained his own perspective with respect to his own role. So that we were lucky to have somebody working for us at that point in time. But he lost the perspective; Robinson lost the perspective. He's the one who felt that it was his union. And I repeat, it is evidenced by the fact that he sent [the document] out to every local union. Whoever heard of the general counsel of the union sending out an attack on the International president unless he figured the attack was going to be successful? Otherwise, why would you do it? So he's the one who lost his perspective.

There was no way ever that Ben Robinson was ever going to become an adviser to the International president. It had to be a new lawyer to start a new relationship.

*Fred C. Munson, History of the Lithographers Union (Cambridge, Mass.: The Wertheim Committee on Industrial Relations, 1963).

HOFFMAN: Yes, you see this in his talks before the convention. He gets up and says, you know, "Our collective bargaining strategy is going to be so and so. . . ."

BROWN: Right.

HOFFMAN: ". . . We are going to try and get universal language; we are going to try and move in the direction of coordinated bargaining." He makes a big speech on what it means to disaffiliate from the AFL-CIO and on jurisdiction. It's clear that he is. . . .

BROWN: Calling all the shots.

HOFFMAN: . . . not set on implementing policy; he is staking out the boundaries of what policy is going to be.

BROWN: And that was traditional in our organization. Each convention Ben made his great speech, right up until . . . where?. . . up until Miami, I guess, in 1962. I don't know whether he even made a speech there. I wouldn't let him sit on the platform; that was enough to slay him! But we were staking out new territory at that stage of the game.

I did not know what other unions were suffering with this problem. I did know that McLellan was very influential in the Printing Pressmen's Union, but he did not have the same dominance that Robinson seemed to have. [Gerhard P.] Van Arkel, in the ITU [International Typographical Union], however, staked out the ITU's jurisdictional territory for years and did the same thing at conventions. In many respects I used to feel that Robinson saw himself in competition with Van Arkel. Robinson was always very disrespectful of McLellan. I don't think he thought much of him as a lawyer at all, but he had a grudging respect for Van Arkel, and I think he saw himself in a competitive sense with Van Arkel. Van Arkel was to the ITU what Ben Robinson was to the ALA. So it was a fantastic ego thing in part. It was also a very lucrative ego thing, very lucrative. See, as Robinson would stake out the jurisdictional claims of the union, he then had to go and implement them with respect to NLRB [National Labor Relations Board] cases. So it was a self-employment project in some respects.

The same was true with the language. He'd write language that hewed to the new laws, right to the line of the new laws. Then they all had to be tested. Who tested them? He did. Nobody ever said, "Do we need the Goddamn stuff in the first place?" Because he'd come in with it and say, "Here it is." That was one of the first things we did when we got rid of him. We just cleaned out all that Goddamn language. No more battles did we have with the NLRB over interpretation of clauses.

GIEBEL: Yes, that's seen as a very successful part of the history.

HOFFMAN: Yes, I think we might talk about that. What is this whole issue of "language?"

BROWN: Well, the theory, at least as advanced by Robinson, was that the passage of the Taft-Hartley and subsequently Landrum-Griffin, put some very real restraints on what could or could not be bargained into a collective bargaining agreement. The law, however, was unclear, and in secondary boycott, in farmed-out work, in sub-contracting, all these fields, there had not been tests on many of the issues. The nature of our business is that it's a service business as well as a primary industry. So that you've got all this secondary boycott and you've got all the question of farming out and you've got all the question of subcontracting work, just as in the clothing industry. Robinson saw himself as being in the forefront of writing the kind of language that extracted out of the law everything permissible and retained as much strength for the union as possible. He was quite willing to have his language tested and then revise it slightly and tested and revise it slightly. But what he needed to have was much more control in the approval of any clauses in bargaining, which was where all the fight was on the Council. Because, if anybody approved a piece of language without Robinson's personal stamp on it, he just was castigated before the entire Council. So that he just got everybody so up-tight on the question of language, but he needed that so he could keep refining his language.

Now the question was whether that language was really worth anything when the smoke all cleared. One thing that I do know is that our approach on language, as an organization, cost us dearly with respect to relationships with the employers; it really cost us dearly.

HOFFMAN: What about relationships with the rank and file?

BROWN: They didn't even understand.

HOFFMAN: It would seem to me that language would not be an issue that they would understand and perhaps would resent having to really go to the wall on an issue like this.

BROWN: Yes. If you take a close look at the San Francisco strike in 1959 and 1960, language was very much an issue there. To members, as far as they were concerned, it was economics. They could care less about the language! And said so! All the terrible resentment toward the International was for the most part based on the fact that we were apparently running a strike for some obscure language. It was question-

able, in their minds at least, as to whether it was valuable language in the first instance.

HOFFMAN: Yes. One of the interesting stories that Ted Brandt told me was that he went to Harry Bridges for his support and he was informed that if he told Harry Bridges that the strike had anything to do with language, he would be done, because Harry Bridges' attitude was, "If you got me, what the hell do you need language for?" Which strikes me as being perhaps, you know, a profound understanding of the nature of politics. I would say that's probably true--if you've got Harry Bridges, what do you need language for?

BROWN: Right, except every city doesn't have Harry Bridges.

HOFFMAN: That's true.

BROWN: That's the only problem. Robinson's theory was sort of the domino theory. You launch your project in this city and then you begin to roll it into other cities. The more cities you get it in, the more likely you are to get it into the next one. We still use that approach.

GIEBEL: Robinson would probably respond by saying that language was clearly important if we look at questions of jurisdiction and what they were able to do with Atlanta and the Foote-Davies [case] and the question of carving out units. I can remember reading many of his speeches to the conventions, in which he would describe the history of the importance of having gotten NLRB approval of this. . . .

BROWN: Well, there are two questions there, though.

GIEBEL: It's a different. . . .?

BROWN: Yes. Language had to do with collective bargaining agreements, and the long battle to establish before the NLRB the traditional jurisdictional definition of the Lithographers Union was the one he was referring to there. The Foote and Davies case was to get decisiion after decision which established clearly in everybody's minds and on the record that the lithographic unit could be carved out of a plant full of graphic arts employees. He was very successful in establishing before the NLRB the appropriateness of that unit.

HOFFMAN: I've always thought that it was absolutely weird that this was going on while you were affiliated with the CIO, with the principle of industrial unionism. Now, I know you weren't a party to this, but I wonder if you've ever given any thought to some of these meetings that took place with Phil Murray. I mean, there's no record of what happened. But my God, I think to myself those must have been weird meetings!!

BROWN: Well, I think it's probably very simple. I heard somebody in a speech the other day make reference to those meetings. I suspect that there weren't many meetings, and I suspect that Phil Murray said, "We'd be happy to have you in our organization; the CIO will make no demands upon you; we will grant to you a charter which gives you the exclusive right to represent lithographers." Just that. And we just went our merry way.

Now, there are stories about some negotiations at that time with Murray that gave litho units to us in all of the can companies where the Steelworkers had the balance of the plant. I haven't any knowledge of those meetings. I have never talked to anybody that was involved in them or whatever. Robinson never mentioned it to me, either. For a long time, when I was assistant to the president, I used to meet with Robinson once a week, or more often that that if possible. He'd talk to me about the history of the organization and really did a great deal to expand my own perspective and understanding. I never heard any discussion in any detail about the time they jumped and went into the CIO. I really suspect they just said, "You got it. We're happy to have you."

HOFFMAN: As part of Phil Murray's empire-building?

BROWN: Yes. We were a clean union. We had a good reputation and a clean union. At that time, how many members would we have had? Fifteen thousand? Well, he had locals that big, I suspect, didn't he?

HOFFMAN: Right. Oh, he certainly did.

BROWN: So that what was a monumental thing to us was an incidental bit of organizing for him.

GIEBEL: Maybe it would be fair at this point just to take a different track and say we've taken care of some of the political questions that preceded a real policy change at the International level.

Maybe you could look back and try to sketch for us what you saw to be the state of the industry at the time that you were beginning now to have to map out independent political and policy decisions.

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE

BROWN: The lithographic industry was growing, in fact surging, around 1960. All the signs were good in spite of occasional slight recessions. The lithographic segment of the industry had several things going for it. One, it was becoming far more economical to produce ink on paper by litho as opposed to letterpress. So here we were in a market situation where each year there was an increase in volume of putting ink on paper. And then, within that framework, was the lithographic segment increasing its share of that total market, including its share of the new market. So that with those two things going for us in 1960, it was the best of both worlds.

The bad things were that on the horizon at that time were the beginning of the introduction of lithography in the printing of boxboard, and the beginning of boxboard companies putting in their own printing departments. They had always, up to that point, had their cartons printed by our members. Now they just were doing a logical extension of the manufacture of the box and putting the printing press in. Because the Paper Workers Union or the Pulp and Sulphide, was the union in the balance of the plant, they certainly didn't come to us. If the company had its say, they would more likely go to the Printing Pressmen because of the lower rates and less trouble in the manning, or to the Paper Box and Specialty Workers, a segment of the Printing Pressmen's Union. So we got into some very bitter fights right around that time with the industry.

I've learned since that the Box Makers Institute, like an employers' association, had some in-depth discussion about this expanding printing opportunity in their industry and the union problems, and they made the decision not to come with the Lithographers Union, in part because we were getting such visibility in our fights over language, our strikes, our obvious militancy as compared to these other unions. They evidently made a decision not to willingly go with the Lithographers Union. We had a long and difficult strike at K.V.P. Sutherland in Kalamazoo, Michigan, over this very question. They fought us for a couple of years. So that on the one hand we had a growth situation; on the other hand, within certain specialized segments of the industry, we were running head-on into some very real problems.

HOFFMAN: Was this happening in can, too, at this time? Or is that later?

BROWN: In the metal decorating?

HOFFMAN: Yes.

BROWN: No, it wasn't happening there at that time at all. Metal decorating was just lumbering along in its same old cocoon. And this business of putting ink on boxes expanded to wrappers and all kinds of surfaces

in packaging, and it was more likely that the company would put its own printing department into its own packaging operation. So by this time we began to see that we were losing a lot of plants.

That brought into focus the question of organizing. When you talk about organizing, that brought in the question of carving out units. When you talk about carving out units, that brings in the question of competition from other unions because you necessarily are going to be intruding on somebody's jurisdiction when you carve out.

So here we were in an expansion period, as far as the industry was concerned, tremendous opportunities, but our own policies with respect to carving out were causing us to lose as many as we were winning. As a matter of fact, I don't remember the figures, but I remember the general statement at the Portland, Oregon, convention in 1959 when Robinson told how many board cases he had won. But in the Council meeting it came out that we'd lost the elections in virtually every one of these cases.

HOFFMAN: Well, I believe George Meany pointed that out to you.

BROWN: Yes, he did, when we left the AFL-CIO. He did. So that, as I saw the problem then, that's really what turned me strongly in the direction of mergers, because I could see that there wasn't any way that we were going to modify the competition with other unions. Almost every campaign we had, the Printing Pressmen had their people in campaigning as well. Organizing would be extremely difficult [even] without somebody working against you.

So I could sort of feel a sense of frustration if one would look ahead ten years or fifteen years, or twenty years. I could see that we were just going to be doing precisely the same thing. Our problem was that we were running like hell and not making any progress, at least as I saw it. The industry was getting bigger, and our share of the pie was getting smaller, because we were a small organization with limited resources. At that time I suspect we had about eleven representatives, maybe ten, and the notion that ten representatives could organize this whole Goddamn country is so silly. They couldn't organize enough to pay their own salary and expenses.

So as you thought about that: My God, are these our total resources? We've got all this competition from other unions that we were deliberately provoking by our own approach to things. If one looks ahead five years, ten years, fifteen years--and we don't do something fundamental to change that--we'll be precisely where we are, twenty years from now, only worse off because the industry is expanding! Far worse off! Then it'll back up into our

bargaining because at that time we represented a high degree of lithographers' percentage, so our bargaining was very effective. But the more the industry expanded and the fewer members we represented in the total picture, that backed up in our bargaining. I could see that fifteen years later we'd be worse off; we'd be weaker; we'd be still spending fantastic energy, time, manpower. So that's what led me to begin the pursuit of merger and also what led me to begin the pursuit of liaison with the employers.

The reason for thinking of both of those things together is that I felt that we had needlessly angered the employer community by the dominance of our lawyer, by our policy with respect to language, by the fact that they couldn't talk to anybody on any local union level, but had to be cleared through New York. And it was always this anti-New York attitude. Then, when you add to that a lawyer that was out of the reach of the employers, we built up a fantastic well of bad feeling, mistrust, distrust. So I felt it important that we work on that, but I couldn't work on it until the lawyer problem was solved--not effectively. And I couldn't work on merger.

Ben Robinson used to say to me that he was very much in favor of merger. When the chips finally came down and the fight was on with Swayduck over the merger question, Robinson was advising both sides at the time; that was when I realized that I'd never be able to bring off a merger until we had separated the lawyer from the International or from the local, one or the other, preferably from the International.

HOFFMAN: Well, as you began to think about merger, what strategies did you develop? I know that one of the first merger discussions was actually called by the [Newspaper] Guild.

BROWN: Well, yes, there had been some earlier stuff. You see, we had a pact with the ITU back in 1959, I think it was.

GIEBEL: Seems to have been a little earlier than that.

BROWN: Was it?

GIEBEL: 1958, I think.

BROWN: 1958? Yes. I was a member of the International Council at that time, and we had meetings with the ITU. I was on the subcommittee that met with them. Then they named a commission of four; Vice-President Jack Wallace and myself representing the Lithographers, and Ike McLaughlin and Sandy Bevis, now president of the ITU, were the other men on that commission. We each put up $50,000 as good faith

money, and we were going to jointly organize and everything. But I must tell you that from our part it was an exercise in cynicism. There's no question about it that nobody ever thought that anything would ever come of it. It was a case of public relations; it was a case of keeping the members happy that you're working on things.

HOFFMAN: You weren't calling up Kinney and saying, "Call off the dogs."

BROWN: Kinney?

HOFFMAN: Bill Kinney. Wasn't he in a big fight with the ITU?

BROWN: Earl Kinney, Earl Kinney. No, heavens no! No, we weren't doing that. We tried to solve that problem our way on that commission. Jack Wallace and I met for four days with the ITU people, and we had agreement. Then it blew up and the strike started in Vancouver. But the point I'm making is that there had been these flurries with respect to merger with the ITU. Merger was in the air a little bit more than it had ever been before, and I think there was some serious consideration, serious thought, being given to merger.

As a matter of fact, when I was president of the Toronto local and International councillor, I delivered to the International Council a position paper on merger. I suppose it's still a part of the records. I've often thought that I was awfully presumptuous to do it at the time, but it was the first time they'd ever had a written paper presented to them on this subject. It was merger with the Photoengravers that I was proposing, and why they should do it. George Canary was then president. A meeting was called with the Photoengravers, but George wasn't interested in working out any merger. Those who were sitting in on the meeting that he had with the Photoengravers told me that it was just a joke. You know, he wasn't interested in working out any merger, so nothing came of it.

HOFFMAN: Why wasn't he, do you think?

BROWN: Well, if you carved open George's skull, you'd see the word "lithographer" stamped in there! And that's all. (laughter) So there was no point in struggling with that. George lived and died a lithographer. He wasn't about to be anything else.

GIEBEL: I think that will be a theme that we'll find often as we talk about the subsequent mergers, because, you know, the first merger with the Photoengravers seems to be easier for many people to swallow who have this

lithography stamp on their skulls. It would be interesting to talk about that. You were saying that the ITU and Lithography joint group was never anything more, really, than public relations. But the Photoengraver approach, was that the first real. . . .?

BROWN: Yes. I think some twenty years earlier there had been meetings between the then Lithographers Union and the Photoengravers, but there had been nothing in between in any formal sense. This was the first formal one.

By the way, the meetings with the ITU came about because Ben Robinson saw the technological change occurring with the Typographers Union, causing fantastic conflict between the Lithographers and the ITU, fantastic conflict! Because, as their jobs disappeared in the traditional typesetting sense, they were going to move into what they called the new processes. And we were already having skirmishes. He [Robinson] correctly envisioned terrible battles between the two unions. So you have a choice of meeting with somebody to modify their attack or meeting with somebody with "marriage" as the object. I think, in the light of history or in the advantage of hindsight, I could see that all Robinson had in mind was to modify, blunt their attack. That's really all he had in mind. For awhile it was slightly effective.

But the first formal meetings on merger came about when Canary had that meeting. But nothing came of that. That meeting had come about because of the paper I had delivered to the International Council, and they voted to form a committee and meet with the Photoengravers. That meeting was held, and nothing came of it; but the significance of that and the ITU thing is that the subject of merger was on everybody's mind. I don't think anybody believed a merger could be brought off, but it was on everybody's mind. So when the Newspaper Guild made the next move, it convened a meeting of all the graphic arts unions for reasons of their own.

HOFFMAN: What were their reasons?

BROWN: Well, as I understand it, the single thing that was driving the Newspaper Guild crazy was the fact that none of the other unions had provisions for strike pay for refusing to cross a picket line of another union. They were taking some lacing because they called strikes and all the other unions would walk through their picket line in the newspapers and say to them, "Well, sorry, but we don't have any provisions for paying benefits." I think the Guild wanted to bring them together in the hope that they could bring about a common policy with regard to respecting picket lines. The Guild wasn't in the forefront of any merger moves, but that's what they had in mind at the time. It still drives them crazy.

Donahue and Wickersham were the two representatives for our group and the meeting wasn't going anywhere. But from that they struck up a conversation with the Photoengraver representative and agreed that they should try to arrange meetings between ourselves.

HOFFMAN: In the men's room! (laughter)

BROWN: That's the story! (laughter) That's called coming to grips with the situation! In any case, Wick and Donahue came back and recommended that we get together with the Photoengravers, that there was some real interest there. We did. I don't know in what depth you want to go into that, the meetings. Wilfred Connell was president of the Photoengravers then, and Bill Hall was breathing down his neck, running against him every year. Bill was then president of the Chicago Local. Connell was in favor of merger; Walter Risdon was Connell's confidante, and he was in favor of merger.

HOFFMAN: What position did Risdon hold at that time?

BROWN: A representative. They had non-full-time vice-presidents, the same as the Bookbinders. So the representatives were these vice-presidents; they were at once a representative and a vice-president. A fellow by the name of [Edward] Nyegaard, the president of the New York Local, was on the Council of the Bookbinders. He also was in favor of merger.

GIEBEL: You mean Photoengravers.

BROWN: Yes, excuse me, Photoengravers. He also was in favor of merger.

GIEBEL: Maybe you can discuss their industry situation at the time as to why they would find it beneficial to consider merger?

BROWN: Yes, that's a terribly important point, because here in the trade union movement merger is like motherhood and the Bible, and yet why haven't there been so many mergers? The answer is there has to be a happy confluence of circumstances: one, leadership; two, condition of trade; and maybe some other things. In the case of the Photoengravers, in 1958 they peaked with respect to their membership. Their membership had not changed prior to 1958 very much. In 1958 it started down. You look at their membership rolls, it won't reveal that, because they did not have any pension plans of consequence. Therefore, members stayed in the shop until they were seventy-five and eighty, eighty-five years of age. But in 1958, as I've analyzed the figures, they began to show a decline in active membership--the same number of members but a decline in active membership. That's been a steady, steady decline ever since 1958.

Connell was aware of this. Walter Risdon was aware of this. They could see that the very same force at work that was causing lithography to expand was at the expense of something, in part, of the letterpress industry, and photoengraving was a service unit to the letterpress industry. Consequently, their job opportunities were contracted. Connell could see it, and he could see that there was going to be no reversal, that it was wishful thinking to imagine that all of a sudden letterpress was going to recover from this decline. It was never going to go out of business; it won't become extinct, but it's going to decline and continue to decline.

So that as they saw this, they could see that they would have increasing difficulty in collective bargaining. Certainly organizing doesn't mean anything at all to the Photoengravers. They tied in their pension with their dues and consequently had a "dues situation" that made it impossible to organize anybody anyway. So that's really what caused them to be thinking. The thoughtful men among their group could see that some merger was worthwhile. The Lithographers now were expanding; we were coming into the forefront. So that was the kind of happy confluence of circumstances that made them receptive. Not all of them, but. . . .

GIEBEL: They too had a problem of stamping on heads. They were really strong, strong crafts people who were coming out of a craft consciousness that was perhaps even greater than the lithographers.

BROWN: I think it was much greater.

GIEBEL: I mean, their history was full of their awareness of their craft, their family traditions. We've talked to photoengravers that lived with other photoengravers as they went around the country or stayed in each other's houses. Their locals still, to this day, are more of a community than a union local.

BROWN: Yes. I found it very difficult at first after the merger to go to a city when they'd be pressing me hard to stay in the local officer's home. Well, it was very kind of them; it was very generous of them. But who the hell wants to be staying in somebody's house when you travel a great deal. You want your own flexibility, and a hotel's more convenient. But that comes out of that very same thing.

They had some real difficulty, but the leadership realized that they were headed for real problems in their industry and that they'd better get with it.

HOFFMAN: How old a man was Connell?

BROWN: Oh, I think he was maybe sixty-eight.

HOFFMAN: So he was really ready to retire?

BROWN: Except they had no retirement arrangement. He may not have been sixty-eight; he may have been sixty-six, but somewhere around there. He wasn't ready to retire in his own mind. He wasn't announcing any plans. So Hall retired him by running against him. Well, they had a system in that union where the delegates voted for the officers right at convention. That made their conventions political! God!

HOFFMAN: And an annual election of officers?

BROWN: Yes, annual election. A delegate would come in representing eighteen members, and he had a vote. So he was courted and wooed by the candidates. To this day the Photoengravers haven't gotten over that! (laughter)

When we merged and everything had to go out to referendum, elections and everything, they still did their political machinations, thinking that, "Oh, I got him in the bag. I got him in in the bag!"

HOFFMAN: Not realizing they were going to go home and get out of the bag!

BROWN: Yes, get out of the bag! Even if, in drinking terms, they got in the bag at a convention and made a commitment, they could always come to life later on! (laughter)

GIEBEL: Well, Hall wins elections on one of the principal issues, which was the non-merger. There was something that ought to be commented on there in terms of the real issue and the expediency of how to win an election with the delegates that. . . .

BROWN: I understand that he ran against him three times and missed by three or four votes the year before. So there was an inevitability about it. The convention was engineered into Chicago. The Chicago local, which was Bill's local, got a big appropriation of money to wine and dine delegates. Harry Conlon, who's second in command to Hall, is ambitious; and so he's anxious to get Hall elected. (laughter) You had all that as background music to it. Bill Hall wasn't clear on his position on merger, to my knowledge. He knew better than to be against it, but he wasn't a committed mergerite as Connell was. Connell was down the road. They tell me that the question of merger really didn't become of paramount importance in the election; nobody was playing it as a big theme. They were really divided as an officer group. [Henry] Dillon was working with Hall as a rep-

resentative. Dillon was working to get him elected. He was also running as a vice-president himself. Walter Risdon was supporting Connell. And there was great division and bitterness. But the actual merger itself only stood to be injured by the election, because if Connell squeaked in and anybody was saying that merger maybe wasn't a good thing, well, he wasn't going to go around kicking over any apple carts. Although he had said he was in favor of merger, on the other hand, Bill Hall was elected.

I had arranged for the president of the Photoengravers Union to be invited to our education conference in Atlantic City as a guest speaker. This was going to be the capper really because the man would put on record his position with respect to merger. All of a sudden Hall was elected, and the next thing I knew I got a letter saying that he was going to be unable to make the meeting. At the Council meeting at that education conference, my own feeling deep down was that the merger was pretty well gone.

HOFFMAN: Now, had Nyegaard and Risdon. . . . Let's see, Edward Nyegaard died.

BROWN: Yes.

HOFFMAN: Was that before the election that he died?

BROWN: If I had to guess, I would say it was after the election, but I'm not sure of that.

HOFFMAN: Right. But anyway, all of these factors were contributing to your feeling that maybe the merger was. . . .

BROWN: At least being put aside.

HOFFMAN: One of the strong proponents had lost in the democratic process. The other one had died.

BROWN: And Risdon was being put into a political wilderness because he was an outspoken supporter of Connell and outspoken against Hall, so Hall promptly isolated him. And so here the whole thing fell apart. Then Hall turning down the invitation seemed to be a clear signal that it wasn't going anywhere. I did not express that to the Council. I just simply said that he was a new man and had to get his bearings, and that was it. Bill Hall wasn't in very long before he realized that merger was the route.

HOFFMAN: Now, did he approach you or did you approach him?

BROWN: We had scheduled meetings all set up. It wasn't a matter of redoing anything; it was just a matter of his becoming active on the merger front again. It meant new faces at the committee because Hall wanted to bring in people that reflected his point of view.

HOFFMAN: And he certainly could have cancelled those meetings if he had a mind to.

BROWN: Yes, he could. Very quickly he got on his horse and scooted around the country, met a lot of people, and found out that, by God, merger was important to the Photoengravers and important to himself. He found that out in very, very short order, very short order, because at our very first meeting we went right to the heart of it: "Now, I don't want any meetings with anybody if the objective is not merger. I can understand reservations about the technicalities, positions, and all that kind of stuff, and we'll get to that. But assuming you clear all those things, you've got to be willing to say you're in favor of merger." So he came around pretty quickly on that.

GIEBEL: He came around, and he went around the country and felt that there was some support there. But did you ever have a feeling that perhaps the rank and file of the Photoengravers would not come around? Or what was your assessment of the rank-and-file feeling in the Photoengravers at that time?

BROWN: Well, I really felt that if the leadership was with it, the rank and file would be with it, provided they got out and led. Just that. So that was the key--to influence the thinking of those who are in a position to influence their own convention, their own delegates. They invited me to their convention in Chicago, and I went and talked merger directly to them. That was, I believe, in 1962. They made tapes of that speech and sent them around the country. They were getting with it at that point in time. So that I just felt it was a matter of making sure we had the leadership.

HOFFMAN: Now, at this particular point in time you also made some kind of an agreement with the Bookbinders to engage in a joint organizing campaign in New England?

BROWN: I don't have a quick handle on that at all, but it's entirely possible, because Jack Wallace had a very close, longstanding relationship with the Bookbinders. We agreed that any joint effort we could make with them would be valuable. So Jack was working on that kind of thing constantly, constantly.

HOFFMAN: But you were more focused on doing this one thing at a time, and your efforts at this particular time were largely taken up with the Photoengravers.

BROWN: Yes, but not to the exclusion of all other things.

HOFFMAN: No, no, I mean in terms of merger.

BROWN: Yes, focused right on that. We held a raft of meetings and really, you know, made a laundry list on the issues that had to be resolved and really pursued them.

HOFFMAN: That would be interesting, if you would sort of check off what the laundry list was.

BROWN: Bear in mind at that same time I was still fighting the question of Swayduck and Robinson, so that I was not able to just think about merger! (laughter)

Well, the laundry list had to do with finances, officers--that's officer structure--departments and department heads, location of headquarters, duties of officers, conventions, frequency of conventions, election--that is, term of election, how long. They had one year, we had two years; they had conventions every year, we had conventions every two years. We also hired a guy to do a comparative analysis of the constitutions so that they would list all the similarities and all the differences. We gave each person one of those so that we could study them. All of these matters had to be resolved. So we just went at it, as I say, like a laundry list.

HOFFMAN: Did you consult with any other unions that had been through mergers?

END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE

HOFFMAN: [You had] the example of the merger of the AFL-CIO. You had before you possibly the merger of the Steelworkers with the Aluminum Workers. About this time the Steelworkers were beginning to think about merger with the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers. Did you look at any of these other patterns?

BROWN: No, no.

HOFFMAN: Or did you just say, "No, we have to work this out for ourselves"?

BROWN: We took the position [that] we had to work it out for ourselves, that ours was a unique situation; not wholly unique, but certainly not comparable to Steelworkers or anything like that. So we sort of had to go down two roads at the same time. One road was to, in fact, reconcile the differences in operations between the two unions. That's where the laundry list comes in. Secondly, to maintain high visibility on what we were doing so that the membership itself in both unions would gradually be convinced of the inevitability of merger.

On that count I got in touch with Lane Kirkland and told him of our meetings--actually it was with George Meany--and asked him to assign someone to work with us, to help us in the merger. Well, we had more experience of mergers than the AFL-CIO did at that time, except for their own merger. I'm talking about merging between unions. There was really nobody who had any experience that could be spelled out: now, here's a procedure for you to follow.

So Lane Kirkland came and attended the meetings. Of course, we arranged to have a photographer there and got pictures of him and filled the pages of our magazine, put out a news release on it, and all that stuff. We've often laughed about it since, because Lane Kirkland never opened his mouth at one of the meetings! He came, I think, to two [meetings]. He never said a single word. He was graceful enough to say, "Look, you guys know more about this than I do. There's nothing I can contribute to this at all."

HOFFMAN: If I may say so, the previous pattern had been absorption by a stronger, more powerful union of a weaker union that required the wider support and service that the bigger organization could provide for them.

BROWN: Yes, if there was a pattern, that would have been it.

HOFFMAN: If there was a pattern, that was it, and they called it merger. But it was really more like rape instead of marriage!

BROWN: But this was the first time when two parties of different sizes were equals at the merger bargaining table, and that was our overriding theme. You'll see it all through the merger documents where we give the Photoengravers double the vote in order to equalize the voting rights on the International Council, all kinds of things like that where we added two Photoengraver vice-presidents, full time. They didn't have them before. All kinds of things to reassure the Photoengravers that, in fact, we weren't simply going to absorb them.

So we didn't consult with any other unions, just used the AFL-CIO from the point of view of selling it to our members.

HOFFMAN: Right, just for that blessing, the papal blessing!

BROWN: On the theory that some members would be concerned that maybe. . . . Oh, I know what it was! There was a lot of talk in the Photoengravers Union that merger with the Lithographers would then put Photoengravers in a hostile posture vis-a-vis the Printing Pressmen, since they made the plates for the Pressmen. The word even was let out that the Pressmen would refuse to handle the engravings made by the engravers if they merged with us.

At that time Swayduck was doing his best to influence the New York Photoengravers local to vote against the issue. A big Irish guy was the president of the local at that time. I've forgotten his name; it may come back. He was playing footsies with Swayduck. He called a special meeting of his local on a Sunday or a Saturday morning and invited me to come and talk to them. Well, that was a mistake, because these guys really did want to hear about merger! (laughter) They really did! I don't know what he thought; I think he thought that all the opponents to merger were going to get up and tear me apart.

HOFFMAN: That you would be eaten alive.

BROWN: And it was a picnic. In fact, it worked out exactly the reverse. That was just a little thing.

On the Lithographers' side, of course, we had Swayduck working politically against the merger in a very vigorous sense--contacting people around the country, fighting it all the way. And we knew it meant 8000 votes were going to go against the merger when the vote came up.

But we finally put the thing together and went to the Montreal Convention, which was an historic convention for the old ALA because we had Swayduck there for his last convention with all his delegates, and had the issue of merger. We were ready to report out on merger. That debate was a fascinating debate. I think it ran all day, as I recall, a fascinating day. Not only were we just debating merger, but we were also dealing with Swayduck. You may have heard stories about the fact that Swayduck and Robinson were holed up in a different hotel, and they would call special meetings of our delegates, sit around at two in the morning, telling them why they should be against merger and what Brown was doing to their organization and how they were going to save them all from a fate worse than death! Then our agents would come and report back to us and we'd have a strategy session based upon what they said.

A couple of interesting things happened at that convention, quite apart from the primary issue. Bob Cottrell had been a vice-president of the ALA, an articulate, aggressive guy, and very popular. He was popular with the New York people although

he was from the Mountain region. He left as a vice-president, went into business and apparently that didn't work out and he wound up in a shop back in Portland, Oregon. He turned up at that Montreal Convention as a delegate. He hadn't been seen or heard from in ten years. It was like Rip Van Winkle because he thought he was going to come back and receive the plaudits and solve our problems. He wanted to meet with me because he was going to be the go-between for Robinson and Swayduck. At this time we had been busy with our knives out for six months. This Bob, well-meaning, even made some remarks on the floor of the convention. I've forgotten what they were. I think I did have a meeting with him of a half-hour or something like that. He was going to patch the whole thing up (laughter), the differences between Robinson and Swayduck. I couldn't believe my ears, that a person would come back out of the misty past and really believe that he had some formula that nobody else had stumbled on!

HOFFMAN: Lochinvar arising from the water! (laughter)

BROWN: Yes! I was astounded. I didn't dislike him; in fact, I've always certainly respected him. I didn't have much feeling about him one way or another as a person, except that I knew that he was a competent officer when he worked for us. But I was afraid that he'd be used by them; that once he got in there, the fact that some old delegates did know him, that they'd suck him in and send him out as an agent of theirs. But apparently he caught on pretty quickly, so he just backed right out. He realized that he was in a little over his head. But that was a fascinating thing.

The second thing that happened that was interesting [and] as historians, if you depend upon the record too much, you surely can be misled, and if you've read the speeches made by the New York delegates. Swayduck required that they put themselves on the record, and every one of them read their statements, and, of course, the statements had been written by Robinson. I think in the course of the debate I made some remark to the effect, because I wanted the record to show that they were reading the statements. Somebody later--I think it was Fred Munson, our historian--was telling me that he was amazed at the outcome of the vote because he said, "Those speeches by the New York delegates were tremendous, to the point, powerful remarks." Then I told him they'd all been read, and undoubtedly written by Robinson, and that sort of hadn't even occurred to him. Because in reading the page he had no reason to think that. All he needs to do is know the guys. Those guys have trouble putting one word after another in most cases.

HOFFMAN: So that everybody there knew where these statements were coming from.

BROWN: Yes.

HOFFMAN: In fact, I think somebody in the record gets up--I don't know whether it was Spohnholtz, but it was somebody like Spohnholtz, you know, taking the kind of role that Spohnholtz would have taken--and says something about "these delegates who've had words put in their mouths." Something like that.

BROWN: Yes, and, you know, that worked against them. Because the one thing that impresses everybody in a debate on the convention floor--and it surprises many people how articulate the delegates are--is when they get up without notes, and they make their point, and everybody respects that. But if a guy gets up and reads a prepared statement, by the same token they all look down on him. I think it worked against them.

As a matter of fact, I've often speculated about the merger vote, had we not had New York fighting it. There are two lines of thought one can have: one, if New York were not fighting it, that it would have been a hundred percent vote. The other is that, because we were able to focus attention on the fight with New York, the question was not merger right up front, the question was whether New York was going to dominate this organization for all the years to come. So that when the roll call started, as much of that was in the minds of the delegates as was the primary question of merger. I had so many people the next day and that night say to me, "By God, this is the emancipation of the organization, in the small locals particularly!" For the first time they had been able to stand up, state their position, and cast their votes in defiance of New York. Not only in defiance; they felt it was getting back at them, too, for all the humiliating things that had been said about them over the years. Swayduck's chief stock-in-trade was character assassination. He just couldn't open his mouth without personalizing the situation, then demeaning. He just went down that road so fast because his mind couldn't take him anywhere else.

We then had a secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare from Cleveland [Anthony Celebrezze]. I think he might have been mayor of Cleveland; he was named by [President John] Kennedy as Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare. I remember Swayduck talking about this new secretary, "the Italian guy with all the lettuce all over his coat!" You know, he had to attack Italians; he had to make an ethnic slur out of everything he did, everything he did.

I remember we had two professors--this is digressing, I know--but we had two professors, Jack Barbash and Bob Ozan. He [Swayduck] referred to them as "Bartrash and Ozone." That was at an educational conference, he and I were having a battle there, a big noisy Council meeting and he was demeaning the whole conference and running it down. He said, "You got a couple of clowns in there, Professor Bartrash and Ozone. That's all they are." That was his

stock-in-trade. So long as he kept it light and quick, people would laugh and not realize that they were being drawn down the road. Then when he got cornered he became more vicious. That was characteristic of him.

HOFFMAN: Well, were there some surprises to you in how these locals voted?

BROWN: No. I think by then we had them pinpointed. If I recall correctly, Pittsburgh voted against; I believe Wilmington, Delaware, voted against; I think Austin, Texas, might have voted against; and Seattle. I think that was it. I think there were four. I think by then we had pinpointed them. The guy out of Wilmington might have been a surprise. Pittsburgh wasn't; Meyers, we knew by that time, was so far down Swayduck's road.

One local that would never really give me a clear go-ahead was St. Louis. Cal Jack was then alive and he was the delegate; I didn't know how the hell he was going to vote. But when Swayduck attacked the whole convention and everything else, why, Cal Jack got up and said, "I wasn't sure how I was going to vote on this, but after listening to Brother Swayduck, I'm in favor of this merger one hundred percent!" He sat down. So we did pick up a little bit on that.

HOFFMAN: So what you're saying is that without Swayduck being against it, you might have had more locals voting against it than you, in fact, had?

BROWN: Yes, that's one line of thought I've had.

GIEBEL: You might have had more reservations expressed than people felt politically able to do, given what they felt was an attack on the International. What would have been some of the issues that never really were raised that were possible problems with the merger? What did you have to give up in order to promote a really strong marriage?

BROWN: Well, the question of the Photoengravers' finances, of course, was very much an issue, and we were giving them two full-time vice-presidents, which was just a gift. Those kinds of things probably would have gotten a good deal more attention. Swayduck made reference to the fact that the photoengraving industry was going to hell in a basket, and that kind of thing might have gotten more careful scrutiny, which would have caused me to trot out the other argument that I never had to use. I used it in Council, but not before the convention, and that is that merger was buying a franchise. That's the key--the undisputed right for the new union to represent an entire segment of the industry. That's the key to the whole thing

because that's the exact opposite to what I was saying earlier about looking ahead ten years and only seeing conflict. So that it was the franchise that was the key; it really didn't matter if it contracted because even with the contraction, something was filling in behind it. So franchise was the key. But if you start talking in those terms in front of delegates, they don't think of themselves as a franchise, you know! (laughter) It's an unfortunate choice of words, but I think it's accurate. But I never ever had to get into that kind of talk. We could keep it on a highly sort of union level--that it would increase our bargaining strength; it would increase our organizing opportunities; that they had local unions in several centers that we did not.

By the way, some of these things were borne out. For example, we've got a viable, aggressive, progressive local union in Quebec City today, and we got it strictly because of the merger. They had a unit of Photoengravers and our Quebec City lithographers belonged to the Montreal Local. We transferred them to the Photoengraver Local and began to do a little organizing down there. We put a French Canadian representative on--Len Paquette--and then subsidized the Quebec Local and put a man on full time down there. We never could have done it otherwise. Merger permitted us to do that. That's just one example.

HOFFMAN: That's interesting.

GIEBEL: I think there are lots of those examples that come out of the back of the merger. Maybe at this point, if we've pretty well wrapped up the things leading into it [merger] and we've talked about the convention, maybe we ought to talk a little bit beyond.

HOFFMAN: We're going to start to talk about the secessionist movement growing out of merger with respect to Local One. Let me say for the record that when you read the proceedings of the convention, there is no reason to believe that Local One is going to secede. They don't say anything that would lead you to believe that their feelings are that strong. I wonder how you account for this secessionist. . . .

BROWN: Oh, it's very simple. Not how I account for the secession, but how I account for their attitude at the convention--they thought they were going to win! They just couldn't conceive of a situation where the threat of the largest local in the International, a local that had dominated the scene for so many years, supported by the general counsel, who for twenty-five years had been the spiritual and intellectual mentor of the organization, the notion that the organization would go in any other direction except the direction that they were recommending, I just don't believe they thought it could happen. There was just no way! No reason for them to feel that

they had their finger on the pulse anyway. Robinson, the lawyer, was still operating from--and smarting from--the vote that had been taken to compel him to decide whether to represent the International or the Local [One], and he didn't believe that would ever happen.

HOFFMAN: At this point what role was Matthew Silverman playing?

BROWN: Well, Robinson had told me that he was going to gradually move out of the picture physically and that Matty Silverman would move in. Matty worked on New York Local One problems almost exclusively. We did not work with him except in a consulting sense. He worked with Local One. Robinson used to say that he couldn't stand Swayduck, so he had Matty working with Swayduck so as to permit Robinson to back away and preserve the account and service the account and let Matty become the bridge between Robinson and whatever was going to happen. So that was really Matty Silverman's role.

I always felt that Matty was a fairly honest guy, and I think we all kind of liked him, perhaps because he wasn't involved in a contentious sense with us. We never had to really test the question of what kind of person he really was. We did get some evidence that he was quite capable of some pretty rough stuff. By rough stuff I mean being as nasty and blunt and direct and whatever as he had to be in order to preserve Robinson's role with both the International and the local.

I had spent an evening with Matty one time. Most unusual. It was quite obvious that he had sought me out and wanted to spend time with me and talk to me. It was during all of this problem when we were trying to separate Robinson from Swayduck. In the course of the evening, the whole evening--dinner together, drinks, and so on--we were discussing almost everybody in the picture. He was being very frank and sort of encouraging in many respects. The question of Wickersham came up, and I made the observation that Wickersham was a very competent, loyal guy who could carry a very heavy work load and you could always count on him, but that he wasn't deeply steeped in trade union experience. My saying that was only really a reflection of what was a fact and also what Wick and I had talked about. Prior to his becoming a local president in Racine, he'd not been involved with unions. He didn't have a family background in unions. He joined the union and very soon after became president of the local union in Racine and very shortly after that an International representative. After being in that position for awhile, he suddenly became assistant to the International president. So he didn't have what I would call a deep background in the trade union movement, either philosophically or in terms of experience. Wick and I discussed this and understood it; I made that observation to Matty in the course of the evening.

The scene changes. We're now the night before the vote at the Mont Gabriel Club when we are going to go right to the wall on the question of Robinson. At the insistence of several of the councillors, I had dinner that night with Robinson and with Silverman and Wickersham, a final attempt to resolve the matter. In my mind that only meant one thing--that Robinson would publicly say that he was coming with the International and would not work for the local anymore. In the course of the conversation Silverman, in an attempt to divide Wickersham from myself on the eve, trotted out with "Why, you're even contemptuous of your own assistant, saying that he has no depth in the trade union movement!" This was Silverman; I looked at him and I thought, "Hm-hm. You see? These kinds of people think everybody lies the way they do." Because Wickersham and I had discussed this; we'd had this concentrated session of a year together of living and working, [and] we had explored one another's feelings on these kinds of things. So he couldn't do me any harm at all. But he thought that he was going to deliver a final shaft. I think it's most revealing about the man that they'd had a meeting to try and find out how to divide Wickersham from myself.

GIEBEL: It's interesting that they should pick up your relationship with Wick as a sensitive point. At first they try to run him against Don Stone and then the vice-president, the executive vice-president, and now try to divide you.

BROWN: Yes.

GIEBEL: They're probably just keying into the relationship that you discussed earlier with Wick.

BROWN: They knew that was fundamental. They knew that it was fairly strong, one of my plusses, you know, to have that relationship. So they tried different things and wound up trying to divide us.

GIEBEL: Talking about the battle you're in to take over the leadership that the presidency should have, it's really a total battle. There are really no quarters given?

BROWN: No holds barred, none. If that is said publicly and openly in front of me, what do you suppose was being said by these same people to other people when I wasn't around to refute statements. So it was a hundred percent war.

Well, in the final year of Robinson representing the International, his billing to us was $124,000! We were an organization of 38,000 with a total annual budget, if I recall correctly, of $1,900,000! That was our total annual operating budget! And

the lawyers took out of that $124,000. Not bad, right? It was all out of whack! So they were fighting for pretty big stakes.

The minute we separated ourselves from them, they fired Herman Greitzer, who was one of the lawyers they'd put on just to handle Board cases for us. He called me up very shortly after asking me to give him a recommendation, because they fired him like a shot as soon as they no longer represented us. So there was a lot at stake besides just Robinson's ego.

GIEBEL: Let me just ask you an aside here. Twice we see now 1) in the situation where Robinson loses perception of whether the membership would have wanted him to be retained as the International counsel and also the Local One counsel and 2) here in this question of merger where they really lose their sense of feeling about where the rank and file is--they overplay their hand. How did they get so out of touch? Did they never really understand where the membership was and were simply able to operate from the standpoint of political power of the New York local? Or did they just lose track of it in the last stages in 1960 to 1963?

BROWN: I think the business of simply losing touch or track is the key. I think it can happen to anybody that's in a position for a long time. They worked through the power bases always. At one point in time I think they forgot that dominating the power bases is different from working through the power bases. What they were doing was dominating the power centers--the local unions, the council, the officers. They were dominating them; they weren't working through them. I think it's an essential difference, because working through suggests that you're getting acquiescence. More than that, you're getting consensus.

HOFFMAN: And you're also listening.

BROWN: Yes, you're seeking. They weren't doing that. They were implementing through these power bases and dominating them. I think that's really where they went wrong, where anybody can go wrong.

GIEBEL: So their threat to withdraw from the ALA was almost seen by you as just a threat that would have brought, in their terms, people back into line; in your terms, it was something you chose to call them on.

BROWN: Well, yes. That all happened rather quickly. I don't know whether it's in the record--I think it is--at the convention. But maybe two to three weeks prior to the convention, I had lunch with Ed Swayduck in a

restaurant on the East Side of New York. We acknowledged all of our differences and our fights and everything else. But he agreed with me to support merger--just two weeks before the convention. I believe it's two weeks, I'd have to check the record. We had a very good, open session.

The curious thing about Swayduck [is that] he isn't a guy who sets an objective and follows that. He can be pulled off track easily. For all that I fought with him, I really think that, when I met with him two weeks prior to the convention. . . . And, by the way, we finished the luncheon, talked everything out, stood up, and shook hands. That was symbolic to me, and I think to him, that we shook hands and said, "Okay." He said, "I don't agree with you on the merger, but I'll support it."

Now, what happened between that point in time and the convention? Was it that Ed was lying to me all the time during the luncheon? I don't think so. I think he meant what he said when he said it. But I think when he left there and went back and had a session with Robinson and [Ed] Hanson, his vice-president, who was completely opposed to merger, I think they just swung him around. Then they set up a campaign to come to Montreal and undermine the entire project, believing that they could be successful.

END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO

(There now arises a problem with the tape. Tape Four, side one was recorded over the beginning of side Tape Three, side one, and the interviewers realize the error. They discuss what should be done. The following material is located midway through Tape Four, Side one, but in subject matter belongs at this point, following up on the previous conversation.)

BROWN: So the point we left off was where I'd had a meeting with Swayduck a couple of weeks prior to the Montreal Convention at which time we had a thorough discussion about merger, and he agreed to support it. Correct?

GIEBEL: Yes, he'd agreed to support it.

BROWN: And at the end of that meeting we had shaken hands, and he had said, "Fine." He was going to back merger with the Photoengravers at the convention. What he said then I believe he meant.

But when he went back to his offices and reported to Robinson and Hanson they developed a plan to come to Montreal and fight it with the delegation. When they came to Montreal, they had quarters in a different hotel from the convention hotel and met with groups of delegates long into the evening to try and persuade them that merger was bad, that pension plans would be jeopardized, that the Photoengravers were in a declining industry, and that they needed Ben Robinson to guide them, that Ken Brown was a Johnny-come-lately, and whatever.

GIEBEL: I think one question that we mentioned earlier was the question of how was Swayduck able to go back to New York Local One and get the kind of support against merger that he was able to get, given what the convention wound up in support of?

BROWN: At that first local meeting following the convention in Montreal, Robinson appeared on the platform of Swayduck's Local One and delivered an impassioned, stirring condemnation of merger with the Photoengravers. Included in his comments were such statements as "The photoengravers' industry is declining, going down the drain, and they will be seeking lithographers' jobs." Secondly, the Photoengravers' pension fund had gone bankrupt, and the new union was going to have to finance the bankrupt Photoengravers' penions plan, and that the New York Lithographers' Local had spent a great deal of money and time in Washington with the Internal Revenue getting a tax status confirmed for the Lithographers' pension fund of New York and merger with the Photoengravers would jeopardize that tax status and thus jeopardize their own pension plan and all the money that they had put into it, that there were members that had three, five, seven thousand dollars of their own money invested in this pension plan, and this local president of fifteen years and this general counsel of twenty-five years were telling them that all of that was being threatened by the merger with the Photoengravers. So consequently they all voted against it.

I mentioned as well that I had written him a letter challenging him to a debate on the platform of his own local meeting on the issue of merger. He responded by getting the local to adopt a motion to bar me from the platform of Local One.

HOFFMAN: He had had that experience with you before when it had not turned out well.

BROWN: Well, particularly in Local 1P, where they had, as he said, foolishly invited me in to talk to thier own membership. He never gives you that kind of an edge at any time.

HOFFMAN: I think one of the other things that we discussed was the factors that were involved in some of his satellite locals not going along with him to support him, like Schenectady and Pittsburgh.

BROWN: Right. When he was persuading his local membership to vote against merger, he told them that there would be ten other locals that would secede with him. He never ever identified them, claiming that he didn't want to mention what places they were because that would bring pressure to bear on those areas. What actually happened was that no other local seceded. One of the reasons was that these other locals belonged to the Inter Local Pension Plan. For them to tell their membership to vote against merger and then to secede would mean they'd have to get out of the Inter Local Pension Plan. Now, termination benefits out of that plan would be like seventy-five percent as opposed to full benefits if you retired while you were a member of the plan. So that again the economic underpinning of the position that everybody was taking was clear, so that Pittsburgh and Seattle, both belonging to the Inter Local, and Schenectady, while their leaders would vote in convention against merger and while they would line up with Swayduck and vote against the International because Swayduck controlled the votes in the Atlantic Region that elected them to their councillor positions--while they would do that in a political sense--they could not possibly go to their own members and ask them to put their pensions on the line.

GIEBEL: Even though they tried to raise it as an issue--that their pension fund would be jeopardy--they couldn't really ask them to leave the International because their fund would have really been called into question.

BROWN: Right. They couldn't square those two situations. The chairman and general counsel for the Inter Local Pension Fund was saying, "Merger is a good thing." The general counsel was saying, "Merger with the Photoengravers will not impact the Inter Local Pension Plan one whit." So that these local leaders would have to try and run contrary to what their pension chairman and their general counsel were saying.

HOFFMAN: To your knowledge did any of these people ever invite either Swayduck or Robinson to talk to their members?

BROWN: We heard that Swayduck turned up in Seattle, and maybe Robinson did; I'm not sure about Robinson. But I think Swayduck may have turned up at a meeting although that wasn't his speed. He very rarely went out to other locals. I'm not sure why he didn't, but he had a warmed-up audience with his own members. He always seemed unwilling to go into a cold situation.

GIEBEL: That brings up another point that I think you mentioned concerning the relationship of the New York Local and the rank and file, to what they felt was the rest of the International membership; that Local One was, in fact, leading the way in many respects, with regard to policy and the direction of the International, and that they could very well have voted almost ninety-five percent against merger and not felt too strange that they were so out of line from the rest of the International. Do you want to comment a bit on historically the relationship of the New York unionist as opposed to the rest of the rank and file?

BROWN: Yes, I think that's an important point. For many years Swayduck had engaged in an internal public relations campaign, both external and internal; but the internal public relations campaign was designed to convey to his members that they were the best in the country--the highest paid, the best craftsmen, the "pros," he used to call them. "You're the pros. Everybody else is a farmer. You're the pros right here. You've got the highest rates and everything." Even as years passed when it turned out not to be true, he still went on with that same campaign; and they had no way of knowing anything else.

Historically Local One had provided much of the International leadership. International President [John] Blackburn was out of New York; Swayduck's own role with the International; Ben Robinson's role. So that Local One was dominant. So you're quite right, that they would take different positions or consider that everybody else was stupid shouldn't have surprised anyone.

The other question is--out of eight thousand people wasn't there anybody who would get up and raise a voice and protest or ask a question? The answer really is that they ran a very tight ship in New York: "You get out of line, and you're job is in jeopardy." I don't think there's any doubt about that. I've had members in my office in New York in tears because they've lost their job and, at least in their opinion, attributed it directly to being in opposition to the leadership of the New York Local. People were frightened; frightened of losing their job, or, if they were out of work, frightened that they wouldn't get a job. So that opposition isn't a popular, easy thing.

HOFFMAN: He had a kind of hiring-hall relationship with the employers.

BROWN: Not "kind of"! It was directly that! When an employer wanted a man, they called the union office. If you were in favor, you got the job; if you weren't, you just might have to wait, like six months.

GIEBEL: So New York steps out. They get the votes to support their secession and they bring out of the ALA twenty percent of the membership, twenty percent of the revenue, the equivalent of $20,000 a month. What effect does that have on the ALA?

BROWN: Now, when you think about the steps that we've gone through--first of all, a whole series of council meetings over a two-year period when at every meeting I reported progress of merger and at every meeting Swayduck voted in favor of merger, for two solid years--then we come right up to two weeks prior to the convention. I had a meeting with him and he agreed to vote in favor of merger. Then he went to the convention with his lawyers and tried to overturn the whole convention, and he failed, threatening to secede if we didn't acquiesce to their position. The convention voted ninety-eight percent or whatever in favor of merger.

Then he went to his membership and got them to vote to secede and he shut off the dollars. When he shut off the dollars, he told the members that he would have us on our knees in a matter of two months because we couldn't afford to pay our bills without New York's income. "That's the only reason they want New York--" was their income, so he said.

Well, at that point we had a financial crisis. We just did not have enough money to meet our payroll because all of the $1,900,000 annual operating budget that we had went to salaries, a small percentage to supplies. But between officers' salaries and expenses, the staff of representatives in the head office, support staff, that was the whole operation as far as operating capital was concerned.

So I called a meeting with the president of the Chicago Local, Spohnholtz, Milt Williams of Philadelphia, Don Biedenbach of Rochester, Ed Donahue of Twin Cities, perhaps one or two others, and reviewed all of this with them because at the same time they [Local One] shut off the per capita, they also filed a law suit to prohibit us from, or have us enjoined from, moving money from one fund to another, because he knew very well that if I got shut off on the General Fund, I'd simply make a loan out of the Mortuary Fund and that would give me operating capital. So he moved in court to prevent me from doing that. I called a meeting of these local people and we spent a day in a hotel in New York discussing it. They, right on the spot, came up with enough money to carry us through.

GIEBEL: Who was at that meeting and what were the kinds of pledges that you received at that time?

BROWN: Well, Harry Spohnholtz of Chicago, for example, simply called his office and ordered a check for $50,000 drawn up immediately and promptly put in the mail to us. Milt Williams sent us three months' per capita. His per capita might have been about $7,000 a month, and he sent $21,000 per capita to us immediately. Don Biedenbach of Rochester sent us a substantial amount of money. I mentioned the story of one small local union that, when we put the appeal out to all locals about our financial crisis, wrote us a check for their entire local treasury, which might have only been two or three thousand dollars, but their letter said the local membership had voted to send the entire local treasury to see us through this crisis.

So the response was simply magnificent, indicating--and I've often wondered about it--that mostly there was a great awareness of the struggle. Not only an awareness of it, but there was even understanding of the depth and the stakes for local unions to be doing this.

Then we called a special meeting in Twin Cities of our council and voted to put a $15 assessment on every member of the ALA in order to raise immediate capital for operating, and we had a referendum vote. Bear in mind that Swayduck was going to be voting in that referendum vote. That meant we had 8000 votes against us out of a possible perhaps 30,000 votes to be cast. So we had to do a fantastic job in order to get enough votes to override that veto.

HOFFMAN: Yes, and this is in the face of the fact that only a few years previous, when there had been an attempt to increase the dues in order to increase the officers' salaries, it had been voted down, in 1958.

BROWN: Yes, I think twice. Two or three times they voted it down.

HOFFMAN: So that this is not a union in which they're just going to say "Yes" because the International asks for something.

BROWN: We called a meeting in Cincinnati of all local presidents just on this special issue. They had to spend their own money to come to the meeting, and we reviewed the entire picture with them. We made a movie on the assessment question and had prints of it rushed all over the country where I explained the financial crisis and Local One's role, and we had the referendum, and we won it. I've forgotten the percentage now, but we won it handily in spite of the 8000 votes against.

It was at that point, then, that Swayduck seceded, took his local out, and we began a series of law suits over General Fund, over Defense Fund, over Mortuary Fund, that dragged on for ten full years. We only settled them finally about one year ago.

GIEBEL: How were they settled, by the way?

BROWN: How? You mean the disposition?

HOFFMAN: Yes.

BROWN: How did it happen?

HOFFMAN: What was the settlement finally?

BROWN: Well, I went to New York and had dinner with Sway-duck and said, "This has gone on long enough." It was just about eleven years. We hadn't seen one another, by the way, in those eleven years, not even bumped into one another by accident. We had dinner together and talked about old times, and I suggested that we pay off whatever anybody owed and "Let's end all the lawsuits."

What that meant [was that] the judge of the court ruled that the members of Local One had equity in our Mortuary Fund, that they had belonged to the Mortuary Fund and paid a dollar a month for so many years and that therefore they had equity in it. Therefore we owed them --I forget the figure--a million-and-a-half dollars or something like that out of the Mortuary Fund. On the other hand, he owed us the three months' per capita that he never paid us. You know, he stopped paying per capita that one day, and three months later we expelled everybody; but he owed us for three months and he paid us that, which amounted to sixty thousand dollars. I think that's the way it worked out. We paid out of the Mortuary Fund what we had to, and he paid us the per capita that he owed us.

HOFFMAN: At that point did that create any problem at all for the Mortuary Fund?

BROWN: Not at all. The truth of the matter is that we did have a lot of money that had been paid in by New York members. When we expelled them, we simply refused to make any further mortuary fund payments. So they had 575 people who died over that decade; there was $575,000 that we had all that time and earned interest on and everything else. It was that money that we gave back, plus a little less than a million dollars of equity. That's how much people had invested from the point of time that they had been in the Fund. So that I had no problem in my own mind about the payment of that money.

GIEBEL: So the ALA retained its solvency, but Local One didn't stop fighting, as I recall. They merged with the ITU. It wasn't a complete merger, but they became affiliated with the ITU. What was the nature of that affiliation?

BROWN: They affiliated with the ITU. In fact, the ITU amended their constitution so as to set up a special form of affiliation for the New York Lithographers. The reason that New York sought out that affiliation was that once they seceded from the Lithographers Union, they became a renegade, separatist, secessionist organization; and nobody in the labor movement looks with favor on that kind of a group. Secondly, they promoted very heavily the use of the union label on printing in New York, which was very helpful to them. We began to attack immediately upon the validity of their label since they didn't belong to the legitimate labor movement. So that they sought affiliation with the ITU in order to come into the House of Labor mainly and primarily to protect their own union label. After that they used either their own label or the ITU label, whatever the employer wanted.

Well, then the question is why did the ITU bother to take them in? Well, the ITU had a chance to pick up a buck a month per member, which is $8,000 a month, $96,000 a year. The ITU was in a declining membership situation and high dues problems, so the prospect of picking up nearly $100,000 a year, without having to give anything in return to the New York Lithographers, of course, was just too much for them to resist. They did not get delegates to the [ITU] convention; they did not receive any service of representatives; they did not vote on any issues in the ITU. To the best of my knowledge, the only thing they got, which is of doubtful value, was the magazine that the ITU produces, which mainly is devoted to pointing out how much money they're losing.

HOFFMAN: Does Swayduck go to ITU conventions?

BROWN: Yes, he does.

HOFFMAN: Has his activity in the ITU increased over the years or remained about the same?

BROWN: It's remained about the same, and it's limited to a meeting once a year. Not every year, but every couple of years he goes to their convention and makes a speech, and they give him a place on the convention program. He devotes most of his speech to an attack on the GAIU and why the Amalgamated Local One is the greatest union in the history and why the ITU is the greatest union in the history of unions, which is always amusing because the record of the old ALA is filled with Swayduck castigating the ITU! (laughter) I always just get a big chuckle when I read how he's lauding the ITU and their membership.

GIEBEL: You mentioned also that at this time there was some attempt made to woo the Photoengravers in New York to see the merger as not beneficial to their interests and that at that time you found a supporter that you didn't even know existed.

BROWN: Yes, that was a pretty important happening, as a matter of fact, that boomeranged on Swayduck. A number of the shops in New York have both ALA Local One members and 1P Photoengraver members in the same shop. They do photoengraving and litho--two separate contracts. So he does have a contact with a number of them. He was working on these Photoengraver members, through his own members, against the merger.

In addition to that, Frank Mc. . .--I'm trying to think of that local president of 1P, who was president at that time--[he means Frank McGowan]. Swayduck was wrapping him around his little finger. So this guy was playing a double game, really. On the one hand with me he was pretending to work towards a favorable vote for merger in his own local, and at the same time he was having strategy meetings with Swayduck as to how to promote the exact opposite and in his wisdom made the decision through his counsel to invite me to a special Sunday meeting to discuss the question of merger, apparently thinking that the opponents to merger on the local level would just simply eat me up. It turned out to be a great meeting because for the first time they heard some of the facts.

The question came up, by the way, where they said, "Mr. President, I understand that if we merge with the Lithographers the Printing Pressmen are going to refuse to work on the plates produced by Photoengravers. What do you say about that?" I burst out laughing [and] I said, "Well, if the Printing Pressmen refuse to handle work, this will be the first time they've acted like a trade union in their history! I somehow doubt that they're going to do that. They've been busy crossing picket lines and looking after their own ass for so long, they wouldn't know how to act in a concerted sense!" Everybody laughed and applauded because, you know, they have that kind of a record. That guy had apparently been very effective in scaring the hell out of some people with that kind of talk. But how silly! The Pressmen were going to use economic pressure against us!!

In any case, that whole effort turned out to be a boomerang for them and a boon for us. We got a favorable vote; but before we got it, when they finally had their debate at local meetings and the whole question was in balance, the debate was raging back and forth, the former president of New York 1P, Denny Burke, who'd been president for seventeen years, got up and delivered a very forceful speech in favor of merger. He had retired as president to become their pension and health and welfare administrator and had

been out of active involvement with the local for some years but turned up at the special meeting on merger and was really most influential in casting his weight in favor of merger, and that just tipped the whole scales our way.

END OF TAPE FOUR, SIDE ONE

(The following material is located on Tape Three, side One, and the material is somewhat repetitive of the preceding dialogue due to the taping error.)

BROWN: (mid-sentence). . . had an operating setup that just broke even every year. There was no point in making money in the General Fund. And what is it all committed to? It's committed to salaries--office personnel, International officers, representatives. So he [Swayduck] moved immediately and shut off his per capita, three months before they seceded.

HOFFMAN: So that was before the convention [that] he stopped his per capita?

BROWN: Well, it depends on what month he got out. I've forgotten, it may have been.

HOFFMAN: It seems to me there was some question about seating his delegates at the convention.

BROWN: Well, if their per capita wasn't paid, we wouldn't have seated the bastards. So they were paid up to then, and then stopped. That's right. At the general meeting immediately following the convention, they stopped paying per capita. And he said, "We'll bring them to their knees; they'll be around here asking." I think it was $20,000 a month or something, a very substantial amount of money.

So here I was now. The convention was finished; we'd voted in favor of merger; the New York delegation had walked out led by Ed Swayduck, gone to a local meeting and said, "We're going to get out of the ALA and we're going to shut off our payments to them right now."

Well, we had the referendum on merger going out, and all of a sudden we didn't have enough money to meet the payroll. And we didn't! We were actually in such a cash position that we

could not have made the next week's payroll. So I had to meet the cash problem first. I called a meeting at the Pierre Hotel in New York--Harry Spohnholtz, Milt Williams, Ed Donahue, Don Biedenbach, maybe one or two others--and I just trotted it out.

HOFFMAN: Anybody from the West Coast?

BROWN: No, I don't think so; I don't think so. I just trotted out the financial problem to them.

GIEBEL: Still ALA people?

BROWN: Still ALA.

GIEBEL: The Photoengravers were not involved in this?

BROWN: We were not merged. I trotted out the position, that Swayduck had shut off the per capita. If I recall correctly, it was $20,000 a month and he also filed a suit against us in court to prevent us from transferring money from one fund to another to meet the payroll. See, it was gunboat dollar diplomacy.

HOFFMAN: Right! Right through the jugular!

BROWN: Yes. So I said, "Now, look, there's nothing we can do. There's no way we can cut back twenty percent of our operation overnight. It's impossible to do and that would be bowing to him if we had to cut back the service. So I need money!" We went over the whole thing.

Chicago gave me a check for $50,000 the following day, or two days later. We put out an appeal to all the locals. Philadelphia paid three months' per capita in advance; Rochester sent us an extra $10,000 or $20,000. Just city after city. We broadened the appeal beyond that group, but once that group went with it, that set the example. One local mailed us their entire treasury! Can you imagine? They just wrote a letter and said. . . .

HOFFMAN: Which local was that, do you remember?

BROWN: No, I don't. A small local, and it might have only had $3,000 or something. They just wrote a letter and said, "We know the fight you're in. Here's $3,000. We've cleaned out our general treasury; here it is. Keep up the fight!" Can you imagine that?

HOFFMAN: That's incredible.

BROWN: I mentioned prior to lunch about "how would we ever get 32,000 people to think as one," but we did. It was fantastic! The money just poured in!

HOFFMAN: Not only is it fantastic, but also it underlines the miscalculation of Swayduck and Robinson.

BROWN: We're back again to that, yes. You see, they thought they were going to win it on a debate basis with the Council and the power play. They lost that. They came to the convention with their big program. Talk about miscalculating! My God, they went out of there in defeat! Swayduck was ashen! Leading a delegation! They thought they were going to lead all the dissidents out and he and his five delegates walked out and nobody else! (laughter)

HOFFMAN: Right. A parade of kings!

BROWN: So now we've got to beat them on the financial front. They shut off the money. My God, what they did was open up the money. These locals came through fantastically. Then we realized that we had to do more than just get money that needed to be repaid. That's when we called a special meeting of the Council and decided to put out a fifteen-dollar referendum, a referendum for fifteen dollars for the General Fund. We made a movie and ran it around all the locals. We called a meeting of all the locals in Cincinnati and wound them all up on it and gave them the facts and pointed out that the referendum was going to have to start out with 8,000 votes against it. There were going to be only 38,000 and there were going to be 8,000 against it, because Swayduck was still in, and they were going to vote. But, by God, we won that referendum to assess themselves fifteen bucks a member! As I've thought about it over the years, it's simply fantastic!!

You know, we were talking about "rally round the flag" and if you've got a common enemy what a job that does. My God, did this do a job! These people just delivered unbelievable votes. So here we won the referendum, put on the assessment, including Swayduck's local, because he participated in the referendum. We put it on his local as well.

HOFFMAN: Which he never paid, I presume.

BROWN: Well, we finally got the money from him, yes, but only after the settlement was made here a year or so ago.

HOFFMAN: It dragged on through the courts, then, for over ten years?

BROWN: Over ten years. Oh, sure. Not a nickel was paid except legal fees for ten solid years.

HOFFMAN: The lawyers did well!

BROWN: Oh, they put their kids through college and everything else! (laughter)

GIEBEL: Given the goal of trying to prevent the merger, it turns out that the New York Local played a very important role in consummating it in this period and lining people up behind it.

BROWN: They really did, absolutely! And it gave us almost a new lease on life. More than that, it strengthened everything for a period of time that permitted us to ride through several difficult years in the early stages of the merger. Because, you know, a merger doesn't solve all the problems; it just kind of puts you in position. And we had an awfully difficult period as any union will have in the early stages of merger. But because of this great outpouring of trade unionism and--I don't know how else to put it--an identification with the union, it bound us together in such a fantastic fashion as to give us strength to deal with some of the other problems we had.

HOFFMAN: Well, now, one of the things, that I must say sort of knocked my hat in the creek, was to read that at this point Swayduck talked about wanting to merge with ITU.

BROWN: Yes, well, there was a practical reason for that. Swayduck had very correctly invested a lot of money and time in the union label. New York had a built-in advantage with respect to printing buyers from all over the country, apart from New York City itself, and he very correctly invested a good deal in union label because it tended to pull the work into his shops. He was in competition with the Allied Printing Trades but had a real big edge because the Allied Printing Trades is such an ineffective nothing.

So then all of a sudden he was out of the legitimate trade union movement--and he was! As an independent, he was completely out of the legitimate trade union movement. His label was under attack; we mounted an attack immediately on his label! Every single time it appeared a letter was written to whoever the customer was to say, "That label is not the label of a bona fide trade union. They are a renegade, secessionist, independent union that does not belong to the AFL-CIO or any other recognized labor body." That was a stock letter that went out. Well, this really began to. . . .

HOFFMAN: Hurt!!

BROWN: It really began to hurt. So he negotiated a deal with the ITU in order to give him . . . .

HOFFMAN: Access to the label?

BROWN: Well, to give him credibility as a union. He did not have it. All he had was a personal fiefdom of 8,000 people who were willing to pay into a pot.

HOFFMAN: What did he use then, the ITU label or no label?

BROWN: He used whatever was necessary. He used the ITU label or his own label. Whatever the customer wanted, he gave it to him. Then he was able to say, "We are affiliated with the ITU, which is in good standing with the AFL-CIO." It was his defense. That's the only reason he went with them, no other reason at all. There isn't any other reason.

HOFFMAN: Why did they accept him?

BROWN: Well, it was an income situation; $8,000 a month for them.

HOFFMAN: I see.

BROWN: At a time of declining membership and a chance to take a whack at the newly-merged GAIU, the ITU just couldn't resist it. They were quite happy to take $8,000 a month. That's $96,000 a year. There isn't an international union in the country that would turn down $96,000 a year from a local that never asked anything of them. They didn't have to pay them any strike benefits; they weren't entitled to delegates to their convention.

HOFFMAN: They didn't service their membership at all?

BROWN: No, not at all. Didn't have to do any bargaining, or assign any reps, or assign any vice-presidents. Nothing. Just accept $96,000 a year. That's not a bad deal.

GIEBEL: You come out of the convention; Local One secedes; you raise the fifteen dollars per member assessment. You look as though you're going to weather the storm. What happens next? You're now merged?

BROWN: We had to vote on merger. After the secession we had to vote on merger, which passed, as I recall, by seventy-two percent or something like that. The date was set for merger, Labor Day, September of 1964. So that was that.

GIEBEL: Did the Photoengravers ever once talk about cold feet or that they saw merger as having Local One in it, that there would have to be something done? Or were they behind your group in supporting what action you were taking throughout this?

BROWN: We were very lucky! There was a man who had been a powerful, dominant influence in the Photoengravers Union for many years, a fellow by the name of Denny Burke. He was president of the New York Local of the Photoengravers for seventeen years, and he was their president in the golden years when they could bargain for anything. And they did! Denny put in a 32 1/2 hour workweek and the highest wages in the country. When he retired--and he did retire--he became their pension and health & welfare administrator in New York. He administered all their benefit programs for them.

After Denny left, they had a whole succession of weak, ineffective local leaders. They just had a turnover again in this election. Some very nice men have been elected, some reasonably effective. But given the real problems of the New York Local, with the down turn in the business and shops going out of business into bankruptcy and so on, this man loomed as a giant.

When the great question came as to a position to be taken by the New York Photoengravers Local on the merger question, it was that their then local leader was misleading them on this question, playing footsy with Swayduck. At the general meeting, when he thought he was going to win the day and Swayduck helped to engineer the meeting for him, this man, Denny Burke, now out of the scene except as pension administrator, got up and delivered a ringing speech in favor of merger and turned the day. The local voted in favor. I didn't expect it. I wouldn't have known where to look for it and had no reason to know that Denny Burke was with it, but just that he's an intelligent man who was apparently a good leader --not apparently--he <u>was</u> a good leader, and even could see after he'd been out for ten <u>years</u> that, by God, merger made sense. So he saved the day, literally, not for the whole merger, but with respect to New York.

GIEBEL: So the Photoengravers were in and you moved towards the convention. Both votes were assured in the convention. Were there final problems with merger? Were there cold feet at all?

BROWN: No, not at all. We worked out constitutions; we had large meetings of full-time people in between and after the first vote on the design of the constitution. There was a great sense of involvement and participation. By the time we got to the special convention, it was cut and dried. There was no question about it. The convention votes were

unanimous from both parties, and the subsequent referendum on the constitution was heavier than the original vote. So that we did our work with respect to involvement of people. Looking back on it, while there were tense moments, there was no point in time when it was in doubt or jeopardy. Not really at all. There was no one person, prominent, that was attempting to use anti-merger as their platform, no one. It was only a question of who was more for merger than the next person, and that applied to both organizations. Those who might have felt in opposition were not going to voice it. It was too clearly cut and dried.

HOFFMAN: Well, I notice, while we're on this merger question, that before the merger is really fully consummated with the Photoengravers, in June of 1964, for example, the Bookbinders and the LPIU officers explore graphic arts cooperation. The Stereotypers and LPIU adopt a program of active cooperation. The Newspaper Guild is again calling for unity in the graphic arts unions. And you made a speech, I guess at the Guild someplace, saying, "Mergers have only just begun."

BROWN: It couldn't have been the Guild. The first time I ever spoke to the Guild was a couple of years ago in Vancouver. It could have been at the Bookbinders' convention. I spoke to their convention a couple of times. I spoke to the ITU once or twice quite a few years back. So it must have been the Bookbinders.

HOFFMAN: Well, in any case, merger is being explored with the Printing Pressmen, with the Stereotypers, and with the Bookbinders. What happens to merger efforts with the Printing Pressmen and Stereotypers? I'm leaving the Bookbinders aside because that obviously worked.

BROWN: Yes, because that came off. The Printing Pressmen thing was fascinating. The president of the Printing Pressmen's Union at that time was Boyd DeAndrade, since dead, and the secretary-treasurer was Al Rohan. The most outspoken member of their board was Sol Fishko, now president of that union.

When we met with them, we came right off our own merger, that is, Photoengravers and Lithographers. In most of the speeches I'd made about merger, people said to me, "But why the Photoengravers?" Because if you really think about the industry--competitive problems, the organizing problems, the bargaining problems--the natural merger was with the Printing Pressmen. "Why the Photoengravers?" So that I would have to explain that I'm in favor of being married to Brigitte Bardot. The problem is. . . .

END OF TAPE THREE, SIDE ONE

(Tape starts with everyone laughing about preceding remark.)

BROWN: So that was my point; what's the point in thinking about merger with the Printing Pressmen if it's not possible. Plus the fact that there had not been a merger in the graphic arts industry and there was some doubt in the minds of a lot of people as to whether there ever could be. So here was a merger that was possible, and on its own made some sense.

Then there was the numbers game. The Printing Pressmen had then 110,000 members--Specialty Workers plus the Pressmen--and we had, as the old ALA, 38,000. We were arrogant enough to think that we had a far better union and that they should take a minority position to us whenever we got around to talking merger. Then when we merged with the Photoengravers we had 60,000. Now we had the elite of the graphic arts all into one union. Well, surely to goodness, when we sat down with these 110,000 Printing Pressmen, they would realize that we had better contracts and a better union and an honest union and a better history and therefore we're equal! (laughter)

HOFFMAN: They didn't realize that, I guess! (laughter)

BROWN: They didn't realize it! It was a surprising damn thing. I made proposals to them as to how I should be president of the union and chief executive officer and DeAndrade should be chairman of the board. We even proposed that. They asked me what his duties would be, and I said, "Cutting ribbons. . . . " and . . . (chuckling). . . We met with them for quite a long time. They were very serious meetings.

Our International Council at one time--and it's in the record, and I think it's an important point--were not crazy about my pursuing merger with the Printing Pressmen because we've had a long history of fighting with them, and from our point of view anyway, a long experience where they have done terrible things. You know, strikebreaking and. . . . So it wasn't easy to persuade our board to sit down with these people and talk about merger, especially when they had 110,000 members and we had 60,000. The question was: what would happen to the then GAIU?

So the board finally agreed and voted in favor of my pursuing serious merger talks with the Pressmen provided the GAIU would be dominant, its policies and its leadership. Translated, that meant--and they said it--that Ken Brown would be the president.

HOFFMAN: Right. And DeAndrade was not about to go along with that.

BROWN: Right! "And if you can't work out anything that includes that, don't bother coming to us with merger proposals." So we worked at it. And, of course, it was a pretty tough proposition because within their union were a lot of people who had aspirations to the presidency, including Al Rohan, including Fishko, and Fraser Moore, who was the vice-president in charge of the newspaper segment of the Pressmen, which is, in many respects, the strongest segment--not numerically, but they had the best conditions. They were in the newspaper field and had the highest rate of employment, and I think there were 18,000 of them. When somebody asked him why the merger talks failed between the GAIU and the Pressmen, Fraser, who was from the South but whose office was in Detroit, said, "Oh, that's not difficult. We just couldn't figure out who was going to be the head fucking nigger!" (laughter) He just cut through everything and said that! That was all.

Now, that's not entirely true. There's obviously some truth in it. We had by then worked out an officer structure of ten officers as a result of the merger with the Photoengravers, and the Printing Pressmen only had seven for an organization almost twice as big. I had made the point to them repeatedly that you can't work out a merger unless you take care of the officers. Take care --whatever that means. But a guy sure isn't going to be in favor of a merger that's going to put him out of a job. He's spent his whole life becoming a vice-president of a union. Is he going to vote for a merger and put himself out of that job? Of course not! But any proposals they designed did not include accommodating to all of these officers. They were going to make them representatives or whatever. Well, Ted Brandt has spent his life and considered himself a very successful man to have become a vice-president full-time in an International Union and had reason to feel that. I think their proposal included making him a representative. Well, he was no more about to become a representative than fly to the goddamn moon.

HOFFMAN: What did your counterproposals suggest doing with their seven officers?

BROWN: Well, I think we planned on evening the voting situation so that we could have equal votes and then on an attrition basis, as our people dropped off, that it would finally come down to X number of officers.

But I don't think that we were likely to make too much headway, as I've thought back on it, because there were some things going on that didn't make any sense. The heir-apparent then was Al Rohan, the secretary-treasurer. We would walk into a meeting and here would be DeAndrade, the [then] president, Rohan, Sol Fishko, the current president, and Fraser Moore, vice-president in charge of the web group, and Bill Hall, myself and Don Stone and a couple of other officers. We'd start the meeting and DeAndrade would say,

"Well, I have a statement to make." He had a yellow pad, and it was filled with writing from top to bottom. He read it word for word at the start of the meeting. It would take him two minutes. He'd sit back and he'd never open his mouth again. Fishko did all the talking. When Fishko wasn't talking, Al Rohan did the talking. We never heard again from DeAndrade until it was time to have lunch or time to have dinner, and then he was once more the gracious host. So that you didn't have to be too smart to figure out that there were some pushes and pulls going on in that officer group that meant that unless you figured out who the hell was running things, you were never going to be able to get a common position among the lot of them.

There were some interesting things, though, that did come out of it. The Printing Pressmen at that time were down in Tennessee; they had their headquarters down there. Bill Hall and I went down to see it. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw it--this ancient place set in the hills of Tennessee eighty miles from Knoxville as headquarters for a union! We lived in a hotel they owned. It had fifty rooms, and we were the only guests. A dining room staff with white gloves, serving Mr. and Mrs. DeAndrade, Bill, and I! We'd go over to their offices to have the meetings; we'd come out of the hotel in the morning and climb into DeAndrade's Lincoln and be driven three hundred yards to his office around a three-hole golf course that had been put in for his own exercise. It was beyond belief!

HOFFMAN: A pretty nice fiefdom.

BROWN: Yes. They had a farm, you know, with cattle and everything. They had a club--I've forgotten what they called it--Happy Valley Club or some damn thing, where they entertained us that night. The officers and their wives drank and laughed and listened to music, and then we walked across the valley five hundred yards to our hotel in the evening. I remember one night walking back, and it was quiet as can be. They all had homes spotted around in the valley, owned by the Pressmen's Union, leased by the officers for something like twenty-five bucks a month. Bill said to me, "Ken, what'll we do if we merge with these silly bastards? What'll we do with this place?" I said, "Easy! We'll just put a goddamn bomb under it and blow it all up and sell it!"

Then when we got into detail in meetings with them where we analyzed their financial position, they were losing vast amounts of money per year.

HOFFMAN: Who did they train actually at this so-called Printing Pressmen's School? What was the nature and quality of the training?

BROWN: Well, it was originally designed to train lithography, to train people for lithography, because that was the new process. But I think there were only two or three students in the whole school.

HOFFMAN: Really?

BROWN: There were eighteen teachers and only two or three students in the whole school when we were there.

HOFFMAN: Good heavens! Who were these two or three students?

BROWN: Well, they were guys whose companies were converting to offset. They belonged to their union and they would come down for two weeks of training.

HOFFMAN: Two or three at a time, you mean?

BROWN: Yes.

GIEBEL: Was this modeled after the ITU?

BROWN: Precisely.

GIEBEL: It was set up, and it just never became functional?

BROWN: Yes. Well, the whole concept of a centralized school in a country as big as the U.S.--if the only place poor members of the Printing Pressmen in San Diego could go to for training was the hills of Tennessee, my God--didn't make any sense then; it doesn't make any sense now.

When we got into the financial aspects of their operation, I said to them, "My God, if you just turn the key on that place--they had 200 employees--just turn the key and walk away, our estimate is that you'll save $900,000 a year," which ultimately is what they did. Clarence Schroeder, one of their vice-presidents, has said, "Well, Ken Brown is the one who told us how to solve our financial dilemma. We turned the key of Pressmen's Home and walked out, rented space across town." It's unbelievable!

HOFFMAN: What happened to all those homes that they owned?

BROWN: Well, they sold the whole works.

HOFFMAN: They sold the whole thing?

BROWN: Yes. I've forgotten the numbers now. They had it listed as an asset on the books for millions of dollars and sold it for something like $300,000. Hell, they spent a million to build the school alone!

But in any case, the merger talks with them didn't go anywhere. One, because we couldn't agree on the kind of leadership and two, they had double the number of members we had. They had this great home down in Tennessee and hadn't figured out what the hell to do with it. I think Boyd DeAndrade is a very nice man, socially very pleasant, but I can't see where he provided any special leadership there. Nothing came of it.

One thing that was good about it: any merger talks that I've ever entered into, one of the first things you have to shake down is you cannot have conflict between your two unions while you're meeting, because your members will say, "For Christ's sake, you're having merger talks and they're raiding us in this plant" or "They're scabbing on us" or something like that. So you have to sort of declare a moratorium on everything. That's one of the pluses of merger talks. It's as though the Israelis and Arabs said, "All right, we're going to enter into formal negotiations; and while we're in formal negotiations, there will be no overt acts," which would be good if it lasted for twenty years.

HOFFMAN: It would be good even if it lasted for six months!

BROWN: Yes, right. Well, we always took that position and insisted on that kind of an agreement and also that all announcements about mergers would be joint announcements. So there were some good things about it. In the course of those things we would turn a plant over to them that we'd heard about or they'd turn a plant over to us. So we did reach a fairly good level of cooperation during those merger talks.

HOFFMAN: Now, as far as the Stereotypers were concerned, that got to be a much nearer thing?

BROWN: Yes, it did. In spite of their inability to provide any kind of leadership to their own people, they did reach a full agreement with us on terms of merger, and we did put it out to referendum. The GAIU did vote in favor if it, and the ISEU [International Stereotypers and Electrotypers Union] voted in favor as well, but they had to get two-thirds by virtue of a constitutional provision. The reason it was defeated mainly was that there were half a dozen locals--maybe eight or ten locals--in the IS&EU that were viable locals in that they had full-time officers and staff, and they lined up against the merger. As they saw the merger, it was a method of the International officers taking care of themselves in the IS&EU, and they were going to be small fish in a very big puddle when they used to be very big fish in a very small puddle. So they fought it. Even in spite of their fighting it, it came very close to winning.

HOFFMAN: Which segment were these locals from that fought it?

BROWN: New York and Pittsburgh and Boston, one local in Chicago, mainly the large locals.

HOFFMAN: Now, you don't think the fine hand of Swayduck was involved here?

BROWN: Very definitely it was. At the convention in Washington here it was really amusing. I don't know whether they call it their Resolutions Committee or not, but the committee that handled the key resolution was presented the issue of merger, the officers having agreed to it. And this committee came out with a vote against merger. In the meantime they'd invited me to address their convention across here at the Mayflower Hotel. So we came in and sat around in our room, waiting for them to have us come in. Finally, I went in and met with their Resolutions Committee and provided them with a lot of information they didn't have before. In any case, they took the resolution to the convention. Then I addressed the convention. Then they took the vote and the convention reversed the position of the Resolutions Committee and voted in favor of merger.

Well, what it was, was the Resolutions Committee traditionally has the local presidents from big locals on it. They were guys against it. The bulk of the delegates were in favor of it. So that it wasn't hard, once we got in front of the delegates, to win the issue. But New York and Chicago and Pittsburgh and Boston and a couple of others were against it. At the convention, right while I was speaking, there was an analysis of the GAIU constitution distributed to all the delegates, apparently done by Swayduck. And through the New York local of the Stereotypers and Electrotypers this was handed out to all the delegates. Really amusing.

GIEBEL: Okay, I think we ought to just pursue that a bit. I mean what was their point?

BROWN: Swayduck's point?

GIEBEL: What was he trying to call attention to? That it was a radical change from the Stereotypers' traditional constitution? Did they have a very similar constitution that the Photoengravers had preceding merger?

BROWN: Well, his main thrust was to show them that theirs was a union, like so many old unions, where everything was in the hands of the members, and the constitution of the GAIU, if given the kind of twist that they were giving it, would indicate that it was a veritable dictatorship run by Ken Brown and that they were going to lose all of their power, control, and influence and simply be gobbled up by this guy who had the power to put locals under trusteeship.

GIEBEL: Very similar to what the Master Printing Association used to turn out.

BROWN: The same thrust! That's it. The very same kind of stuff. The connection between that and the reality or the truth wasn't really important. This was distributed to the delegates. Here again, it had little effect. The delegates voted in favor of merger. It had more effect later because they had to get around to a referendum, and this was used in certain locals.

GIEBEL: What would the advantage have been to the LPIU to bring the Stereotypers in at the time when their membership was down, their funds were down, they were running in the red, maybe, at least if not then, they were soon after that? Was this just another step in bringing the whole graphic arts together? Or was there some technological or political reason why this should be a natural stepping stone?

BROWN: Well, we had come off a successful merger, and we were the merger union. To have pulled off another merger right then and there would have tended to cement up our image as the union that was moving things in that direction. Secondly, the GAIU was in the newspaper field, but not in a very big way. We had about 3,000 photoengravers employed in newspapers, and more than fifty percent of the IS&EU membership is in newspapers. So that it would have given us a presence in the newspapers much greater than we had before. In the newspapers the impact of technological change, while it was touching on everybody, it was also touching on the Stereotypers, Electrotypers, and the Photoengravers. And this would have been a natural in that the impact on the Stereotypers and Electrotypers could have resulted in retraining through our schools and right in the newspapers.

HOFFMAN: Did the Guild play any role with either of these merger discussions, either with the Pressmen or with the Stereotypers?

BROWN: No, not at all, not at all.

HOFFMAN: They stayed out of it completely?

BROWN: Yes. So the stereotyper-electrotyper would a) give us a presence in the newspapers; b) it would--this is not necessarily in order of importance--add numerically, the numbers game, to our size; c) it would take another union out of the scene, which is badly needed in the graphic arts industry; d) it would give us this franchise again to function in the whole stereotyping-electrotyping field in some way or another. We felt that we could manage the impact of technological change upon these people because the employer . . . .

HOFFMAN: Were you interested in this control-over-plate kind of concept?

BROWN: That's part of it. It was natural. But in our case we were in the plate and in the press end, so it really didn't matter which direction we went in there. It really didn't matter. Their tradition, their skill tradition, was not too bad, somewhat similar to photoengravers. They had practices in their union that are peculiar to newspapers, that's true, but nothing that was so different from what we were living with with the Photoengravers as to make it impossible. It's the kind of thing we could have managed very easily.

See, by this time we had set up a structure of a union --the GAIU--with an Organizing Department, Contract and Research Department, an Educational Department, now moving on a Legislative Department. We had the structure that could have accommodated a union of 200,000. Actually it was a high-priced, expensive operation for a union of 60,000. Really, we had all these things that other unions didn't have, because they didn't see it as important enough. We had a representative staff that was very effective and high-priced. We could have added twenty, thirty, forty thousand new members without changing a single thing within that framework. So the Stereotypers and Electrotypers we simply would have just drawn in, and we did offer them, I think, a very excellent deal in terms of representation.

HOFFMAN: Now, what was this business about they passed it at the convention, that there was some question about whether it had to be a two-thirds vote or something?

BROWN: Well, there was never any question about that. The constitution clearly provided that there had to be a two-thirds vote by referendum.

HOFFMAN: Oh, I see.

BROWN: The convention only had to be a majority.

HOFFMAN: I see, right. So the convention carried it, but when it went to referendum, they lost it then.

BROWN: That's right. They carried it by fifty-eight percent or something. It was over half, but I've forgotten the numbers. Now, interestingly enough, the ITU also butted in on this one. It posted stuff on their bulletin board, opposing this merger, which really shocked me. I think that was a spill-over from Swayduck. I think he got in touch with them. See, they were in the newspapers everywhere, and so they posted stuff on their bulletin boards, opposing the merger.

I must give the ITU credit that over the years they have insisted that no one else shall butt into their internal affairs; to their credit, they've not butted into other people's internal affairs. But this was a case where there was an exception. I'm reasonably sure it was a matter of Swayduck getting in touch with them and saying, "Hey, let's shaft these bastards!"

GIEBEL: What was your reaction? Did you feel a sense of defeat? Here was something that, you know, would have been different if it had fallen apart like the Printing Pressmen merger, before it ever got off the ground. Here you've got a constitution, your membership was behind it, their membership numerically was behind it, and yet the thing doesn't happen.

BROWN: Yes, I was really very sad, because I thought it was too bad from our point of view. It would have been a coup; it would have been very helpful in our general thrust toward merger. It was really too bad from their point of view because they wound up being very silly. They formed a new committee that traveled around the country and spent $200,000 in expense money, meeting with other unions, and finally wound up giving their union over to the Printing Pressmen. So it was kind of a sad ending to what could have been a very good arrangement for them and for us.

Donald Stone said to me one day shortly after the vote, "Well, I'm going to watch you very carefully because you're so used to successes, and I want to see how you react to this defeat," which was a pretty important comment for a confrere to make. You know, it had a sobering effect on me because I might normally have reacted kind of angry and bitter and said, "Oh, piss on them then. If they don't want to merge, why should I get myself all caught up in this kind of thing if other people don't appreciate the value of it?" You know the kind of thinking you would have. Donald's comment was really very good. I remembered it then, and I've remembered it since. It was one of those pieces of advice given at a time when it's needed and most important.

GIEBEL: One of your goals, in addition to merging, was the whole question of strenthening employer-union relations. During all of this period you're growing in size. You've merged with the Photoengravers; you're talking with the Printing Pressmen; you almost pull off a merger with the Stereotypers. Wouldn't you think that employers would interpret this as a threat rather than as an overture, an olive leaf, to try and heal some of what was, preceding your presidency, bad employer relations? How did you kind of juggle both balls up in the air at the same time?

BROWN: I have thought about that a good deal; I thought about it then a good deal. Some employers saw it as a threat, and in speeches they were making to their trade

associations they were saying, "This new giant on the scene will run roughshod over your interests," that kind of thing. But there's a saner element among the employers--fortunately it prevails--that can see that one of the problems in the graphic arts over the years has been the multiplicity of unions within a single plant. If I were an employer, I would want--as one said to me--I would want to have no union; but if I had to have a union, I'd want it to be one union. The last thing I'd want would be several unions, certainly not ten, or five.

GIEBEL: Would this tend to be the employer that was the old-line employer, the employer that grew up probably a union member himself at one time, and started his own shop rather than the manager that comes out of a business school that learns union-employer relations from a conflict model? I'm just wondering. The employers, we tend to sometimes view them all as one. . . . But as I see, there clearly are different groups of employers out there. You're saying that one group of employers seemed to be able to be reached by the merger, weren't frightened by the solidarity or the grouping together of separate unions. Is this the old-line, the traditional employer? Is that a fair way to describe these guys?

BROWN: I don't really know whether I've been able to identify which group is which. For example, a professional manager type, I read a speech by one of those people who was talking about the union gaining great strength out of its mergers and that "we'd better look out" and that "we'd be wiser to keep them divided." That same kind of a manager would fight us bitterly on bringing about common termination dates between different local unions in the same plant, a professional manager.

Another professional manager right here in Washington, talking with him, he just said, "God bless you! Full speed ahead! The sooner I get everybody in my plant in one union, the better. I'm prepared to sit down with you in our next negotiations and move toward a common termination date, even though you haven't merged yet. Because if I'm going to have trouble with you, I'd rather have trouble with everybody in the plant and have it done with instead of having trouble today and three months later with another local and three months later with another local." They're both professional managers.

The people who expressed concern, if I was to identify a group, the people who expressed the most concern about our becoming--not the one union concept--but our becoming big and powerful, were the old-line employers. And note the distinction I draw about becoming big and powerful with the old-line employers, because the old-line lithographic employer identified himself as a small employer with a small union in a highly personalized sense, and he was fear-

ful of that changing, that he all of a sudden was going to be dealing with a great big union that wouldn't be one-to-one with him. A small union, a small employer. That I think is an identifiable distinction to draw. I did hear that a number of times, almost invariably with old-line employers who tended to identify with the old Lithographers Union because they were litho plants.

GIEBEL: So what did you do? Is the educational program an attempt to in some ways deal with employer resistance?

END OF TAPE THREE, SIDE TWO

BROWN: Well, I think the first positive move we made in that direction was in setting up these liaison meetings with the industry. While we'd had them before, they were not very well structured. I'm not sure that the union or the employers had their objectives too well identified other than sort of an abiding belief that if we had a chance to spend more time together, out of that would come better understanding of one another's problems and objectives. But we zeroed in a little more on the relationship with the employers' associations. I arranged a series of meetings, not just with the International officers and the employer association representatives, but with a broad cross-section of local union officers as well. In this respect our liaison meetings were totally different from anything that had been done in the graphic arts before. We would have maybe ten officers and fifteen local presidents meeting with a like number of employers.

Now, I had worked out in my mind that there were three or four or five reasons for doing this. One, the union was undergoing change in its structure through its merger and subsequent mergers, and the employers could only find out that they had nothing to fear, any more than they might have feared prior to the merger. The only way they'd find that out was not to have somebody preying upon them with false information, but to be able to say to people, "Oh, no, I met and talked with Ken Brown last week, and we discussed that in some detail" or "I met with our local leaders, and we talked about it." So that was the number one thing: to lay to rest any notions that employers might have that there was a fundamental change occurring in the union's approach to its relations with the industry.

Then, of course, I did believe, and I do believe, very strongly in the idea that if you do not make your point of view known to the employer, somebody will jump into the vacuum. In all

probability it'll be another employer or an employer representative who will be an "expert on your behalf," only he will--since irony never comes through on a tape--be advancing his own interests. Then best you speak out yourself.

We also were launching at that time a couple of primary, fundamental projects--the educational program and the early retirement program. I also felt that in our kind of an industry, since we don't have national bargaining, if I could get to the employers with the concept of some of these things before they ever hit the bargaining table, we might just lay to rest some misconceptions. So we used those meetings to talk about the early retirement concept, which we launched in 1966, and the educational program, which we launched in 1964 or 1965.

GIEBEL: Were both of these programs received kind of equally? Or did the early retirement program have some more hesitancy to it? It seems to me that you were asking employers to do a little bit more in those situations [early retirement] than you were in the education. They could get benefits immediately, and whatever came, would; but in early retirement they were kind of committing themselves to the long-run, mutual benefit of both union and management. Was there resistance from employers?

BROWN: On the educational program the employers didn't believe that we'd ever get it off the ground. Since the first thing they always ask is "How much is it going to cost me," when we told them only half-a-buck a week, what the hell, that was worth the price to get us off their backs. So there was great skepticism about the education program, based upon some fair experience on the part of many employers, where programs had been launched in various cities and had never come off successfully. So that the feeling was generally that "Ahhhh, these are grand plans. We're all in favor of education and training. That's motherhood, religion, and we'll go along with it." We showed them slides and told them about putting out a referendum to our members and "we're building up funds," and "we're going to jointly move with you," and "we'll be coming to you at the bargaining table." But they couldn't see where we were headed, particularly, except no one dared be against education.

They did try a little bit to talk about education as a means of developing a pool of people from which they could draw for employment. You know, we'd heard that crap for years, and we didn't spend much time on that. Frankly, they didn't think we were going to go anywhere on it. So it was just an educational effort on our part on the national level. We had Bill Schroeder in and showed him slides of what we were up to. In that respect it was pretty good because we did flush out a couple of employers that really were interested and subsequently turned and worked with us in some of the cities.

On the early retirement front, you get another reaction which was fascinating. We presented, right here at the Shoreham Hotel, the whole idea of early retirement, prior to it hitting the bargaining table in any city. They, of course, wanted to know first what the bottom line was, how much it was going to cost. We were then talking about three percent, wholly employer paid. They knew damn well, once we got the foot in the door, what that would mean in terms of increased contribution by the employer. But the thing we had going for us was a problem that the industry has suffered with for a good many years--people staying on too long. And they have a problem with aging.

GIEBEL: Change being very rapid and investing their dollars into changing people's technical capacities.

BROWN: Right! They've had this problem for many, many years. While they wouldn't say it at the meeting openly, I had so many of them come to me afterward and say, "Hey, I think you've really got something there. Now, don't tell anybody I said it to you, but I've got about three guys in our plant that I'd love to retire tomorrow; but they've been with me twenty-five years, they're nice people, and I don't want to throw them out. How soon did you say we can get benefits?" I said, "Well, one year after contributions start." "Good, fine! Count me in!"

GIEBEL: So this was predicated on a formula--"pay out now on the basis of what was taken in now"--with a sort of social security. . . .

BROWN: Well, it was to be funded.

GIEBEL: It would be fully funded?

BROWN: Yes, but off in the future. The unfunded liability was fairly heavy but benefits payable now based upon what we could project as income over the years. But one year from the date contributions would begin there would be sufficient money generated to encourage a man to step out. From an employer's point of view, he'd be able to call a guy in and say, "Look, now, come on. It's been nice. You've been here twenty-five years, and I know you're having trouble staying up with that press. Now you've got this new plan, and I'll pop up another fifty bucks a month for a year. Please retire."

So that attracted them. That attracted them, and fortunately the Employers' Association was so disorganized that they didn't even see what was happening. The stupid PIA, the Printing Industries of America, when they heard about it, voted not to have any part in it on the assumption, I'm told, that they were sure it would fail. Now, that's such a ridiculous conclusion for businessmen to come to in the light of the record of this union! Not the

Photoengravers, not the Pressmen, not the Bindery, but the Lithographers Union had successful Inter Local Pension Plans, had a successful Local One plan, had a successful San Francisco plan, you know.

GIEBEL: Here's a case where your union is taking leadership again for the whole industry. Even the trade association for the industry seems unwilling to take the leadership in terms of staking out new programs for further development of the industry.

BROWN: Absolutely! Not only that, they voted not to be a part of it as an organization because in one of the early drafts for the trust agreement, we put in that the "PIA shall select X number of employers." They had a meeting and took up the question and voted not to participate. Of course, now, now they're fighting to get in. They've got the executive secretary of the PIA on the Board and had to ask that he be permitted to come on [the Board] and that they would remove him if at any time I objected. So that it was funny. When it came full circle and was implemented and became successful and the employers around the country were now saying, "Hey, it's a good thing!". . . .

GIEBEL: So that these types of things helped to establish credibility in some employers' minds that you weren't necessarily a force that was going to be detrimental to their own interests. In fact, you could help solve some of their problems for them--retirement, retraining.

BROWN: Well, that was the theme. That was the theme we were presenting through our liaison meetings. Then, of course, about the same time I launched an all-out campaign to address just about every employers' meeting that I could get an invitation to address. By then I was selling the merger. I just turned all the arguments around to the employer --fewer unions in the plant, one union to deal with, one set of bargaining, then the educational program, then the early retirement program. So we had a lot to sell.

(We now leave Tape Four, Side one, because it is here that the interviewers realize the taping error. The rest of Tape Four, Side one material has been inserted in the proper sequence earlier in the transcript.)

HOFFMAN: We want to talk about the merger with the Bookbinders, which is a little bit out of phase in terms of chronology at this point, except that Greg [Geibel] had made the point, which I agree with and I wonder if you do, that the merger with the Bookbinders was really a very different kind of merger.

BROWN: Yes, there's very little similarity in the two mergers, either from the point of view of our objectives in the second merger or the logic of the second merger. The major arguments for the first merger had to do with similarity of skills and similarity in history of development and a close affinity between the two unions over the years. With the Bookbinders, however, it was a deliberate move to create a union that, for the first time in the history of graphic arts unions, could represent production employees from the front door of a printing plant to the back door.

HOFFMAN: Right. Now, this meant a substantial female membership for the first time?

BROWN: Yes. The Photoengravers Union had about 17,000 members, and to my knowledge there weren't any females in that union. Would that be de facto sex discrimination? (laughter

HOFFMAN: Well, according to the guidelines, yes.

BROWN: The Lithographers Union had a number of female members. If I had to guess, I would say that we had about 1,000 out of 36,000, mostly in San Francisco and in Rochester, a few in Texas. So that was the key to the thrust.

I was saying earlier that if I were an employer, as has been said to me by employers, I would rather not have any union. But if I had to have a union, I'd like to have just one. The last thing I need is six unions. In a discussion I had with the executive vice-president of a very large company one time--they'd opened up a new plant and I was talking to him about our coming in and covering everybody in the plant--I said, "You know, you're going to be unionized one day. You might as well turn around and put in a union that can supply you with the people you need and has a history of being a clean union and sensitive to the employers' demands with respect to new technology, production, etcetera." He said, "Well, I'm not going with any union to cover just one of the processes in my plant. I'm going to only go with a union that covers the plant from door to door." I said, "Well, it's the right of the union to organize people in a definable bargaining unit." He said, "Well, it may be their right, but last year we had four strikes in our one plant--four

termination dates, four different unions, and four different dates in the year. You can't make sense out of that to me under any circumstances. If I had one union in the place, I'd have one strike. Then my problems would be settled for two or three years. I'm not going to get caught up in that again. I'm going to fight to keep the place non-union; and when it turns, I'm going to put a single union in." Well, we'd been hearing that theme constantly. It's a perfectly valid theme for an employer to be advancing.

HOFFMAN: It's not Boulwarism, that's for sure.

BROWN: Not at all. They're not being anti-union. They're just saying, "I want to make sense out of the collective bargaining procedures and not be whipsawed and not have my plant shut down three or four times."

So that what I've been aiming for is to develop an organization which could cover a plant from door to door because, back to the thing we were talking about quite a bit earlier, trying to organize, trying to negotiate, trying to mobilize your resources if you're constantly being pulled off base by strikes, by picket lines of other unions in plants, this is dissipating energies of one kind or another--financial, human, or material. So that the move to develop an organization that can go in and organize a plant and truly say that it represents all the skills that are in that plant from door to door, in a historic sense, and have the franchise, as we talked about, for each of the production aspects of the plant, should be an attractive and stabilizing influence in the industry. That's the theme I've been using in the speeches to the employers' associations--the stabilization in bargaining, the reduction in the number of strikes, minimizing jurisdictional conflict, all of these things. And I think they're absolutely valid points to be made.

GIEBEL: Let me just ask one further thing. Is it not true also that the lithography press is going to be getting into bookbinding more and more, or that traditional bookbinding craft is going to be added right on to the lithographic press in the future? And that even on that level it makes sense?

BROWN: Yes.

GIEBEL: You will, in fact, be inheriting both what is traditionally bookbinders and then inheriting a jurisdictional conflict?

BROWN: Yes. In the 1960s we saw the advent of the web offset press that's come in tremendously. We did a study on this question back in 1964. Bill Schroeder did it, and his projection then was very accurate. More than

fifty percent of all the work can be produced on web offset presses. By golly, it is being produced on web offset presses! And web offset is particularly suitable for running books, and books has been the traditional field of the letterpress-bookbinder.

So here we are--whoops!--into the book and publication field on the offset side. The web offset press has slitting, cutting, folding units hooked right to the press, which is your point, which would hook us right into conflict with the Bookbinders ordinarily. Last week I had a meeting with Bill Schroeder and one of the equipment manufacturers told our committee chairman of Technological Developments that for the first time they're hooking a folding operation onto a sheet-fed press. So it's just a case of in-line production.

That's the kind of thing we can look for more and more, and that goes back to the business of saying that, had we not worked out these mergers, we would be in conflict with the Bookbinders, we would be in conflict with the Photoengravers, with the ITU, as each of these unions fought to replace the lost jurisdiction or to retain the lost jurisdiction. By "replace" I mean take over the new technique or equipment or process that is handling the work previously done by them.

HOFFMAN: Well, that leads right into the question that I was going to ask, which is that now, under the EEOC guidelines, where they're saying you have to have plant-wide seniority, and the bookbinders are coming in, are there going to be sex tensions on the basis of women who have been in some kind of folding-binding operation who are going to look around and say, "Well, what reason is there that I can't think in terms of being a press person?"

BROWN: Yes. Well, we already have that. I would guess that we've had about nineteen or twenty EEOC cases in the last year or two and have a number of them that are currently pending. However, there is less pressure specifically in the area you're speaking of. Where most of the pressure is coming from is where we have certain locals that are 100 percent female or 100 percent male, and there's no way you can square that away against the current laws. That's one problem.

HOFFMAN: And the Bookbinders historically and traditionally had female locals.

BROWN: Yes. Not a lot of them. Ten of them. There are maybe four left now. Where we're running into real problems now is where there is a plant that has what we call "bookbinder 1" and "bookbinder 2"--it used to be called male jobs and female jobs--and they have separate seniority lists, separate hiring priorities, everything separate, the EEOC

and the courts are now saying that these separate lists are not appropriate and have to be changed. You have to have plant-wide seniority. It is not so much that the women are now saying, "I should have the right to that press" as they are saying, "I should be in line for opportunity somewhere in the plant in the higher-paying jobs." We've got some problem with what I would call the professional protester who seeks the most obvious, flagrant violation and says, "I want that position," as a demonstration that she can't get it. We're having very little of that, but we are getting some legitimate complaints.

GIEBEL: Are you getting any employer utilization of this as an issue to not signing a contract? Have employers used this at all? It would seem to me that it's available to them to say, "We're going to refuse to sign a contract with the New York local that is sex discriminating. It makes us party to the discrimination."

BROWN: No, it's the other way around. They want the union involved because that makes a second party to share the costs when the judgment comes against them. One of the phone calls that I had to make today was to try to get an employer to agree to let us get off the docket. We're one of the charged parties, and we haven't even signed the agreement. We want a summary judgment to permit us to argue before the court that there's no basis for us being named in it. The lawyers for the company, the last time we went round on this, opposed our motion. I met with the lawyers yesterday and said, "What the hell do they care whether we're in on it or not?" Well, the strategy is to keep as many of the parties in as possible because if there's a $100,000 settlement, it'll be divided among the parties.

So the employers are not at all refusing to sign contracts. They know that they're going to be caught whether they have a contract or not. The practice in the shop is going to be what does them in. What they're trying to do is blame the union, to say, "This is not the practice we would want to have ourselves. The union compelled us to operate in this fashion." So everybody's trying to shift the blame to everybody else.

HOFFMAN: What's the situation with these separate seniority lists? The reason that pops a bell in my mind is that, as you know, in New Jersey one of the so-called solutions was separate seniority lists for blacks and women. That was approved by a lower court in New Jersey and then thrown out by the higher court from the State of New Jersey as not being true seniority. But it seems to me that events may catch up with the Bookbinders. If the feminists go for some kind of separate seniority lists, that would lead me to raise the question: what is seniority like in these separate lists? Has turnover been so high in these women's locals that typically they do not have very high seniority if seniority is merged?

BROWN: Well, that's part of the answer. They do have very high turnover. High is a relative term; high compared to what? Compared to any litho operation we ever knew the turnover might be one-half of one percent. In the Bookbinders it might be ten percent.

HOFFMAN: How about high compared to other bookbinders?

BROWN: High compared to men, very definitely. The lower the skill job, the higher the turnover rate. That's--what is it?--a business axiom.

HOFFMAN: So that in a period of recession for these women, they might be better off to maintain the separate seniority lists.

BROWN: Well, I think events are moving them, although in the other direction. I don't think the women are sitting around and calculating which would be better. I think they're simply making a judgment whether separate seniority lists have prevented some of them from moving on to higher paid jobs. Just that. So we get charges on that basis.

The other area where we're getting charges is on the health and welfare field where a man's health and welfare provides coverage for his wife, but a working wife's health and welfare does not provide coverage for her husband. That's a very legitimate complaint, but the economics come into it again. It costs more for a married man than it does for a single person. So they just say, "We will cover a married man and his wife and his children, and the rate per head goes up for that person"--maybe a third higher than for a single person, or fifty percent higher. So when the women say they want coverage for their husband, then it will cost a third more than it was costing. Now, who's paying for it? Is the union paying for it? The individual member? Is the employer paying for it? Is it a jointly contributed thing? So the economics is what is preventing resolution of this matter more than anything else.

GIEBEL: So you were saying the Bookbinder merger is an entirely different situation that confronted you?

BROWN: Yes.

GIEBEL: It's probably also true that the local organization that confronted you there was very different. Although the Bookbinders are steeped in history, the locals weren't the same type of locals that you had in the Photoengraver and the Lithographers. Could you talk a little about what you felt to be the structure of the locals at the Bookbinder level?

BROWN: Yes, if you look at the material we put out on merger between the Bookbinders and the GAIU, it was quite different, the thrust of the argument for merger was quite different than in the first merger. We were saying, for example, that we doubted very much that there would be very many local mergers occurring. In fact, we were not persuaded that local mergers were even important in this question, whereas in the first merger we were arguing that International merger would put locals in a position to merge, thus increase their membership base, their finance base, put on more full-time people, and so on. We didn't use that kind of argument at all with the Bookbinders.

The reason for not doing it is that there's a skill difference and thus an historic difference in the way the locals operated and in the issues that they considered. If we were pressing merger and leaving open the question of whether they would have to merge locally. . . . Here's the Chicago Local of the Lithographers and Photoengravers who don't see themselves having anything in common with the Bookbinders in terms of skill and in terms of ability to bargain, in terms of the view of the employer, of the member, the local wages, fringe benefits, everything. And the fear would be that if you put them all into the same package you would dilute your ability to represent these special crafts. So that we turned away from that. Not only turned away from it, we made positive statements that it probably wouldn't be necessary to have local mergers. So that was an essential difference.

By this time we had persuaded the GAIU membership that merger on the International level, however, was terribly important, that it did permit us to mobilize resources better, that we could have more representatives on the staff, that we could develop our Research Department, because we had more dollars to do so. We'd won that argument and so we didn't have to go through that again. They could see that merger with another union probably wouldn't change things locally for them, but that it would be important for us to take one more union out of the picture. It would give us added strength in our dealing with other unions, added strength in dealing with the AFL-CIO, all those things.

HOFFMAN: Yes, now, this was one thing that I wondered. You know, when you look at Connell and look at his long history of relationship with the AFL, including having his offices in the old AF of L building, and his activity with the Allied Printing Trades, did you see him as a possible bridge to other unions in the graphic arts field? Was that part of your thinking?

BROWN: No, not really. It wasn't going to hurt. It's like chicken soup. You know, it wouldn't hurt, but I couldn't see it as a plus. In terms of the relations with the other union, as a result of the mergers that

have occurred, there are only three unions in the graphic arts now plus the Newspaper Guild--three plus the Guild. So all the leadership has changed. The Printing Pressmen leadership has changed; the ITU leadership has changed. Our is the only leadership that has not changed in the last fifteen years. So that nobody can lay claim to any special relationships with other unions in the graphic arts. I really can't see it.

The Bookbinders have had a long and good relationship with the Lithographers. They've also had a long and good relationship with the Pressmen. They've also had a long and good relationship with the ITU. Because they never offended anybody. They were always just nice, decent people.

GIEBEL: Is that a reflection of the power that they had at any particular point, given their control over a craft?

BROWN: You mean lack of power?

GIEBEL: Yes, lack of it, their lack of power in relationship to the other unions. They couldn't really challenge for jurisdiction so much as take what was coming.

BROWN: Well, historically, in the bargaining sense, they aligned themselves on a "me too" basis with either the ITU or the Pressmen, whichever union was more prominent in a particular plant or particular local. Very rarely did they align themselves with the Lithographers. So that they waited until the ITU or the Pressmen settled, and then they would make the settlement that remained. So that they were never a moving force in creating any policy or establishing or breaking any new ground in the graphic arts at all.

They had a more aggressive organizing program, however, than either of the other two unions, and it was in that respect that we found easy, common ground with them, through Jack Wallace. They were accustomed to dealing in much larger numbers per plant than either the Pressmen or the ITU or ourselves. It wasn't uncommon for them to be working on a 400-person plant, so it became very productive for us to hook in with them.

For example, Taylor Publishing in Dallas-Fort Worth [Texas] was one of the biggest organizing campaigns we ever had in our history, and it was a joint campaign with the Bookbinders. So it was productive for us to align ourselves with them. Conversely, they were neither helpful nor hurtful in terms of our relationship with other unions.

GIEBEL: We talked a little bit about the difference in membership and the difference in relations with other unions. What about the administrative aspects of their union both in terms of the talent that was available and also the type of structure that you found?

BROWN: One thing I found in common in all the graphic arts unions that we've negotiated with--the Pressmen, the Stereotypers and Electrotypers, and the Bindery--with the exception of the ITU, their financial pictures were miserable. They were complicated; they badly needed sorting out; there wasn't a plan of any kind.

I'll give you an example which runs through all three of them. The Printing Pressmen, you could study their reports until you were blue in the face and you couldn't figure them out because they were constantly taking money out of one fund, putting it in another fund, listing assets. They would list the Pressman's Home as an asset for three million dollars, and then they would borrow against the three million dollars for another fund. They would give chits to the locals; instead of paying them out of that fund, they'd give them chits. It was nearly impossible to sort out their finances.

When you see that kind of thing, it's obvious that either somebody is incompetent or they're deliberately moving numbers around in order to make up for the lack of income and the lack of an orderly financial arrangement.

HOFFMAN: Or both!

BROWN: Or both. Yes, it could be both! In the case of the Bookbinders, I think they came into this merger with . . . . What did I hear? Was it twelve thousand dollars? Some unbelievably low figure! No, it was $2,500! When we finally cleared the smoke, their assets, apart from ongoing assets, were $2,500. You wouldn't believe it!

GIEBEL: The membership also was surprising, the actual membership.

BROWN: Yes. Their method of operating was kind of strange. So here they came in with $2,500 assets. When we tracked down their method of billing the locals, we found out that they billed the locals for whatever the locals said they had. If the local said they had 800 members, they billed them for 800. If the local said they had 600 members, they billed them for 600. If the local said, "We dropped 300 members," they billed them for whatever was left. Well, that kind of a system lends itself beautifully to "Don't bother me and I won't bother you." It also lends itself beautifully to local unions making their own arrangements with respect to their per capita, undercounting their members, whatever.

So that up on this level, on the International, all they had were three full-time people--the president, the secretary-treasurer, and one vice-president. That one vice-president was around the country all the time, so for practical purposes there were

two people in the International office, the president and the secretary-treasurer. Their administrative approach to the union was totally, totally different than the Lithographers or the Photoengravers or the LPIU, totally different.

HOFFMAN: What about their field staff?

BROWN: To my knowledge they never ever had a staff meeting. One needs hardly to say anything else. They never had a staff meeting. Their representatives did not report, did not make any written reports. They ran what Wickersham refers to as the "bell hop" system. The local calls in; you look to the top of the list, phone that representative, and ask him to go and look after the problem. When he had looked after the problem, he went home and waited for the. . . .

HOFFMAN: Next call!

BROWN: . . . the bell to ring again! (laughter)

GIEBEL: The next question would be the actual particulars dealing with the Bookbinder merger. How did that become a possibility? Did you approach them? Or did they approach you?

BROWN: There was a point in time--I can't pinpoint it for you--when we were talking with the Printing Pressmen, we were talking with the Bookbinders, and we were talking with the Stereotypers & Electrotypers. As you know, with the Pressmen we got into serious merger discussions, and with the IS&EU, serious merger discussions. But throughout all of this time our relationship with the Bookbinders had been maintained, insofar as contact on the International level was concerned, by Vice-President Wallace, who consistently and persistently argued that merger with that union made a good deal of sense and was possible. I had addressed several of their conventions and Vice-President Wallace sort of escalated the situation by exploring merger with them. At their convention they had the resolution in from some locals about merger, and they managed to get it referred, as I recall, back to the executive because the executive wasn't ready to talk merger. You know, the executive of the Bookbinders realized that there was increasing, mounting pressure for merger within their organization. By the next convention they were ready to deal specifically with merger.

I must say that Wallace was not just a contributing factor. He was the dominant factor in pressing the question of merger with the Bookbinders. With respect to the then LPIU, I had a lot of sorting out in my own mind about whether this was the next merger, whether we should go in this direction, or whether we should try to go for the Printing Pressmen. But finally, back to the original thinking that I had that the merger that is possible is the merger that one should be working on, not one that you'd like to

have. I then made up my own mind that, okay, let out all the stops, and let's go after merger with the Bookbinders.

Once we decided on that, we made a plan, and we got it through the Council Board unanimously, and then we set up the whole series of regional meetings on merger and called batches of locals together and really began to pursue the question of merger with them.

HOFFMAN: This was done jointly by the LPIU and Bookbinders?

BROWN: No, separately. We invited Bookbinders to come in, but it was essentially for our union. Then we began the serious talks with the Bookbinders.

At least as I saw it, they had had, over the years, a close working relationship with the Printing Pressmen's Union because in many of the companies and the binderies that their people are in the Pressmen are in, and we're not. In many, many cities, like York, Pennsylvania, you'll find in a large letterpress a Printing Pressmen unit and a Bookbinder unit. On the other hand, in many, many cities, particularly in major cities, in small plants and large plants in major cities, you'll find the Lithographers and the Bookbinders. The reason for that distinction is that the Lithographers Union was always well-organized in the major cities and not necessarily so well-organized in the boondocks. The Pressmen were frequently well-organized in the boondocks. So that the major cities then were oriented toward the Lithographers Union and many of the smaller communities with large plants in them were oriented toward the Pressmen.

John Connolly had had a long relationship with the Printing Pressmen leadership. Boyd DeAndrade, the president of the Printing Pressmen, comes from Boston and John comes from Boston.

HOFFMAN: They were friends?

BROWN: They were friends.

HOFFMAN: So that leads me to an obvious question. From your point of view, why didn't the Bookbinders merge with the Pressmen?

BROWN: Well, because there wasn't sufficient initiative within the Pressmen's Union to work out such a merger. Nor was there sufficient initiative in the Bindery Union to work out such a merger. Both parties were quite willing to let it be the nice relationship. You know, to work out a merger takes a hell of a lot of hard work! It really does! And if you don't have to work hard, why bother? It's the attitude of a good many people. Taking on a merger project is really a commitment of two or three years. Not everybody in your union is going to agree with it either. So that you can't dabble in mergers; you really have to work at them. I don't think there was initiative from either union.

END OF TAPE FOUR,SIDE TWO

BROWN: So long as DeAndrade was alive, John Connolly wasn't going to merge with any other union because that would look as though he was turning against the Printing Pressmen. Of course, DeAndrade died. Another thing happened as well. John Connolly kept saying, "Let's have a merger with all the unions. Let's all get together." Well, that's a great comment, but impractical as hell.

When finally they felt more and more pressure from their own organization, they decided to move with the Lithographers Union. Joe Hellman was the key; he was the president of the New York local. Once Joe decided that merger with our union was in the best interest of the Bookbinders, then John Connolly and Wes Taylor and all the rest of them just jumped into line. He was the key. Of course, the reason Joe wasn't particularly anxious was that he was in New York and his opposite number, Swayduck, wasn't available for merger. So once Joe did a switch. . . .

HOFFMAN: What caused him to change his mind?

BROWN: I've talked to Joe about that, and he saw really serious problems in the future for the Bookbinders in terms of technological change, that there just had to be a marshalling of forces among the unions. And he couldn't see it happening with the Pressmen. He couldn't see anything in the leadership of the Pressmen's Union that would cause him to think that there was a future there.

HOFFMAN: Weren't they also increasingly involved in bargaining with conglomerates?

BROWN: The Bindery Union?

HOFFMAN: Yes.

BROWN: Yes. Of course that question cuts across everybody's activities in the graphic arts. It doesn't matter what union you're talking about, they're all caught up with the conglomerates. But I don't know that they recognized it precisely in that sense. I don't think that the term "conglomerate" was being used by them. They just knew that many big companies were non-union, located in isolated, small communities, and in direct competition with their major urban-based producers.

GIEBEL: Their market had become national very rapidly.

BROWN: Oh, golly, yes! Book production; maybe twelve major companies. Of the twelve major companies, if three of them were unionized, that would be about it. So it was becoming increasingly difficult to bargain.

The Pressmen that they followed were having their own troubles, the same kind of problems. The GAIU seemed to be the only union that was really making strides and doing innovative things.

We had good press, as it were. I don't mean that literally, but good press with the membership of the Bookbinders Union, and with the leadership, for that matter. So once they made up their minds that they were going to have to merge with somebody, they had a meeting and said that of all the unions they want to merge with, it should be the GAIU, which then was the beginning. And we went through the same series of meetings.

GIEBEL: Was it helpful to have worked out the Photoengraver and Stereotyper situations? Was the same kind of format used, where appointed committees sit down, iron things out?

BROWN: Precisely the same format. We did just that. We sat down and, as I said, identified the laundry list, went to work on it.

HOFFMAN: Did you hire somebody again?

BROWN: No, we didn't. We didn't need to at that point. We realized that the constitution itself was less important than was the kind of living aspects--finances, officer representation, council board concept. You see, none of these unions had ever had a council board. They all operated with an executive board, a terribly important difference between our unions. And as you will note, that concept of a council board still is in existence. We've come through two mergers with it, and we still have it.

HOFFMAN: You have it still?

BROWN: Yes. So that getting them used to that kind of thing. . . .

GIEBEL: It's a big council now?

BROWN: Oh, it is. Well, we're a fifty-person Council Board now. We'll be down to thirty-two by April 1st of this coming year. The first year we lop off eighteen people. So that once you get it down to thirty-two, twenty-five, you're down to a manageable group. You can work with twenty-five people. Fifteen is better, but you can live with twenty-five. You can touch base with them unofficially; you can talk to them better; you don't get a lot of extraneous comment. Although, even with a fifty-person board, the thing that happens is the same people do all the talking anyway, but it's just costly. But we had to go through that.

GIEBEL: So the constitution remained pretty much intact? The LPIU constitution and the GAIU look pretty similar?

BROWN: Right. And the reason the Bookbinders went with that, as did the Stereotypers, is that it's rare in the history of a union that you rewrite a constitution. A constitution is mostly a thing that happens. Each convention a couple more things are passed and tacked onto the side of it, and it's a misshapen, misbegotten thing that nobody knows anything about. Nobody remembers the constitution. Who reads it? I don't read the damn thing. Who can remember all the amendments anyway? So it's rare that a union gets a chance to throw everything out and start fresh.

That's what we did with our first merger, and the Bookbinders saw that. So we just said, "Wherever possible the LPIU constitution will be used. Only when the Bookbinders have some peculiar, particular thing will we drop that into the constitution." Consequently, there's very little difference between the GAIU constitution and the LPIU constitution, very little difference.

HOFFMAN: What effect did it have on them to suddenly find themselves operating in a council?

BROWN: I heard two kinds of comments. One is that "Ahhh, they just talk about the same crap over and over again." I've heard that comment. Coupled with that frequently is "Brown keeps us in meetings too long." They were not accustomed to coming to work at nine o'clock, going until twelve, starting at two, meeting until five, getting named to a committee that meets at night, and start again in the morning. That wasn't the way they operated, so that was kind of a complaint.

The other side of that were those who said, "Gee, we didn't know anything about our union until we got on this Council. We didn't know how it worked. We know it didn't work like this did. We didn't know anything about our union." The reaction generally has been very good. It has developed quite a large base of people who have a better, greater awareness of the problems and how the International Union works.

On the litho-photoengraving side it's had a different effect, quite a different effect, and almost a bad effect. Not almost, it has had a bad effect, because here were men who were heads of big locals, belonged to a comparatively small Council, had an easy, close relationship with the president. Nobody was pulling him in any direction except theirs. And overnight we went from an organization of 60,000 to an organization of 130,000; and I went from having a ten-man officer board to a twenty-man officer board. We went from a seventeen-person representative staff to a forty-person representative staff, and our office staff here increased by a third. So the demands overnight--time demands, personal contact demands, which was the major problem--changed.

See, somebody is elected an officer in an organization, and I consider an organization of 130,000 to be a pretty good size. If somebody is elected to office to run that kind of an organization or to be an officer in that kind of an organization, and he didn't know anything else, then he doesn't have to do any unlearning or relearning or adjusting. But we've come from a very small Photoengraver unit, where everybody knew everybody and, as we were talking earlier today, where people stayed at one another's homes. The Lithographers were not quite as personalized, but very close to it. All the way up to the situation now in which it's not possible to have as personalized an operation; it simply is not possible.

The comment you hear more often now than anything is "Gee, I hardly ever see you" or "I hardly get a chance to talk to you." People come up to you in a conference and shake hands, and you know it's not true, but it's almost as though they used to spend their waking hours with you years ago. Well, they didn't, but in their minds they did, which is just as bad as though it were real.

HOFFMAN: Now, let me ask you this. It seems to me there's a lot of skilled-nonskilled conflicts within other unions. Do you think this is a factor, that the Lithographers and Photoengravers are not used to talking to people who are representing non-skilled workers?

BROWN: Yes, there's some problem there, but that isn't a problem for the councillors. How can that be a problem for them? They come to a meeting every three months. They're not dealing on a day-to-day basis with this.

So, now, that's not a problem; and yet there is a problem with the councillors. I think the problem with the councillors is that they don't like being in a much larger group. They don't like that and that will not change until after this term. No matter what I say to them, it doesn't mean anything with respect to . . . . But wait until the end of the term. As far as they can see now, what they thought was a highly effective arrangement that we had before is gone.

GIEBEL: So the Council is playing a lot less of a role in the policy development, just by the numbers. Even if you have a committee of five delegated to develop a policy about some technological change, it's now going to be five of fifty--one tenth. Whereas before it was five of fifteen and there were thirty-three. So what you're saying is that, even if they probably do play the same role of evolving policy, they don't feel that they are actually the "convention in absence of convention". I think that somebody talked to us about the Council, that they used to feel that they were actually the convention; when you were not meeting, they carried the members' wishes to the International office. Some of that's been lost now?

BROWN: I'm not sure about that point. You know, in the dynamics of running anything, whether it's an office in a university of a PTA or a kibbutz in Israel or a union or a business, numbers change things in the policy-administrative apparatus. They just change things. There isn't any way that more than ten people can report to one person. If you get more than ten or twelve people reporting to one person, then things start to lose.

For example, as soon as we merged, overnight we had doubled our staff. One of Wickersham's jobs is to direct the representatives. Well, there are too many representatives for him to direct and keep up with his other work. He couldn't possibly maintain the same kind of personalized contact with the guys. So what do you do? Put on another assistant? Put on another assistant, which in theory would not cut his work in half but would provide an opportunity for other people to talk to the second man who in turn would filter stuff to the first man. That's the theory. In reality it puts the first man a little bit further from a whole batch of people that he normally was in close contact with. It may still be just as efficient, but it's de-personalized somewhat.

The same thing happens with the Council. Prior to this I had a council meeting, and since I met with the officer frequently through the week and through the month, when we'd go to a council meeting it was very easy for me to have dinner with a selected number of councillors to talk about certain issues. But how can I do that now? It's physically impossible. We'd need eighteen nights for me to get through all the Council, having dinner with them. End result: one night I had dinner with Milt Williams and one of the guys that was in with him, plus John Gabbard, one of the vice-presidents, plus somebody else; the next night I had dinner with Heber Stephens of Twin Cities, president of the Twin Cities local, plus one of our officers and somebody else; the next night I had dinner with. . . . well, I've even forgotten. But the point is that three nights went, and I touched base with about three people. Well, more than three, but that still left a great number untouched. So how do you address yourself to that kind of thing?

GIEBEL: That's one whole set of problems with the increase in numbers. Now, another set of problems seems to be that the organization is changing some of its identity. It is moving from a craft organization to an industrial focus. I mean, door-to-door is certainly an industrial philosophy. Also, you're bringing people on who come out of an industrial philosophy, say, representatives who are going to have to deal with craft locals, negotiating contracts. There seems to be this area of change between craft and industrial, and it seems to be maybe a problem going both ways. Did it surface or does it continue to surface?

BROWN: I'm reasonably sure that while we will have an industrial union in the traditional sense, we will nevertheless have a craft orientation within an industrial union. I'm satisfied that that will continue to be the case, that the leadership is going to come out of the craft segment; that the policy-making, with respect to bargaining particularly, and organizing, and everything else for that matter, is going to have a heavy stamp of the craft segment. So I don't see us sort of lost in this business of industrial unionism. As a matter of fact, we can't get lost there.

See, one of the advantages that the Auto Workers and the Rubber Workers have over our union--even assuming we had half a million members or a million members--is that they have half-a-dozen plants. They have contract negotiations that go on, and they're over. Now, if you asked me what I do with my time. . . . Now, I've had all the phone calls shut off today, but whatever phone calls I've had have been on bargaining. Whatever I was doing on the West Coast last week, it was on bargaining. Whatever I was doing the week before, it was a bargaining conference. Bargaining, bargaining, bargaining. We bargain all the time. I don't know of any other union that negotiates as we do. It's the nature of the industry--all small companies. I suppose the Clothing Workers may have the same kind of problem.

So that we can't afford the luxury of knocking off six contracts and then saying, "Okay, now I'll devote my time to political action," which industrial unions can do. We can't do that. So that we're not going to go the way of the industrial union. There's still going to be--I think forever in the graphic arts--this heavy emphasis on bargaining which relates itself to the craft, which relates itself to technological change, and hocks in with organizing. I don't think we're ever going to be an industrial union in the sense that most people think of an industrial union.

GIEBEL: Okay, then, can you comment on the reverse, the people that have come out of the Bookbinders? Have they been able to service the craft needs of the Photoengraver and Lithography locals? Have they been able to fit in with the particular type of craft consciousness that your representatives for the Photoengravers and Lithographers have?

BROWN: Well, it's too early. It may be that [Eu]Gene Boerner or Murray McKenzie have negotiated a contract or two for litho or photoengraving. I'm not even sure they have. Some of the representatives, I know, have worked across all branches. Vince Maloux in Quebec, I'm told, is negotiating for whomever they want. There may be some others. It's too early. We've only been merged three years or whatever it is, and it's really too early to have brought that about.

A good many of the Bookbinder locals call for a Bookbinder representative. They don't want a Lithographer negotiating their contract. By the way, the Bindery people have a craft orientation. Murray McKenzie and Gene Boerner consider themselves skilled craftsmen first. The wage rates that Joe Hellman has for his contracts are higher than Eddie Swayduck's in New York--higher rates, shorter workweek, better health and welfare provisions, plus better pension provisions. So they don't feel like second-class citizens to the skilled craftsmen. The leadership of the Bookbinders Union historically has come out of that group. So that I expect that same kind of leadership will flush up to the surface in the organization with a skill orientation.

HOFFMAN: Is there going to develop any kind of bargaining boards or conferences?

BROWN: You mean to develop policy?

HOFFMAN: Yes, right. Wage policy committees which are focused on particular aspects of the industry.

BROWN: Well, we run a highly centralized operation. I'm not sure how long we're going to be able to keep that up. But we run a highly centralized operation, which means that policy development occurs through discussion with a group of comparatively few in number. We run it through the International Council, then we negotiate it in a half-a-dozen major locals, and that becomes the pattern.

Wage policy committees, as far as I can see, are largely a charade designed to impress either the members or the employers or perhaps some of each. I don't think that's a particularly impressive way to proceed. It might be a necessary way for some unions; I don't see it as important for us.

HOFFMAN: Well, I think you're certainly right. It's a part of the preliminary pas de deux before the main ballet.

BROWN: Yes. Sometimes important. I haven't seen it as an important thing for us to do.

GIEBEL: How has the inclusion of the Bookbinders into the LPIU changed the political balance of the internal politics? Now, with Local One in New York dropping out, Chicago picked up some of the political power that the void created. Now, what has happened with a whole new membership almost double what the LPIU was? Has there been any significant change?

BROWN: Oh, yes. Actually it has resulted in a little more balance again. For example, the New York Bookbinders local is a local of four or five thousand members, and they're accustomed to voting strong and voting as a bloc,

which tends to set them up, if you like, as a counter to the Chicago situation.

See, we were never accustomed to as large numbers. We thought in terms of locals with five hundred to a thousand as being big locals. I was president of a big local--a thousand members. I think it was sixth or seventh at one time. The Bookbinders have 1000-member locals in Sornie, Idaho! (laughter) It's the damnest thing! So those kinds of numbers have sort of confused us a little bit, confused some people, and we haven't got it locked in yet. So there is a shift in that balance. We don't know yet how well they deliver votes. It looks to me, from what I've seen up until now, that votes are delivered where people work at it, and they're not delivered where there's no leadership.

You take our Atlanta local. It was always a nonentity in a political sense in the old LPIU and the old ALA. It wasn't a very large local, and the leadership there were nice people but they just didn't do anything at election time on issues. But there's a president of a Bookbinder local down there, Truitt Crunkleton, with six or eight hundred people and by God, he delivers every vote in the city! So now that becomes of political consequence. So the numbers situation has changed. I don't think anybody yet has got a good reading on it.

One of the reasons that Swayduck was anxious not to have a merger, as was reported to me, was that he saw 17,000 Photoengravers neutralizing, in part, his influence, which maybe answers your question in a different way.

GIEBEL: I guess, then, a question I'd want to ask is about the result of the merger. We talked about political consequences and some of the internal structural change, but what about the industry conditions? Do you feel that the merger has helped in some regards? And where has it made little difference?

BROWN: Well, I don't think it's altered the industry situation particularly. The union structure should be really responding to changes that are occurring in the industry, and I think what we've done is put ourselves in position to adapt more readily to change that is occurring in the industry. Some companies are taking the opportunity to make good use of the merger. I mentioned a company right here in Washington that was dovetailing its termination dates, cutting down on the amount of bargaining, and minimizing the chances of leap-frog strike situations. I don't know how extensive that is, but some people are making good use of it. In the city of San Francisco we have a big Bookbinder local, and we have a big Litho-Photoengraving local. We've had two strikes there, and in both cases they have respected one another's picket lines.

HOFFMAN: Two strikes since merger?

BROWN: Yes.

GIEBEL: City wide?

BROWN: Yes, city wide. Never did it before. Respected the picket lines now. Bingo! We're heading into bargaining right now out there. It's very difficult to measure what that does to the bargaining scene, but it sure as hell changes it. In all negotiations in San Francisco there's a representative from Bookbinders sitting in on Litho negotiations and a representative from Litho sitting in on Bookbinder negotiations. In the meeting I just finished last Friday, we made that as a rule in all the cities on the West Coast that are heading into bargaining. So the employers are getting the message.

GIEBEL: Has the ease in which cost-of-living has been inserted in some of the Bookbinder contracts in places where they weren't in the LPIU contracts before, be some measure of the increased effectiveness in bargaining? Or is that simply things that were coming along anyway?

BROWN: I'm not sure I understand where there was a cost-of-living inserted with any ease in the Bookbinders.

GIEBEL: Okay. I had understood that cost-of-living was inserted in New York early.

BROWN: The Bookbinders?

GIEBEL: Yes. They had a cost-of-living, and one of the feelings was that it would be necessary to get other Bookbinder locals into that or it was going to create more of an imbalance. I had understood that there were contracts that were now being negotiated that had cost-of-living in. Chicago said that they had felt that they were going to get that into their contract. Is that because of some of the trade-offs that the Graphic Arts has been able to give? Or was Chicago probably set to get cost-of-living for the Bookbinders anyway? I'm not sure you can isolate these things that way.

BROWN: Oh, yes, well, in Chicago what has happened, the other graphic arts unions have all moved to put the cost-of-living formula in after we got it. I'm not sure whether merger helped or hindered that; it certainly didn't hinder it, but whether that meant they got it any sooner than they would have otherwise. If they got it with a four-cent-a-point formula, then they got it because we were merged.

In the case of New York, one of the locals there did not have the cost-of-living formula, and they got it. The one they got, though, was the same as Joe Hellman's. There are three or four

locals in New York, and they got the same as the other Bindery local, the cost-of-living.

We picked up a cost-of-living formula in Neena-Menasha in the great big Banta plant with 1,000 employees in the Bindery, that we would never have gotten without merger. We got a thirty-five-hour workweek in the same plant that we would never have gotten without merger.

HOFFMAN: Where was this?

BROWN: Neena-Menasha, Wisconsin. The Banta Company, one of the biggest companies. We got those kinds of conditions for the Bindery people because of merger. So the leveling-off process of some of the contract conditions and langauge has already begun. There's plenty of evidence. In Toronto and Montreal they picked up a thirty-five-hour workweek, they put in the early retirement provision; they made fantastic progress! Dick Clarke, our vice-president, and Len Paquette--neither one of them Bindery people--handled the negotiations. Charlie Buhler, president of the Toronto local of the Bindery, said to me, "I don't know whether everybody was persuaded that merger was a good thing or not, but, by God, we could no more have signed that contract we signed in Toronto and in Montreal were it not for the merger!" So there are buckets of evidence that it's helping.

GIEBEL: Is that because of the picket-line clause? Or is it struck work?

BROWN: It's the implied strength, the implied support, whether there's a picket-line clause or not. As a matter of fact, in some areas we don't even have a picket-line clause, but the word goes to the employers.

END OF TAPE FIVE, SIDE ONE

BROWN: . . . (mid-sentence). . Photoengraver group crossed the picket line after we were merged. My worst fears were realized. Terrible! Unbelievable! So the employees immediately put out a bulletin and said, "You need not feel that simply because of the merger, it's a guarantee that the Lithographers will respect the Bookbinders' picket line or vice versa. Here's what happened in San Diego." Jesus!

GIEBEL: Let me ask you quickly about a few things in the industry, and then we can move on to your role as International president. Has the effect of conglomerates and multinational firms had an impact that you feel is going to so severely affect the industry that it's going to become unstable--the movement south, the movement out of traditional printing centers, Meredith/Burda situation in which there's a foreign firm employing German gravure workers in the south unorganized? Are these things a real threat? Or are they overexaggerated?

BROWN: I don't think it's possible to overexaggerate the impact on the union and the industry, in either short-range terms or long-range terms, of the kinds of things you describe.

In 1966-1967-1968 *Forbes Magazine* particularly, analysed the printing industry, the graphic arts, printing and publishing, and said this is a good industry for investment. Right about that time there were a lot of companies that were coming off a highly successful period--Litton Industries, Arcada, American Standard, and a whole list of them. They were cash-rich.

HOFFMAN: Yes, they were like the Arabs.

BROWN: Yes, right.

HOFFMAN: Looking for a place to put their money.

BROWN: Looking for a place to put their money. They all rushed into the graphic arts industry, some of them wisely. Beatrice Foods--these are companies that do $350,000,000 annual volume, where an average litho graphic arts company, if they did six to nine millions dollars, was considered a nice, healthy little company. They--the big companies--came rushing into the graphic arts industry. American Can was another example.

The Livermore-Knight Company in Providence, Rhode Island, was an old, old litho company, been in business God knows how many years. The president of that company created what was called Printing Corporation of America and began acquiring other plants. And then in that pick-up period in 1968, 1969, he sold a whole lot, undoubtedly on a stock-trade arrangement, to American Can. So American Can moved with what they called their Venture Capital Division into the graphic arts industry. Venture Capital meant just that to them. They had more cash than they knew what to do with, and they moved it into the printing business. Almost overnight they became the largest single printing company in America--American Can. It wasn't in the printing business at all!

All right. The wheel turned, and the squeeze came on American Can, as with a lot of companies. We're into the seventies now. And they need capital. They were now in a capital-crunch prob-

lem. So every one of these companies that wasn't showing the five percent profit as a profit center that they had acquired, said, "Get rid of them." The Livermore-Knight Company that was perhaps eighty or one hundred years old--I've forgotten--was shut down. I met with American Can officials before the actual close down, and they said, "Look, Ken, there isn't anything you can do. It's not your people. If you cut the wages on half of the people working there--a big plant in our terms, maybe 150 people--we can't keep it open. There are thirty-six shifts to sell, and our salesmen can't fill them, and we're losing $100,000 a month. So down it goes."

Three weeks ago one of the oldest plants in Chicago with 130 jobs I believe, was shut down. If I think carefully, I can remember the name of the plant--American Can. They picked up Poole Brothers, a printing group in Chicago, including this old, old plant, a place where George Gundersen, president of the local, worked when he worked at the trade. It's had a traumatic effect upon George. One hundred and thirty highly skilled craftsmen! Because it wasn't showing a profit, they've got a dollar crunch--bang!--shut the place down.

HOFFMAN: It makes a difference, too, in terms of who you're bargaining with, doesn't it? I mean, you're not bargaining with anybody who ever even used to be a fellow craftsman.

BROWN: Right. Oh, golly, yes.

HOFFMAN: You're now bargaining with some kind of bureaucrat that's been hired to bargain in terms of percentages.

BROWN: Yes, the IR man that's come full-blown into the graphic arts industry. Full-blown into the industry! We no longer have a man who has his ass in the meat grinder, the owner of the place who's sitting with his knees under the table, talking to the union about his plant. We don't have that any more. I shouldn't say "we don't have." We do have it in some instances, but less and less is that happening. So there's fantastic adjustment occurring. This business of shut-downs is a very real threat.

HOFFMAN: The other problem, it seems to me, too, in terms of the shut-down business, is something that Senator [Richard] Schweiker was talking about. You're also dealing with a guy who not only has no identity with the craft or with the trade or with the industry, but also he doesn't necessarily have any identity with the community. He doesn't really care what happens to Kenosha, Wisconsin.

BROWN: God no! He was moved in there just like the plant was.

HOFFMAN: That's right.

BROWN: It might be moved out a few weeks later.

HOFFMAN: That's right. He's not looking to the health of that community--to raise a family, to send the kids to school, etcetera.

BROWN: Right. You know, if you scratch the surface of a man who belongs to our union, what you turn up depends on where he works, what company he works for, what city he's in, and how large the community is. If you scratch the surface of a person who belongs to our union in Racine, Wisconsin, works for Western Publishing, or in Mt. Morris, Illinois, or in Hannibal, Missouri, or here in New Jersey in Bridgeton or in Scranton, Pennsylvania--and you could just go on naming them, one-shop towns; not really, but for practical purposes one-shop towns--you scratch the surface of that man, you'll find that, first, he's an employee of the company. That's where he sees his fortunes and his future. Second, he's a lithographer or a craftsman, and third, he's a member of the union.

Now, you go into a major urban center, and that reverses itself. First, he's a member of the union; second, he's a craftsman; third, he's an employee of that company.

Where this business of the conglomerates is having such a big effect is that people in these small towns that identified with the owner of the plant. . . . "Good ol' Bill went around the plant calling us all by the first name. He'll always look after us." Well, 'good ol' Bill', the son-of-a-bitch, sold out for a stock trade to some conglomerate in a five-year contract or a two-year contract to run the place and bought a place down in Florida, ran out his contract, and then took off. All of a sudden the employees say, "Holy Jesus, where's good ol' Bill?"

HOFFMAN: Well, but there are two reactions, it seems to me, that employees can have to this situation. I've seen both of them. One is they look around and there's nobody to hate. You used to be able to hate Andrew Carnegie. You knew exactly who was responsible for how hot and dirty and bad it was. Now you look around and there's nobody to hate, except the local union president and the shop steward. So that it may result in a kind of inverse, perverse kind of way, the guy holds the union responsible now for whatever his troubles are.

BROWN: Well, that may be in some industries. But you see, they didn't hate anybody to begin with in our industry. They just didn't hate anybody. It was a nice place to work. It's a clean place; the wages are good in the graphic arts, a thirty-five-hour workweek. They didn't hate the man. They didn't love him, but, by golly, he was from which all benefits did flow in the small one-shop town.

GIEBEL: Now, the reverse is also true. If it's a small, one-shop town and they don't get bought up by a conglomerate, then they don't have the investment capital to buy these new high-speed presses. Milt Williams, the Philadelphia GAIU president, was saying to me that one of the mistakes they made in Philadelphia was not to see the advantages in keeping their industry competitive by getting this outside capital to invest in web offset presses, to make their lithographers and photoengravers and bookbinders competitive to Chicago and various other places--Beatrice Foods and Western Publishing--where conglomerates were able to go in. Now, it seems like a no-win proposition. If you invite them in, you're doomed to changing conditions. If you don't invite them in, you become non-competitive.

BROWN: Well, I don't think it's a question of whether you invite them in or not. Republic Corporation on the West Coast, which you hardly ever hear about now, at one point was the most acquisition-minded company in the graphic arts. Their vice-president in charge of acquisitions bragged to me one day that he had, for a year, picked up a new plant every week-and-a-half! A new plant! What kind of plants were they looking for! They weren't looking for highly profitable, well-managed plants because those kind of places aren't sold. Places being sold were places where the management was getting old; their sons or whatever were idiots or else they didn't have any, so there was a terrible gap in their management. They hadn't been plowing back money for new equipment; they'd been using old stuff and milking the damn place; and they became ripe. The guy got tired and said, "I want to get out." So American Standard or Republic Corporation or Arcadia came along and said, "Hey, we'll give you a good deal. We'll give you stock here in our company; we'll give you a contract to run the place for a couple of years." And away you go.

So there's a certain merit to what Milt says, but the conglomerates moved into Philadelphia anyway, because they picked up these old junk shops and got them cheap, too. Because those employers there, what were they doing with the money instead of plowing it back? What were they doing with it? The answer is they were setting themselves up very nicely. So several companies in Philadelphia have sold out to conglomerates, old-line companies.

HOFFMAN: Milt complains about the non-fertility, especially with respect to the production of sons among his employers!

BROWN: Yes! (laughter) Right. But they became ripe for acquisition in Philadelphia and they've been picking them up right and left. My reason for saying that we couldn't exaggerate or overstate the case with respect to the impact of the conglomerate and the multi-graphic arts plant on today, and on the future, goes back to the business that, with the downturn in the economy, long enough now so that even the graphic arts

industry has felt it, these companies that picked up plants as profit centers now have centers that are not profitable. And they're going to shut them down right and left, having nothing to do with the ability of the craftsmen, nothing to do with the community--the point you were making--nothing to do with anything. Is it feasible from a tax point of view?

One of the biggest plants in Washington announced six weeks ago they're closing down. It's the McCall Corporation. They are closing in June. I had some discussion with a man the other day who should be in a position to know. I said, "I don't understand why they announce their closing so far ahead. Why didn't they wait until June 1?" "Well," he said, "two things. They had to make arrangements with their customers to ship the work to some of their other plants. So they've done that. Then they need to make public what was going to be leaked around as soon as they negotiated with their customers to move their work. So they made a public announcement."

Secondly,--fitting in another little bit of intelligence in the matter--I had lunch with the president of McCall Corporation, the overall president, not the plant president. And he said, "Well, I'm not sure we're going to be able to keep this Washington plant open. We're examining the matter." This was a year ago. Apparently, among other things, they put their tax people on the deal, and they worked out on the yellow sheet that it would be more advantageous financially to close it down for its tax advantages than it would be to keep it open. So the plant's announced it's going down, period!

HOFFMAN: In the meantime the government is going to have to pay welfare or unemployment to all of those people.

BROWN: Yes, whatever. But the board-room people don't care about that. It's advantageous, you know.

HOFFMAN: Right.

BROWN: Now, when that plant was privately owned by whoever the hell built it, that guy didn't say, "Hey, I think I'll close it down for taxes." He had his guts, his life, his blood, everything wrapped up in that plant. And his pride!

Fawcett Publications owns a big plant here. Fawcett is one of the big book publishers in the country, paperbacks. They also own a plant in Louisville, a very old plant. They sold the whole thing to World Color, and World Color just shifted their operation from Louisville to Ephrata, Illinois. The Louisville plant's gone down.

HOFFMAN: What can be done about this? What can be the union's response?

BROWN: Well, it's strictly a defensive thing. You try to make the best of whatever you can.

GIEBEL: With multi-plant operations the work can shift so easily. You can move it around to states where you don't have the rights that other states have for the union.

HOFFMAN: Right. Move into right-to-work states.

GIEBEL: Now, that's had a significant effect as multi-plant firms deliberately open one or two plants down south, even though there might be high transportation costs, just as a hedge so that they can. . . .

BROWN: I don't know that they ever do it just as a hedge, but that is one of the side benefits. Take the classic example of the Krueger Company in Milwaukee. Two big plants in Milwaukee. We have them both organized and have had them for years and years. Krueger Company, fifteen years ago, opened a plant in Phoenix, Arizona, and have effectively prevented us from organizing it, lo these many years. The new president of Krueger--new, about five years--Bob Mathews, has now opened a plant down in Mississippi, non-union. He's going to keep it that way. Now he's just opened another plant down in one of the other states right down on the Gulf of Mexico. I've forgotten which one. So now he's got one, two, three non-union plants, two union plants, and he just bought another plant in Los Angeles which is non-union.

I read a speech that this man made to the employers about how to deal with the union when there's a strike. And he has effectively set himself up so as to minimize the impact of a strike if we decided to strike him again. So that here it is, this organization of capital in the printing industry, which was almost like a mom-and-pop industry, almost a cottage industry, damn near, and all of a sudden there was this kind of mobilization of capital.

HOFFMAN: Well, if you go back five years, one of the answers was coordinated bargaining. If you're dealing with Continental Can, then what you do is you go and see Jacob Clayman, and he'll say, "Let's see if we can't get together and arrive at some kind of coordinated contract expiration date. We'll all go in there together--the Machinists, the Steelworkers, and the Graphic Arts Union--and we'll face them as sort of a conglomerate of our own." Is that still a reasonable posture when what you're faced with now is contraction and closing and cutting down and phasing out these operations?

BROWN: Well, I think our larger priority at the moment is unionization rather than coordinated bargaining. I don't mean one to the exclusion of the other, but in terms of priority I think unionization of these divi-

sions of these companies should have higher priority. See, contract bargaining comes at you whether you want it or not. That contract runs out, and the members say, "Hey, what are you going to do?" to the local leader, and the contract has to be negotiated. You can turn your back on that; it'll happen. But with organizing, you can't do that. With organizing, it has to be initiated, created, financed, manpower, and it's all a bootstrap operation.

HOFFMAN: You've also got to think about this thing that we were talking about at lunch--who can organize these people? Maybe you look at your staff and you realize you don't have anybody who knows how to go to Mississippi or to a Gulf port town in Texas.

GIEBEL: Have you had any feeling that you'll be able to, through the mergers, perhaps mount an organizing campaign that will meet some of these new kinds of problems? Or are you still waiting to find a strategy that will be effective here?

BROWN: I don't think that there is a strategy. I think the only time we're ever going to keep up with the industry, assuming the industry continues to expand. . . . If you look ahead ten years, and it increases seven percent a year for the next ten years, we won't keep up organizing. There will be new companies; there will be shifting of the financing and sort of the capital structure of the industry and the management of the industry. It will constrantly be shifting out from under us one way or the other. Just holding our own on that is going to be difficult as hell. I don't think a strategy is possible because there are so many companies. We could decide to concentrate, as we're doing right now, in Visalia. There are several thousand graphic arts workers there unorganized. We've had a team in there working, but it's tough. It's tough organizing right now.

HOFFMAN: Does that mean you have to have a Spanish-speaking organizer?

BROWN: We have one in there out of our Los Angeles local. But it's very difficult to organize a big plant. We've put a man on in Charlotte, North Carolina. He's working hard, a southerner, and fairly effective. But it's very difficult to organize.

What I'm saying is there are so many plants that the Graphic Arts Union can't organize enough to even hold even. It does not require a strategy; what it does require is a merger between the Printing Pressmen's Union and the Graphic Arts Union. When that happens, then we will have taken everybody out of the field, all of the competitive forces out of the field, in terms of organizing. There will be no competition left. Us or no one. Once we do that,

then I think we've got a chance. But until we do that, while it's better today than it was, by virtue of the Bookbinders being together with the Lithographers and the Photoengravers, I still think we'll be treading water.

HOFFMAN: Are you moving in that direction?

BROWN: There isn't anything on the front burner at all right now. These things have a way of breaking loose, though. I said there has to be a happy confluence of a variety of things.

HOFFMAN: Well, I wanted to deal with the activitiy of the union in politics a little bit. Maybe one of the things we want to talk about first is your being originally a Canadian citizen. By the way, when did you become a citizen of the United States?

BROWN: I'm not.

HOFFMAN: You're not?

BROWN: No.

HOFFMAN: Okay. Still a Canadian?

BROWN: Yes.

HOFFMAN: You go home to Canada to vote?

BROWN: No, I'm not permitted to vote in Canada. I'm a resident alien here. I carry a little green card which permits me to work and not vote. I have taxation without representation!

HOFFMAN: (laughing) Says he bitterly!

BROWN: That rings a bell. If that rings a bell with you, it should! It was designed to! (laughter)

HOFFMAN: On the other hand, Ken, I don't detect any lack of interest in American politics when I talk to you!

BROWN: (loudly laughing) No, I should say not!

HOFFMAN: Eddie Donahue has been liberated to be pretty active politically. Don Stone certainly supported COPE and political action committees from the very beginnings. So did Martin Grayson. I mean this has been, for its size, an active political force in the labor movement and a liberal force, moreover. You have not always gotten along with the establishment of the labor movement with respect to. . . .

BROWN: And still do not.

HOFFMAN: And still do not! And how do you see your role? I gather that you don't think your membership is as highly political as, say, the Rubber Workers or the Steelworkers; that they are not as concerned as perhaps somebody like Eddie Donahue would hope that he could educate them to be. But what do you see as your role in terms of the politics of the American labor movement?

BROWN: Well, the opportunity presented by our being in positions of influence in the union is just too great to resist. In fact, if we didn't do anything about it, then we would deserve to be criticized. What I mean by that is that the membership of a union permits the leadership wide and great latitude provided the leadership satisfies their economic well-being and addresses itself from time to time to their social, educational, and maybe even cultural concerns, way, way down on the scale.

First, their economic well-being. So that as the president of the union I don't have a member from Sornie, Idaho, saying to me once a week, "Why did you take a position on this matter?" or "Why didn't you?" They leave it to you. Some people, when they get left that kind of an opportunity, don't do anything with it. Our union has consistently and steadily escalated the involvement of our leadership in this union on the political scene. I believe we have the responsibility to exercise leadership in this field, to make our point of view felt on the political arena. If we don't, I think we're not discharging our responsibilities. If we are not reflecting 100 percent the view of our membership, that wouldn't surprise me because I don't think anybody who's trying to speak for 130,000 people could necessarily reflect their view unless he polled them once every now and again. I don't think that's practical, and I don't think that's important.

I'll give you an example. We endorsed [George] McGovern. Now, McGovern and his policies more nearly reflected the point of view of the majority of the officers of our organization than did Nixon. To put that another way, there was a deep-seated distrust, dislike, and fear of Nixon, which translated itself into support for McGovern. But support for McGovern only came about because I was willing, along with people like Donahue and Stone, to urge that we endorse McGovern. And we did, one of the seventeen unions that did in spite of the position of the AFL-CIO. To the best of my knowledge, I only received--and I believe the same with Donahue--one letter protesting that action.

Now, I know of another union--specifically it's the Sheet Metal Workers Union, Eddie [Carlough], president. He's in the building trades, and most of the building trades were busy endorsing Nixon. Carlough, by instinct and whatever, didn't want to

endorse Nixon, and so he didn't. He really wanted to endorse McGovern, but he made the mistake of polling his members. Well, we wouldn't have made that mistake. If we'd polled our members, we would have gotten the same results he got. They would have said, "Endorse Nixon". Why not? Because sixty-two percent of the people--was it sixty-two percent?--were for Nixon. That means sixty-two percent of the lithographers and the photoengravers were for Nixon, too. And yet we didn't endorse Nixon; we endorsed McGovern and didn't get any criticism for it.

HOFFMAN: And now you have greater credibility with your membership on account of it.

BROWN: Much greater credibility! People have come up and said, "I didn't agree with what you did. By God, I give you credit for taking a position, and now, in the light of events, it turns out you were right and we were wrong."

HOFFMAN: So next time they may listen a little more carefully.

BROWN: Maybe, yes.

HOFFMAN: Did you take a position on the war in Vietnam?

BROWN: Yes, we did. The very same situation there. Some years ago Ed and I discussed with Don Stone the idea of getting a resolution adopted by the International Council. I'll tell you what it was: Do you remember when they were having monthly moratoriums, one day once a month, to try to focus attention on the Vietnam thing? Well, we were having a Council meeting, and I prepared a resolution to take to the board when we were the LPIU. We worked it, and I kept modifying it and modifying it from Ed's position, because I said, "There's no point in this unless we can get it passed." You know, I don't feel good about getting a real good resolution rejected; I'd rather get something else adopted.

When we took that to the board, I tell you it was like having a meeting with Attila the Hun! (laughter) My God, it was unbelievable! It got so bad that finally I said, "I would like to suggest that we table this matter and not take any votes." Because I didn't want a vote on the record. All that would have been left was Stone and myself and Donahue and blood on the wall, nothing else! And I finally got rid of it. A year later I tried again. Same result, same result. Gee, you wouldn't believe!

END OF TAPE FIVE, SIDE TWO

BROWN: (mid-sentence). . . to the British Trade Union Congress. And they asked me if I wanted them to write a speech for me. I said that no, I'd work it out. (laughter) The other delegate with me was [C.L.] Dennis from the Railway Clerks Union, a very nice man, you know.

HOFFMAN: Why did Meany ask you to do that, by the way?

BROWN: Darned if I know.

HOFFMAN: That's very peculiar! He sure couldn't have cleared that with Jay Lovestone.

BROWN: Dennis asked me about the speech and I said, "No, I'm working something out." He said, "Well, they've given me a speech." So he made it. God, he attacked the Communists in Hungary and the Communists here and the Communists there, and they boohed him. They boohed him and they boohed him. I made a speech attacking America's involvement in the Vietnam War.

HOFFMAN: Did you explain that you were a Canadian?

BROWN: The president of the Congress mentioned that to them. There was also a Canadian delegate there from the Steelworkers, Larry Sefton, who has since died.

HOFFMAN: Oh, yes, right.

BROWN: Of course, my speech was received; they gave me huzzahs and cheers. Brief speeches you make, five-minute things.

When I came back, things were different. It had been reported. And I had said in my remarks, "If I never see you again, it'll be because President Meany decides to send a delegate that more nearly reflects the views of the American labor movement!" (laughter) There was no question that I wasn't representative of the views of the American labor movement.

Then we had a convention in New Orleans, and we took a resolution to that convention, and we fought it out on the floor. If you want some interesting reading, you want to read that debate some time. We got a resolution adopted against the Vietnam War, calling for all-out withdrawal and so on. That's when we really broke loose. This was while we were the LPIU, and this was prior to it still being terribly popular. Certainly in the labor movement it never was popular to take that position.

So the answer to your question--it was the long way around--is, Yes, as individuals several of us spoke out against it and spoke out against it. As an organization we took a position much

ahead; I only know of one or two other unions that went on record at convention, debated the matter, and took a position.

HOFFMAN: How do you see the task of political education for the membership? What's the vehicle for that? I mean, now you've alluded to it in a sense, in that you developed, with the help of events, support for the position on the war in Vietnam. But what about positions on welfare rights, medicare, minimum wage?

BROWN: Well, I've long resisted any introduction of those kinds of issues at the International Council of our union or at the conventions. The reason I've resisted them is because we didn't know enough about them. I have refused to rubber stamp positions taken by other unions, even though I knew they were good positions, until we could have a legislative department, a legislative committee that analyzed these positions and came to our board with our own understanding of the issues and verbalized it ourselves. Once we were able to do that, then fine. We've been doing that in recent years, we've been doing that. I got an okay to create a legislative department and created a legislative committee and named Donahue, once we got him on the International, as chairman.

In fact, I was negotiating with Ed Donahue to become the legislative director prior to his coming on as vice-president. That wasn't in the cards for him, to become a vice-president. He was going to come to work in Washington as legislative director. We were in the middle of negotiations for that position when the convention came and he was approached to run as vice-president and decided to throw caution to the winds and become a vice-president.

HOFFMAN: And run against Ted Brandt?

BROWN: Yes. When he did, then I made him legislative director. Of course, he's been off and running ever since. But we dealt with the Kennedy-Griffith Bill. We had Bert Seidman at our board meeting and went into that and adopted it as a position the minute it was presented. On the Occupational Safety and Health, we did the very same thing. You know, on any issues that have been either of general concern or of specific concern to us, we've discussed them; the committee has met on them, thrashed them out, brought a recommendation in, and we've adopted them. So we can defend it. That's the point I'm making, that we were not pulled and pushed by people who have interests that are not necessarily 100 percent aligned with us.

HOFFMAN: That leads me to ask you a question. What about Burke-Hartke, which is an issue that is tearing the Canadian and American membership apart in a lot of unions?

BROWN: We have no problem with it at all. We just came right out against it, and said that it was obviously contrary to the interests of the Canadian members, and unless they were prepared to build in exceptions for the Canadians we were not going to endorse it. We contacted the IUD [Industrial Union Department] and conveyed our feelings to them and asked that they in turn convey our feelings to Meany's office. We had no problem with it at all. Meany responded by saying, "It's not possible to build exceptions. GAT will not permit it."

HOFFMAN: GAT?

GIEBEL: General Agreement on Tariffs.

BROWN: General Agreement on Tariffs. No exceptions are permitted. We said, "We're not interested in technicalities. We're not in favor of a bill that has the net effect of discriminating against ten percent of our membership." Our board adopted it. No problem at all.

HOFFMAN: What about the Canadian efforts in terms of political education? What about your members in Vancouver, their position with respect to the NDP [National Democratic Party] and party endorsement and so forth? Are they active?

BROWN: Yes, the Canadian locals have, on the whole, been more active than the American locals because you have the NDP--prior to that the CCF--which is really labor's arm in Canada, much as with the Labor Party in Britain. So that a number of locals are quite active in the NDP.

HOFFMAN: Do they press the Council to take some kind of international position in support of their stands?

BROWN: We've had to work at that. As a matter of fact, in the last year I've added to the legislative committee two Canadians. So that at every one of the meetings of the committee, consideration of Canadian issues will be a part of the agenda. Vice-President Clarke, plus the president of one of our Toronto locals, has been added to the legislative committee. So we will, on an ongoing basis, look into positions on Canadian political affairs.

There's an essential difference between the parliamentary system, though, and the system of government in the United States. Lobbying is not nearly as important up there, because, when the party takes a position on an issue, everybody in the House votes the same way. Here the fact that you're a Democrat or a Republican doesn't matter a damn when the oil depletion allowance question comes up. Even though the caucus has met and agreed on a certain position, people are going to vote however they want to.

HOFFMAN: It depends on who got the skids greased! Quite literally! (laughter)

BROWN: Yes, so there'll be heavy, heavy lobbying. But in Canada nobody ever votes against the party position. It's been done once in fifteen years, and they pretty well read the poor bastard out of the party when he did it. So the discipline is great! Therefore, lobbying isn't as effective. You can work on an individual member until you're blue in the face, but he won't, as they say, cross the House. Because that's what you have to do, physically walk to the opposition side.

HOFFMAN: Therefore maybe the lobbying takes place at some other level. It takes place inter-party and within party caucuses.

BROWN: Yes, but it has to be a different kind of lobbying. You have trouble buying 287 people all in the same room at the same time.

HOFFMAN: No, but you can exert pressure to get certain kinds of things in the platform.

BROWN: Yes, yes, that's true, and that's lobbying. Labor meets with the party leaders and presents their positions with respect to labor's aspirations.

HOFFMAN: Well, one thing I wanted to ask you about, Ken. A lot of American unions are having considerable difficulty; their Canadian members are restless on the one hand; there is a rising Canadian nationalism that makes the Canadian member a prickly pear. On the other hand, a feeling on the part of the Americans is: "Ah, the hell with them! Their per capita isn't worth bothering with them. They cost us more money than they bring in." You know, that kind of attitude.

I had the good fortune to see that you wrote a position paper on this and I think it would be very worthwhile if you would say something about the development of that position and what your thoughts are in terms of implementing it, and where you, as an International Union president who is a Canadian, can be useful in this regard.

BROWN: Well, whatever feelings of nationalism there are in Canada, we have it in our union the same as every other union. We have it more or less, depending upon a number of things, not the least of which is how much attention we pay to Canadians as Canadians, as a union. In our case, in part because of my being a Canadian, we moved years ago--one of the first things I did when I became International president--to open a Canadian office. We'd never had one. We always had a vice-president. The constitution never said specifically that there shall be a vice-

president who is a Canadian or elected from the ranks of the Canadians. We put that in the constitution. I opened a Canadian office, set up an administrative arrangement; we did that fourteen years ago.

Eighty percent of the membership of unions in Canada belong to international unions. You can check union after union after union, and they don't have a Canadian office. They sometimes have a Canadian director who is appointed by the international president. They've really treated them with the back of their hand. There's merit to some of the complaints they're making.

The second thing is the economic well-being. Now, with the Steelworkers and the Auto Workers, there's been a very effective job done in parity, as they said in Canada, very effective job done because of the national contract concept. We too have done a completely effective job in parity. The Toronto wages are comparable to the best wages in the U.S.--Rochester, Twin Cities, Chicago, you name it. Our Montreal wages are the same--London, Hamilton, Ottawa. All the wages in eastern Canada are on the same level, and they're all compared with the top wages in the U.S. They have a thirty-five hour workweek, the same as they have in the U.S., and four weeks of vacation. And our early retirement program, which is employer-paid, crosses right across the border and covers Canadian members as well. I think we're the only union--there may be one other--that has negotiated a national pension plan that provides for contributions on the other side of the border as well and to precisely the same plan.

So we've worked at representing the Canadians well. Representing them well, and also giving them a voice equal to, or greater than, the numbers in Canada warrant. It's true that the money tilt, contrary to the popular notion, is toward Canada. That is, more money flows into Canada from our union than flows out of Canada, has been for many, many years. I'm not talking about strikes; I'm talking about administrative money. The money tilt is toward Canada. All Canadian money that's collected is deposited in Canada and invested in Canada and kept in Canada.

Now the problem is that we've had our membership doubled in the last fifteen years. That means that seventy percent of all of the people in Canada weren't even members of the union fifteen years ago. The reason it's seventy percent is you have a lot of people die off, so you hold your own. That's a rough estimate--that perhaps sixty to seventy percent of the people there weren't in the union fifteen years ago.

Well, why should they understand the relationship of unionism in Canada to the U.S.? Why shouldn't they be ready victims to the propaganda about American union bosses? So my theory is very simple. If we've got a good case, then, for God's sake, the next thing we've got to do is make sure they understand the case.

Now, that's the reason we did the position paper. First of all, I did the position paper and took it to the International Council and said, "Do you Americans agree with this, that there's an irretrievable bond between Canada and the U.S.? Our history makes it irretrievable. And today, more than ever before, it's necessary." And the Council voted it unanimously. I then had the position paper refined a little and took it to a special conference in Canada of Canadian local presidents. After full discussion, and considerable discussion, they adopted it unanimously as their position paper. Now we're having it printed up and distributed to the members so as to provoke discussion at the local meetings on the question. Then we're supplying, with the position paper, a statistical fact sheet that Clarke is preparing in the Canadian office.

So we're literally going to provoke discussion because we've found that our strongest positions came out of the locals where they had discussed the matter on the floor. Where there had been no discussion were our weakest positions, where they were victims of what they read in their local newspapers and where they were getting nothing from their local union. So we're flushing the thing to the surface on the theory that we've got a good case, that we have done well, that it'll stand all the examination in the world.

Now, with respect to the Canadian Labor Congress, they have adopted very special regulations that American-based International Unions must comply with. There are some slight technicalities but we're taking the position that our present operation complies with all the requirements of the Canadian Labor Congress. Period! We think we'll be able to sustain that. It'll be up to them to press us to prove that we don't comply. That may be two or three years away.

Right at this moment, if we were to press a vote in Canada among the local leaders and thus, I think, through an informed membership with the membership itself, as to whether a member shall remain in the GAIU and thus get out of the Canadian Labor Congress, if that were the choice presented, we would win easily.

HOFFMAN: Would you win in Quebec?

BROWN: We would have more trouble in Montreal than in Quebec City. Quebec City is more of a provincial community, and Montreal is an urban center that has more of the political 'pizazz'. I don't know how we would do in Quebec, but we would win. I'm assured of that by our local leaders. In fact, they wanted to press that motion, to tell the Canadian Labor Congress to drop dead. I said there's no point in doing that; I think we can just go our merry way and sustain our position anyway.

So the main point I'm making, and I've talked to some International presidents about it and been frankly disgusted by their attitude: "Well, if the Canadians--as you said--if they want their

own union, let them have it." Well, I think that's turning their back on the situation. I don't think that the Canadian membership of international unions will be best served by being in separate unions. American money is flowing across the border like crazy into our industry and into every other industry.

HOFFMAN: We should become super-nationalists. . . .

BROWN: Who owns the automobile companies and the steel companies in Canada? It's American money that owns the damn things. And the notion that they should separate themselves. . . .

I was at a conference one time at Aspen, the Aspen Institute of Humanistic Studies. Seated next to me was a professor--I don't know whether I told you this story or not--Crane Brinton. He was from Yale, I believe, a leading authority on revolutions, a leading authority on Arabic studies. We got him into a discussion on revolutions. The question came up of Canada becoming separate politically. His comment was, "Oh, for heaven's sake, if they want political separation, let them have it because they're so irretrievably entwined with the United States economically that it won't have any meaning. They won't even have control over their own destiny." You know, he was showing what a ridiculous thing it is for people, except for cheap politicians, to be advocating total separation from the United States. They can't separate themselves from the United States. They just can't do it! It's impossible! Their economy would collapse. But politically they can be separate, as they are, you know, and have no truck nor trade with the United States. But they'd collapse. That was his whole point, that this sort of nationalism as far as Canada is concerned. . . .

The reverse position was being presented: why doesn't Canada become a fifty-first state? We turned that around and said, "That doesn't make any sense either because we're better off to let them have their own political ballpark to play in because we've already got them economically." The significance of that, and the reason I'm applying it here, is that the same thing is true with respect to the Canadian union situation: they're irretrievably, historically, economically entwined with the U.S., and to attempt to separate them would require major surgery, and the patient might even die in the process. So any international leader that is just not working at that kind of thing is, I think, being damn near irresponsible.

HOFFMAN: Well, there's another aspect to it, it seems to me; and that is that in a number of big, industrial unions the Canadian membership is somehow a sane, stabilizing force--articulate, well able to argue positions--and there's just a personnel dimension in which to lose that membership would be a serious loss.

BROWN: Loss to the American labor movement. That's a good point. Because one thing you do get in Canada is a very well-grounded trade unionist. You get that. They love to debate, and they're capable.

HOFFMAN: Right. Well, what are you saying to American labor leaders who say, "Well, to hell with it; let them go"? It may be that part of what they're saying is not all that different from what you're saying. They may be saying, "Let them go. They'll only discover that they're going to have to come back to us for some kind of coordinated negotiations when it comes to collective bargaining anyway."

BROWN: Yes, but that isn't what's happened. Our friend from the Paper Workers Union, Joe Tonelli, the president, went around to Canadians saying, "If you want your own union, just go right ahead. Have yourself a vote." There were 50,000 of them. They had a vote, and they voted to separate themselves. Then he was furious! (laughter) A man I know was in his office when the results of the vote came in, and he raged and tore and ranted and said, "That's the thanks I get for all the help I gave them up there!" Dumb bastard! He went around making it sound as though they had an option! Sure, he gave them the right to vote, and now they're having a hell of a job. They've got to raise their dues fantastically to provide the same kind of services they were getting, and also they were misled to think that they would get a chunk of the American union's assets, their proportional share. They are not going to get it now.

GIEBEL: Would that be true in this situation with the Inter Local Pension Fund or Early Retirement or anything like that?

BROWN: Oh, well, those kinds of things would be a matter of law. Their equity would be protected, of course. Unwinding those things is a terribly complicated matter, much more complicated than just talking about union treasuries. But we have approval on our pension program from the Canadian treasury, the opposite number to the IRS. Our money has to remain in Canada, be invested in Canadian currency.

As a matter of fact, the administrative costs for operating the pension program are paid out of American dollars. There's no administrative charges against the Canadian operation at all. Yet we're leaving the money there.

GIEBEL: Is that on the fact sheet?

BROWN: Nope! (laughter) But it will be. I mean, they're tossing that in. We don't want to make too much noise about that because, if our American associates hear too

many of those things, they get upset! (more laughter) So we're balancing delicately on that question.

HOFFMAN: Well, this leads us into the thing we wanted to talk about in terms of your position with respect to the international labor movement. You are members of the International Graphical Federation. I gather that under your presidency you have moved to make that membership real in the sense that you are actively participating.

BROWN: Well, we didn't belong until I recommended it about ten years ago, or less.

HOFFMAN: Why did you recommend this?

BROWN: Well, I'm a one-worlder at heart. That's why, really! (laughs) I think the biggest enemy of people in the labor movement is lack of perspective in their own country or perspective in their own shop or perspective in their own local, their own state, their own country, other countries, and then getting beyond the North American continent. I really think that's our biggest enemy.

With the advent of the multi-national company coming into the graphic arts industry, we began to hear about companies acquiring plants in Europe--Continental Can picked up eight metal decorating companies in England; Western Publishing picked up a plant in Paris; the big company just outside of Philadelphia bought a plant in Europe; Printing Developments, Inc., which is a spin-off from Time-Life, has a European operation and a Japanese operation. We begin to hear more and more of this kind of thing. So that it seemed appropriate for us to at least have some idea what was going on. I talked to the International Council about this and told them I wanted to go to Europe and formalize the relationship between the European trade unions and learn as much as I could.

I went over for a six-week trip and visited England, Scotland, France, Holland, Italy and Switzerland, visited plants and trade union leaders. A kind of a fact-finding mission. When I came back from that, I recommended to the board that we join the International Graphical Federation, which is the world federation of graphic arts unions. This was the only American graphic arts union that had ever become a part of it. So they approved it.

We had a funny little side effect. Right at that time George Meany was battling with the ILO [International Labor Organization] over the new chairmanship or presidency of the ILO which was about to go to one of the Communist countries. All the trade secretariats have delegates to the ILO but no official tie, but obviously the trade secretariats are influential in the ILO. So Jay Lovestone was busy hustling all the unions on this question to work through

their trade secretariats to influence the ILO, to threaten them, quite frankly, that if they put this guy in as chairman or president, they would all withdraw, just as the AFL-CIO did, from the ILO.

So, coincidental, then, with my trip was a recommendation from Meany's office, Jay Lovestone, that all the graphic arts unions join. Well, we already had it in gear, and all this did was reinforce my recommendation and we joined. (laughter)

HOFFMAN: (laughing) You're really nice boys, aren't you? You did just what you were told!

BROWN: Yes, just what we were told! The scene changes, the ILO is out of favor. Meany has walked out and shut off all the money and now they call upon all the unions to threaten their trade secretariats and resign if they do not bring pressure to bear on the ILO.

In our case, I met Lovestone at the AFL-CIO convention. He got Al Rohan of the Printing Pressmen and myself--Rohan's union never joined--and he said to me they would like us to resign from our trade secretariat because they'd allowed two Communist-dominated unions, one in France and one in Italy, to join the graphic arts trade secretariat. I said, "Well, I'll tell you, I don't know how other unions work, Mr. Lovestone, but I can't jerk the union I head around on a string. We just went through the process of getting them to affiliate for the first time in our history, and I'm not about to walk back to them two months later because they brought some Communist-dominated unions in and tell them we're going to get out. We're not going to just be used that way, and I wouldn't use our union that way."

Well, obviously I wasn't very popular. I went to the Board and explained everything to them, and they voted unanimously to remain members, which was, for them, really pretty good. I say "for them"--I mean you use the word "Communist" and some people just kind of go ape. And I used the word in order to make the point, but they voted unanimously to stay in.

I'm off the board of the IGF. Once a year there's a meeting. . . .

HOFFMAN: How big is the board?

BROWN: Oh, about twenty or twenty-five, I suppose.

HOFFMAN: And it has representation from every country?

BROWN: From different countries. Not every country. There are twenty-seven countries and about twenty on the board.

What I've done is sent different people over every year so that we've had [Henry] Dillon attend; Bill Schroeder has attended; Jack Wallace has attended; Dan Streeter has attended; I've attended. In this way, part of my thinking was to broaden the perspective. Well, there'd be no point to that if I was the only one that went. I've arranged for John Stagg to go over, different people of ours to go over. And it's been fantastically enlightening for them and has done, I think, exactly what we set about to do. They went into plants and saw the same kind of equipment that they run being run in some other plant over in some other country.

END OF TAPE SIX, SIDE ONE

HOFFMAN: Are they working on that?

BROWN: No. I don't really know why they're not, but I arranged for Wickersham to go to Japan for three weeks; he toured all the plants, the graphic arts, met with the unions and brought back a very full and extensive report on the Japanese situation. We had delegates to our convention, I don't think the last one, the one before the last. They sat through our whole convention. They were absolutely fascinated by the full and free debate.

So I think it's been a worthwhile exercise, plus the fact that the European countries are competitors of ours and what we're trying to do is help them help themselves a little by offering assistance to provide materials for them, to give them the facts about our bargaining picture so that they will raise the standards. We've developed a very good relationship. There's a strike on in Toronto right now, and because of our membership in the IGF, this strike has been widely circulated in Europe because the company is seeking craftsmen from Europe and the unions are slamming the lid on them. So we have that kind of cooperation.

HOFFMAN: What role do you see that you can play? I mean, we've talked about the situation now in the sense that here's the national AFL-CIO not endorsing McGovern, not backing the seventeen unions that take that kind of posture, not moving on the business of the war in Vietnam along the same lines that your union did, taking a national stance in the face of various international organizations--the ILO, the ICFTU [International Confederation of Free Trade Unions], the General Secretariat. . . .

BROWN: Oh, yes, I said ILO, and I really think I meant ICFTU and their relationship to the secretariats.

HOFFMAN: Yes, right. What kind of an influence do you think you can be? Do you think that the positions that you have taken have driven you into Outer Siberia? In other words, you know, your chances of getting on the Executive Board of that AFL-CIO Council are el-zilcho [meaning gone] at this point because of the kinds of things that you have done. Or do you think that gradually you see some plan down the road of where you will successfully convince more and more people like Red Smith and the Machinists or Joe Keenan, that this group that represents your attitude and philosophy will get bigger and bigger and the tail will begin to wag the dog?

BROWN: I don't know whether it'll get bigger and bigger, or not. I don't want to sound pessimistic, but I doubt it. I think that the liberal wing of the American labor movement will be like the liberal wing of the American political scene, that it'll gain advocates on a small bulge basis--it bulges up a little bit here this year and down a little bit that year--and I don't think fundamentally it'll change too much.

My observation of the Canadian scene, where you have three parties, is that the CCL, CCF, the New Democratic Party on a national basis would pick up between twelve to eighteen percent of the vote which would cause them to run between thirty and fifty-eight seats or something like that. The chances of them forming a government are very remote. On a provincial level they would occasionally sweep a province and form a government on the provincial level.

What I'm saying is a sort of political philosophy. People I've noticed in the labor movement are as representative of the society as a whole as you can find, maybe even a little more conservative in some respects because they've got a little bit better chunk of the economic well-being of the nation. So I don't see a great change occurring there, which therefore doesn't discourage me because it simply means that I will find myself in a minority on a broad base most of the time, but aligned with labor's general position many of the times and will continue to exert whatever power and influence we can to keep pulling the American labor movement more into a role of an activist in a socially oriented sense.

HOFFMAN: What kind of role, then, do you see that you can play in the AFL-CIO?

BROWN: Somebody said to me one time--they heard the story--"Is George Meany vindictive?" And the answer is, "No, not if he's dead!" (laughter) So the point of that story, of course, is that. . . .

HOFFMAN: That he's eighty!

BROWN: Well, that I don't expect George Meany to easily consider me as an appointee, although they have a committee that considers all candidates for addition to the Board. I've not been on the committee, but my name has been considered by the committee and advanced to President Meany in each of the last four appointments. So that he's seen my name on a regular basis! (laughter) Why he would want to add to his minority voice . . . .

HOFFMAN: Why he would want to put another Jerry Wurf on the Board?

BROWN: Well, I don't see myself quite as Jerry Wurf!

HOFFMAN: No, but you and Jerry Wurf would often be on the same side of an issue.

BROWN: Yes, more often than not. That's right. More often than not. And he [Meany] doesn't want to add to that group. There are about four or five votes there now that could easily coalesce and consistently vote against him. But we'll just have to see. I'm not about to change my ways in order to curry favor with Mr. Meany or to try to get a spot on that Executive Board.

HOFFMAN: That's true. And while he's eighty and you're . . . ?

BROWN: Forty-nine.

HOFFMAN: Forty-nine, he still may outline us both, Ken!

BROWN: I think Lane Kirkland's comment on that was priceless. When he was being interviewed, they asked him did he think he'd be the next president of the AFL-CIO, and Kirkland said, "I'm . . .--whatever age he is--I'll be retiring when I'm . . . .--at whatever age. And I fully expect that George Meany will deliver the speech for the evening!"

HOFFMAN: Right! (laughter)

BROWN: At Lane Kirkland's retirement dinner!

HOFFMAN: (laughing) It wouldn't surprise me, either!

END OF INTERVIEW

KENNETH BROWN

Interview #III

Index