ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

in cooperation with

THE 20th CENTURY TRADE UNION WOMAN: VEHICLE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Oral History Interview

with

LILLIAN HERSTEIN

American Federation of Teachers

by

Betty Balanoff

Program on Women and Work

Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations

University of Michigan - Wayne State University

VITAE

LILLIAN HERSTEIN

Lillian Herstein was born in Chicago, Illinois, on April 12, 1886. After graduating from Northwestern University, she taught at a high school in Franklin Grove, Illinois. She later moved to Chicago and joined the Federation of Women High School Teachers there. Herstein was the organization's delegate to the Chicago Federation of Labor where she served on the Executive Board for twenty-five years.

An effective speaker, Herstein was often engaged as a speaker by organizers throughout the labor movement. She was also extremely active in education for women workers, teaching night classes in Chicago for the Women's Trade Union League and at the Bryn Mawr Summer School for Women Workers. As a representative of the Federated Press, a service of Labor News, which sold articles to mainly labor newspapers, Herstein tried to involve more unions with the Press.

Herstein's activities often took her beyond the boundaries of domestic union roles. She worked with the Jewish Labor Committee, an ad hoc group originally formed to rescue European labor leaders targeted by Hitler. As the years progressed, the Committee became more involved with race relations in the United States. This led to Herstein's eventual membership with the Chicago Commission on Human Relations.

In the late 1920's, Herstein was active in organizing the Farm Labor Party. In 1932 she ran for Congress as a candidate of the Illinois second congressional district. During World War II Herstein was engaged by the War Production Board of the federal government, serving as its Women Consultant. Supervising the entire West Coast region, she sought to gear community facilities to the needs of women working in the war industries.

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October 26, 1970
to
May 12, 1971

by

Elizabeth Balanoff

Roosevelt University Oral History Project

HERSTEIN: I am the child of immigrant parents who came from Lithuania near the German border. My father's mother seemed to have had some money, because he got private lessons in English, so he knew how to write and read English before he came to America. He was born not too many years after the Civil War, and he had read about how Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves. Abraham Lincoln was a Republican, and then and there, before he set foot on American soil, my father became a Republican. By the time he came to America he and my mother had a son who was born in Lithuania, the only one in the old country. He [father] came first, as so many immigrants did, and then sent for my mother and the boy. My mother had a sister who was younger than she, but quite enterprising, who lived in Pittsburgh. And my father stopped there. I don't know for what reason he didn't settle there. He settled in Chicago. He became a sort of sexton, we call it, of a synagogue in Chicago, one of the first in Chicago, and then, in connection with that, he opened a bookstore of Hebrew books. Of course there was a demand for that. With the salary of the sexton and the little he made in the store, he made a very modest living. He was like a great many Jewish men of that era, very much interested in scholarship, and not in those manual occupations, which were in demand in America, a relatively new country, and would have brought more lucrative rewards. He brought my mother over and we lived in the store. We lived behind the store and had some rooms upstairs.

INTERVIEWER: What year was it that they came?

HERSTEIN: Well, I can almost figure it out. I've got that written down somewhere. 1868 I think was when my sister Gusta was born. She was the first child born in America.

INTERVIEWER: That's good enough.

HERSTEIN: Now, it must've been before that.

INTERVIEWER: It was after the Civil War.

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes, it was after the Civil War; maybe ten years afterwards--that was 1865. That would have been 1875, because the memory of that period was very strong in my father's consciousness. He was not acquisitive at all. In fact, our store became the center for the immigrant Jews that came from that synagogue. They would stop at our store. They would send money back to their families in the old country. He'd write letters for them to their wives in the old country before they brought them over. Now if he'd had an instinct for making money he would have done what many immigrants did; Italian, Jewish. They went into the steamship business and some of them even became bankers. But he was doing this as a favor. He never even charged them anything, and that used to annoy my mother because the family began growing and needed more money. He made a meager living, and he was a respected member of the community. The men from the synagogue would come, and he would tell them who was running for office. There was a Jewish paper then, The Courier. This is before the Socialist days that brought Sidney Hillman and Dubinsky and that group. They were already oriented in the Socialist Party. They were a younger, much younger generation. In my father's days most of the ethnic groups had foreign language papers and they really rendered a service. There was the Abendpost, the famous German one. There was a Bohemian one, the Daily Zvornhost, and my father knew and admired the editor. But they gave information to their people that they needed. They rendered a real service. As time went on, years after, as their children learned English, the need of the foreign language papers grew less and less, until they have practically no need now, though some still exist, written in Yiddish or German. I don't know whether the Abendpost still exists. It was the big German paper. The foreign population of Chicago was largely German. In fact, Bill Thompson was supposed to have declared the neutrality of Chicago in World War I when he was going to hit the snout of King George. Remember? They were a very big group. Then there were those whom we called Bohemians, who were Czechs really. My father made his meager living, was respected as the sexton of the syngogue. And then there was one of these internal political cabals against him, and he was defeated for that job, which was a very great blow. Together with this Jewish bookstore that he had, my parents were ahead of their time. They used to make grape wine for the Jewish holidays, and everybody bought it from them. They were the predecessors of Mogen David. Mogen David got their push from Hitler, which had made the Jews very race conscious. They came much later. My mother was a wonderful winemaker. And all these Jewish people used to buy wine from us for the Jewish holidays. Then for the other holidays, Succos, they would bring these luloffs from Jerusalem, and then these--sort of like a lemon--and they sold that, too. With the store

HERSTEIN: which sold Hebrew prayer books and the selling of wine and luloffs twice a year, they made their living that way.

Eventually there were six children in the family and I was the youngest. I was only twelve years old when my father dropped dead of a heart attack. He was about fifty-three. I have his picture here, I'll show you someday. But he left a very deep impression on me and all of us. We used to gather around the table--a big kitchen-dining room table, back of the store--and he would tell us about what was happening in the world. I remember his discussing the Dreyfus case. And from the time we were children we were oriented in the conviction of participating in the activities of this great country. He believed in it, and he was a Republican. One of the interesting stories about him that my niece cherishes: When the Democrats ran William Jennings Bryan, the gold and silver-tongued orator for President in 1896--sixteen to one--they came to my father and offered him a bribe if he would use his influence with the Jewish people of the synagogue to switch from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party. He scorned it! My mother had brothers in this country, and she had one who lived in the East. He was fairly well-to-do, and my niece was trying to get him to vote for Roosevelt. Oh, he would never do that. "You don't know what your grandfather did, the sacrifice he made for the Republican Party."

Then as far as unions were concerned he would think they were terrible. Why these poor immigrants come to this wonderful country and we have to go and have unions! And you see, he was long before Dubinsky. You had what they call the Bund in Poland, and they were Socialists; so was Sidney Hillman, avowed Socialist before they came. In fact such nationlists and internationalists in the Socialist philosophy that they were against Zionism. They were against Zionism; they were strong Socialists. But my father wasn't. If I thought anything about unions, I thought they were a lot of nuts that ought to appreciate this great country.

One of the regrets that I have is that I was the beneficiary of everything, because I was the youngest. The rest went to work at the age of fourteen and my mother had to carry on this business. We were socially minded, but this was a wonderful country. About that time women in Illinois were given limited suffrage, the right to vote for university trustees, and my mother was the only woman in the precinct that went to vote.

INTERVIEWER: Really?

HERSTEIN: Yes. And she took me by the hand. I was about five years old. And the clerk, when he was registering her, said to me, "What about you, little girl?" "Oh, I'm going to vote. I'm going to be President some day." We had that consciousness. We would never miss an election to vote.

INTERVIEWER: Your father didn't disapprove at all of your mother voting?

HERSTEIN: Oh, he wanted her to. He was for all that. He just didn't see the labor movement. He didn't see the economics. My oldest brother was to become a citizen; he's the one that was born in the old country. Next to us was a feed store owned by German immigrants, not Jews. The name was Edsel, and they had a son who was to become a citizen. My father went with this oldest brother and Mr. Edsel with his son. And when they went with their sons to become American citizens, it was just almost a sacred ceremony, such a feeling of what it meant to be a citizen of this great country with all its opportunities was early inculcated in them. Then, as time went on, the generation gap between us and the older generation was on a different basis than what it is now. Our parents, being older and more sophisticated, would talk about some evils in America, corruption, etc. Oh, we'd say, "Not in America!" We were the 100 percent Americans, optimistic about America, against our parents' more mature judgement. They weren't bitter at all, but they had maturity. As I said, all the children in the family went to work except me. I was just twelve years old when my father died and I must've been in eighth grade. Then I went to high school, the only member of the family that went to high school. I went to the Medill High School. Oh, I loved it! I can recall, in the four years that I went to high school, I missed one day when I was really sick, and in my senior year when my oldest brother died. There's an interesting story connected with him. He was only twenty-three when he died. But this family of ours became very American, baseball fans. This oldest brother was a remarkable baseball player and he joined a team that subsequently became the Cubs.

INTERVIEWER: Really?

HERSTEIN: But he didn't tell my father, because my father thought it was terrible in a country like this, with all the opportunities, to go and be a baseball player. He went under the name of Charles Babb. Now, in those days, some of the men of the congregation, the younger men, younger than my father, went to the games and saw him. And they said, "That's Mr. Herstein's son." And, "Oh, no." The whole family were baseball fans. But in those days they didn't take care of the players the way they do now. They were used to the full limit. He developed heart trouble, and he died at the age of twenty-three. My mother was left with six children, five after he died, and this precarious business! The oldest was a breadwinner, too. She had $500.00 insurance, that's all!

The problem of providing for the family became a real problem because these orthodox Jewish people were reluctant to deal with a woman in these religious activities. My mother went into business with a Mr. Friedman, who was the man that displaced my father through synagogue politics. My mother's going into business with this "enemy of our father" was a shock to us. But she had a family to support. We were in St. Patrick's parish; I remember a lot of funny stories connected with that. The priest

HERSTEIN: would come into the store and read the Hebrew books. At that time, only the Catholic clergy knew Hebrew. You know who brought about the reading and learning of Hebrew by the Protestant clergy? Harper, at the University of Chicago.

INTERVIEWER: I didn't know that.

HERSTEIN: Well, Harper graduated from Yale, got his doctorate degree when he was nineteen, in Hebrew. And he felt it was outrageous that the Protestant clergy, by and large, did not know Hebrew and were unable to read the Bible in that language. And he started the movement. But the Catholic clergy always did. And the priest would come in our store and look over the books, and he and my father would engage in conversation. In back of the store was my mother, cooking supper or dinner, wondering how much business he was doing. And she realized he wasn't. I can remember her crossly saying, "That priest! He has no children to support. But you have a family. You've got to sell the books, not talk about them." She had to be practical. Then, as I said, my brother died in my senior year, and that was the week I was out of school. In four years I missed one day and a week. School meant everything to us, just everything! By that time, my oldest sister, Augusta, the first one born in America, worked in Mandel Brothers as a saleswoman, and in Field's. In those days they worked twelve hours a day. They had no stools to sit on. When they worked overtime they got fifty cents for supper. And she developed, late in life, very bad arthritis. I always put it back to those years of standing on her feet. She was very fond of me, and there developed between me and her a very close relationship. By that time she was the oldest and I was the youngest, and there was a younger brother, younger than she, Louis, my sister Ann, who's still living at home, and my brother Bill. They're all dead except Ann and me. Gusta, if she'd had a chance! I remember hearing that when she graduated from grammar school she went over to the old West Division High School. Then we had the West Division and the South Division. She wanted to go to high shcool. When I think of the inflexibility of principals! She wanted to register and the principal thought it was too late. How different her life might have been! She was very bright. If people think I'm bright, she was the same. She just didn't have the opportunity. She worked at Field's and about that time Mary Dreier Robins had organized the Women's Trade Union League of America. She was of a very rich German family in Brooklyn. I've got her book here.

INTERVIEWER: I saw it.

HERSTEIN: That's right. She even spoke with a gutteral "r" like the Germans did, but they were very wealthy.

INTERVIEWER: And she was the primary organizer?

HERSTEIN: She went to England and saw the British Women's Trade Union League. So did Jane Addams, and they organized the Women's Trade

HERSTEIN: Union League of America with the idea of doing something for working women. She was a remarkable woman, just fascinating! Good Republican, also. And from the beginning, those wealthy women who organized the Women's Trade Union League were determined that the power should be in the hands of the working woman. They designated the women who joined the Women's Trade Union League who were not working as "allies." For many years Mrs. Raymond Robins was the president. They wrote in the constitution that the control of the executive board should be in the hands of the working women. These women organized the Women's Trade Union League of Chicago, and then the National. The headquarters were also in Chicago for many years. Local Leagues were organized in Boston, in New York City, and Kansas City. Somehow or other, my sister Gusta, the oldest one who worked in Field's, got in touch with the League. The League would meet on Sunday afternoons, and Mrs. Robins would speak, and that proved a great inspiration to my sister. That was her first contact, really, with the labor movement. In those days saleswomen didn't belong to unions. My brother got some job in the Banner Waist Company, and nobody was organized or even thought of those things. But all the principles that Mrs. Raymond Robins presented meant a great deal to my sister. Incidentally, at one time there was a parade of I.W.W.'s in Chicago, and Mrs. Robins marched in that parade, and the Chicago Woman's Club read her out of their club.

INTERVIEWER: Is that right?

HERSTEIN: She was a millionaire. She was a very courageous, very fine woman, and developed a very close relationship with all these local Leagues and their presidents. One of the best local Leagues developed was in New York City; the head of it was Rose Schneiderman. She was an immigrant and went to work as a capmaker when she was twelve years old. She was a fiery, red-headed, beautiful girl and she developed a wonderful League. She was much better than Agnes Nestor of the Chicago League. And she had not the favorable conditions, because the central body in New York City was in the hands of some very shifty people, whereas in Chicago the president of the Chicago Federation of Labor was the great incorruptible John Fitzpatrick. Rose Schneiderman and her group were very enterprising and had great initiative. They bought a house; they served lunches to working men and women at nominal prices; they organized many classes. Very early, Eleanor Roosevelt became active in the Women's Trade Union League of New York and subsequently in the National Women's Trade Union League.

INTERVIEWER: Did Rose Schneiderman work at this full time?

HERSTEIN: After a while she worked full time. She had been a capmaker. The League never could afford adequate salaries or anything like that. And I remember that during the Depression everybody was broke. Unions didn't meet; they skipped their national conventions. Then the Roosevelt Administration came in and it was decided that they would have a convention; the National Women's Trade Union League. By that time the national office had

HERSTEIN: moved to Washington. Its secretary--oh, she's still living. She's blind--was Elisabeth Christman of the Glove Workers' Union.

INTERVIEWER: She came up through the ranks.

HERSTEIN: Yes. She worked in glove factories in Chicago when they charged the workers for the needles they used.

INTERVIEWER: I've heard of this.

HERSTEIN: And she was a very remarkable organizer and administrator.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me a little about her, describe her a little?

HERSTEIN: She was from a German family. Apparently in the old country, when her father and mother married, it was considered the father married beneath him. In the old country they were Catholics. And then they came to this country. It was a large family and the father was a musician and belonged to the Musicians' Union. Elisabeth was always very proud of that. Elisabeth was a glove-maker. And then she finally became the secretary of the National League. She was very good at fund raising. And, without salary, she was the secretary of the Glove Workers Union. She did that, all that work. She was very, very capable, very much unlike Agnes Nestor, who was the president, who got a lot of attention. Now, Elisabeth went to a Lutheran school when she came to this country and always regretted her lack of education. In the midst of a big campaign I'd go in to see her about something and she'd ask me, "Now, make it clear to me the differences between the uses of 'will' and 'shall'." She was very modest and very eager to learn and very capable, very capable. And then, subsequently, the national office was moved to Washington, D.C. During the Depression, as I was telling you, hardly any union conventions were held. But the Roosevelt Administration came in with all its promise. The Board of the League decided to have a convention. And as they were sitting there, Mrs. Roosevelt said, "My, I wish you could bring some of those textile workers from the South." The textile industry had resisted organization for years. Ainsworth was in that business. Elisabeth said, "Oh, we'll try to bring some of them but their unions have no money. Those unions, they couldn't send anybody." I think it was Mrs. Brandeis who said, "Oh, I'll contribute $50.00," and so on. They were going to bring these girls from the South, the working girls from the textile industry. Plans for the convention were being made and one day Elisabeth ran into Mrs. Roosevelt on the street somewhere in Washington. Mrs. Roosevelt said to her, "Oh, Miss Christman, how are you getting along with the convention?" She said, "Fine." And she said, "I have everything for the southern girls. I've got the money for their transportation. Now, I'm working on their hospitality, where they'd stay." Mrs. Roosevelt said, "Just wait a minute." And she went to the telephones and came back, and she said, "Miss Christman, you know that top floor

HERSTEIN: of the White House where there are these big beds? I just talked to them."--Major Domo or somebody from the White House--"How would the girls like to stay there?" I thought Elisabeth would die. She said, "Oh, Mrs. Roosevelt, that's too much!" She said, "That's all right. I've got the place and enough beds for the southern girls. And then I want Rose Schneiderman to stay at the White House, and Molly Friedman," who was in the International Ladies Garment Workers in New York. Mrs. Roosevelt knew them personally. And so they came to the convention. And it was a marvelous convention, the first one in a long time. And the day before it was over one of President Roosevelt's secretaries got hold of Elisabeth Christman. He said, "Miss Christman, I'm talking for the President. He feels very sorry that affairs of state were such that he couldn't meet his guests. He wants to meet them tomorrow at tea." And Elisabeth said, "Oh, that's too much. We don't expect it and you don't have to do that." He said, "Listen, Miss Christman, you can't tell the President who his guests are to be. At three o'clock." And they gathered in the blue room, as they usually do for teas. Soon President Roosevelt was ushered in, in his wheelchair. He was most gracious. Elisabeth said he couldn't have been more gracious if he were entertaining the most important ambassador of an important country. They had a wonderful tea. It was written up in Time magazine, but not as fully as I'm telling you. That was a never to be forgotten event for these working girls. During their stay in the White House, Mrs. Roosevelt put in their rooms little mementos that they would take home and cherish all their lives.

Now, to get back to the Chicago League and my sister's work in it. An uncle of mine put it into my head that he was going to help me to go through college. Nobody in my group went to college. There wasn't a girl in our group that went to college. I went to Northwestern. In the summer my high school teacher, who was very fond of me, got me a job at Sears, Roebuck. And I got $6.00 a week. And I could walk to work there. My older brothers would give me money, ten cents, a quarter, and so on. So with this attitude towards participating in things, I went through Northwestern University. And it was then the leading Methodist school in the country, and they had the Four Mile Act. I don't know what's happened to that, but no intoxicants could be sold within four miles; we went to chapel three times a week. We hear much of counseling these days, usually for poor students. I have come to think that a good student needs counseling as well as a poor one. Why did I go and major in Latin?

INTERVIEWER: Is that what you majored in?

HERSTEIN: That's right. I had Latin all through high school. And I majored in Latin in college and also took Greek. My most distinguished professor there--I'll tell you about him--was John Adams Scott, whose brother eventually became the president of the university. And I also took history, but it was always ancient history or medieval. Towards the end of my

HERSTEIN: college career however I realized the one-sidedness of my education, so I took German. I had had no modern language, and I did very well in German. Walter Will Scott was then professor of psychology, and he subsequently became the President of Northwestern. He was the brother of John Adams Scott. John Adams Scott was my professor of Greek, a most remarkable man. We would meet and we would read, translate two hundred lines of the Iliad in every class session. And then he'd tell us about things going on in the world. At that time, the governor of Illinois was not nominated by a primary; we didn't have the primaries then. He was nominated at a convention. The convention that year was in Springfield. And there was a fight royal between the three candidates running for the Republican nomination for governor. And of all things, John Adams Scott was a delegate to that convention. Now, can you imagine this great scholar? I remember this was the time that Schliemann had done the great excavations about Troy, and he'd tell us about that. Then he goes to the convention. And, oh, it was deadlocked.

INTERVIEWER: You got the past and the present pretty close together.

HERSTEIN: Now wasn't that remarkable for that man! And he came back, and we'd do our translating, never shunted the work, and then he'd tell us about the convention. This was before the day of ghostwriters, known as ghostwriters. He had poked around in Springfield, met all the fellows that were writing, and so he discovered that the same man was writing the speeches for the three fighting each other for the nomination. He was a very great influence in my life. Another great influence in my life was Arthur Wild, who was professor of ancient history, a typical Bostonian with the typical fairness of the Puritan. I remember once at a reception he took me aside. There were three Jewish students on the campus at Northwestern. One was Jacobson, who subsequently became a distinguished psychiatrist, and another girl by the name of Yetta Sheftel, whose parents were very religious (she used to have to get special permission to transfer examinations listed for Saturdays), and I. I was at this reception, and he took me aside. He said, "Now, Miss Herstein...." He said I was one of his good students, and asked, "I'm wondering, do you feel any discrimination here because you're Jewish?" I said, "No, I don't." And I didn't. The discrimination at Northwestern was not on the basis of race--although there weren't too many Jews or Catholics--but money. The most snobbish sororities and fraternities that I knew of were at Northwestern University. They were very, very bad. And I blamed the University because they didn't develop activities for the barbarians--for us. In fact, I had a friend, Cora Ellis, who has since died, and she was a brilliant girl. She went to college for three years and then dropped out to make money, and she came back her last year. She was Phi Beta Kappa. We were very great friends. Well then she graduated, and she taught at LaGrange High school, and she had two children. And she had a son, James, who was a wonderful football player. And she, like all the alumni, got letters from

HERSTEIN: Northwestern about the games and, you know, you could get tickets and so on. And she wrote back; she said, "I am going to attend the Northwestern-Illinois football team game, but I shall not sit on the Northwestern bleachers. I shall sit on the bleachers of Illinois where my son plays fullback. I used my influence for him to go to Illinois instead of Northwestern which was so ridden with prejudice against poorer students." And she wasn't Jewish, no.

Well, then, when I was a student from Northwestern I lived in a dormitory, Chapin Hall. It was quite remarkable. We did all the work. I think our board and room was about $3.50 a week. The work was so organized that every girl was expected to do an hour's work a day, but it often didn't amount to that, it was so well organized. And we had a matron, kind of a top cook, I'd call her, and then a preceptress--these fancy names. She came from Colorado; Grace Harris was a very lovely person and very close to the girls. Her people were well off, and she was working on her master's degree and living there and she was quite an influence.

As we got to the senior year we were all applying for jobs to teach. And we all joined teachers agencies. I joined the Fisk Teacher's Agency. One day I got a letter from George Palmer, who was a former Northwestern man and head of the Fisk Teacher's Agency. He said, "The next time you come to Chicago I want to talk to you." And he said, "You know, Miss Herstein, I've been baffled by how you haven't gotten a job. And now I know why, and I think you're big enough to tell you the truth." He said, "I have sent your papers when they said they wanted somebody like you, who could teach six subjects and everything, just the person they wanted. And then they didn't take you, because in one of the letters, John Adams Scott, in recommending you, called you 'a brilliant Jewess.'" And when he heard that, he wouldn't change that letter, he was furious. And I couldn't get a job. I learned the geography of Illinois by the places that wouldn't hire me. The only time I got a job was in Frankfurt, Illinois, near Dixon, because the person who'd accepted the job dropped out at the last minute. But once I got the job they said I did so well--I was the only Jewish person there -- that I was wanted in other nearby towns. But I was advised not to go but to get two years in southern Illinois. There I met Laura Blackburn, the daughter of a Baptist minister, who was one of the great influences in my life.

There was an incident that happened at Northwestern that somehow I had forgotten about until recent years. When I was at Northwestern--it must've been my third year--there was a Jewish girl enrolled as a student. She had emigrated from Russia, and she was very odd compared to the rest of us. We were typical American Jews, or Americans. And she was this very peculiar--we didn't know the word "radical"--radical person. She was in an English class at Northwestern. I think now, how did it happen that I didn't cultivate her--she was Jewish and I was Jewish. But we

HERSTEIN: were worlds apart. One day in the English class an instructor by the name of Odell, a very nice person, reminded us that we're supposed to correct our themes and send them back corrected. He said, "Well, some of you are not returning your corrected themes; you're absent or absentminded," he said. He read the list of the students who hadn't returned their themes, called them "absent-minded." And this Russian immigrant student arose furious. She didn't know what "absentminded" meant. And she said, "That's a terrible way to treat anybody." And she dashed out of the class. Later that day she committed suicide.

INTERVIEWER: Oh my!

HERSTEIN: And it wasn't for that reason. She had been in the Revolution of 1905 in Russia, upon which the many idealistic people had pinned their faith. And it failed! And like all revolutionists she carried poison with her to be able to commit suicide before the police would get her. You see she did this all her life. Then somehow she came to America; her father had a humble job like killing chickens the way the Jews are supposed to do it. This was 1905. And she was so upset--she thought absentminded meant insane. But before she died she sent for the Dean of Women. She said, "Tell that dear professor that what I did had nothing to do with what he said. It was the failure of everything I'd worked for all my life." And I remember, Mary Ross Potter was the Dean of Women, she felt terrible. And then she sent for me. She said, "Lillian, did you ever know this woman?" I said, "I hardly ever saw her. I was hardly ever in a class with her." People that were in her history class where we had that bumptious guy--he was such a 200 percent American, waved the flag--said she had learned American history in Europe, and she disagreed with him several times. That wasn't done in those days. And who knew American history? Who ever told us that we stole one third of Mexico; we stole it! That's what General Grant tells us. We stole it. Abraham Lincoln said so. That's why they didn't elect him. But she knew that and questioned the professor.

Well, I finally got this job in Franklin Grove, Illinois. But during the summer, the head of one of the Jewish agencies asked me to work because their people were on vacation, and I could speak Yiddish.

INTERVIEWER: What was this, a welfare agency?

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes. At that time, the Welfare Department was separated from what we call the Bureau of Personal Service, which rendered legal aid to poor Jews. Just look how advanced they were. For instance a Jewish man would get arrested for peddling without a license. And they had lawyers who would give their services gratis, usually very fine ones. Or, a Jewish man would work, and the boss would say, "You're fired," and he wouldn't pay him. You'd be surprised how common that practice was; he just didn't pay him. So what could the poor fellow do? He would come to the

HERSTEIN: Bureau of Personal Service. And we would try to get his earnings for him. Then we had a lot of domestic difficulties. The Jewish husbands didn't beat their wives, and they didn't get drunk, but they deserted. They knew the Jewish charities would take care of their families. And one of our jobs was to bring the husband and the wife together in our office and see if we couldn't make a reconciliation. Minnie Lowe was the head of the organization, one of these kind-hearted women, and she was very fine. That was the day before we had a school for social service administration. The relief office was a few blocks away, and that was under Miriam Kalisky. Very often the relief department got mad at us because they thought we separated the families and they had to give them relief. That was an interesting experience. In the meantime I'd got this job in Franklin Grove, Illinois, ten miles east of Dixon, Illinois. Miss Lowe tried to persuade me to stay in social work. But I thought being a teacher was the most wonderful thing in the world. I remember, she went on her vacation, and she wrote to her assistant, "I'm sorry Miss Herstein won't stay with us and is going to that little town to teach." I was only there for the summer, you know, eight weeks. But she said, "I want her to have a week's vacation with pay before she leaves."

I went to Franklin Grove, a town of about a thousand inhabitants. They had a story there that they once had a Jew who was a banker. It so happened that the president of the school board who engaged me was what was a liberal in those days. Most of the inhabitants were "drys", they were teatotalers, and he wasn't. His name was Dr. Banker. The Christian Endeavor, the church societies, were very much shocked at this man because he drank beer, and then he employed as teachers one Jewess and a girl who was a Catholic. She taught in the grades. One man was the superintendent; I was the principal--two teachers! I taught all the subjects. Miss Weels, the other teacher, and I became very great friends, and Dr. and Mrs. Banker used to entertain us often at their home. He always remembered that when I came for the interview before I got the job they had pork dinner and that I didn't eat it. I didn't know it was pork. I never saw it. I was too excited. And he said, "Well, this must be Passover. Miss Herstein is passing over the food." We became very good friends. I worked hard, prepared my lessons every evening, and was regarded as a fine teacher. There was a little kindergarten teacher, too. She and I were friends. Immediately I began to get offers from towns around there. I remember, there were these book agents, they know everybody. And this fellow came to me and said, "I want to tell you something. Now you're making a big hit in this town. And you'll be offered several jobs. But," he said, "you know, one of the reasons why women fail on jobs is because they try to do two jobs." He said, "You take a man. If he earns $15.00 a week, he doesn't iron his shirts. But women do, they do the two things." He was trying to warn me. He knew I would get offers. I remember I got an offer from Sycamore, Illinois. But at that time if you wanted to get into the Chicago schools, be eligible for examination

HERSTEIN: in Chicago schools, you had to have two years of experience in the same school system. I stayed the two years. After that I went to Mount Vernon, Indiana; at the end of the first year in Mount Vernon, I tried to get a job closer to Chicago. The teacher's agency sent me to apply for a job in East Chicago, Indiana. This same Mr. Palmer of the Fisk Teacher's Agency--it was only two years--said, "Oh, I've got just the job for you." And I went down to East Chicago, Indiana, was interviewed by the president of the School Board. It was after I had been in Mount Vernon a year, and I had a very bad case of malaria down there. They had swamps right on the Ohio River. He was trying to persuade me not to accept that job. He said, "Oh, you'll get malaria again." And he was wonderful, just wonderful. I realized I had made a good impression on him. And he was so impressed. After all I was an attractive little girl, twenty-two, you know, with rosy cheeks and black hair. And I had a lot of intellectual qualities which he seemed to recognize. He was really an educated man, probably the only educated man on the board, and was eager to employ me. But much to my surprise I didn't get the job. I went back to Mount Vernon, Indiana. In those days teachers used to jump their contracts. In the middle of the year, at Christmas, I get a letter from Mr. Palmer. He told me that the board of East Chicago, Indiana was very eager to have me, that the teacher that was in the job had left. Mr. Palmer wrote, "Now I want to tell you why you didn't get the job last summer, not because they didn't appreciate your educational qualifications, but because of your religious connections." I was urged to break my contract in Mount Vernon and accept the job in East Chicago, which paid more and was closer to home. I'll never forget the letter I wrote.

INTERVIEWER: What did you say?

HERSTEIN: I said to them, "If anybody's church relations make any difference in East Chicago, East Chicago is sinking in the mire of medievalism from which I do not want to bring them out." I didn't take the job. And they learned that a Jewish woman who was offered a job at a big salary wouldn't come. And, you know, Mr. Palmer told me he would see that the president of that board, who had wanted me in the first place, read that letter. So you see, when I read about these people that have become so radical, sometimes it is due to some race prejudice from which they had suffered. Well, we had it. We had it a great deal. So I went back to Mount Vernon, and I had my second year there. After two years in Mount Vernon I decided to come into Chicago and try for the exams. The exams were offered in December. Again Miss Lowe of the Bureau of Personal Service got after me and said, "Come and work for us." I said, "Well now, Miss Lowe,"--this was June--"I want you to know I'm planning to take the Chicago exams which come in December. If you want me for just a few months...." "Oh," she said, "you won't pass." She was a typical German Jew, you know, who felt superior to Jews of Russian Jewish extraction. I remember one of the Russian Jews in the office was simply furious at her and at me because I didn't get mad. Miss Lowe mentioned Hortense so-and-so of a very

HERSTEIN: well educated German Jewish family, who took that exam and didn't pass, so how would I? So I took the exam in December and I passed. But I had told her that I wouldn't quit. She heard that I passed. She had a sister who was teaching in the elementary schools in Chicago. One day she said, "You know, Miss Herstein, my sister says that I'm doing you a great injustice, because since you passed you're eligible for substituting. And unless you substitute four months in the same school, you don't get an assignment. And it's no telling what you will miss." So she said, "Suppose we agree that you stay until March and help to train your successor." And that was Irene Kamin, who subsequently became deputy chief of the juvenile court, deputy chief. So, I said, "All right." So I stayed until March. I was very lucky, because people used to substitute all over the city before they were assigned. I substituted at Lane Technical High School for Boys three days. As soon as they saw me they began celebrating. They informed me that their teacher never got sick and they never had a substitute. Now they had one, and they were going to make life merry for me. It so happened that a teacher I had had at Medill High School was teaching there. He came to my room and said, "Now listen, if this gets hard you call me. Don't let these boys try to get advantage of you." I was there three days. Then I was called up to go to the Wendell Phillips High School. I wondered how they would know Thursday that a teacher was going to be sick on Monday. But this was the situation. Wendell Phillips was a marvelous high school then. It had one of the best faculties, probably the greatest number of Negroes, but only about 8 percent, who went there. They had a very good faculty. And they were always pioneers. They pioneered, that faculty, and they pioneered through their English clubs and so on, to have every teacher have only five classes. The usual number then was six classes. They were the first high school that had it. Because they were given five classes, one teacher had to take a class from each teacher. When I came, I was given an Algebra class, a German class, a class in what they called business English, and physiology--four different assignments. To make my program equal five classes I worked for two hours in the office, which was a very good experience. I learned how in a big system one erratic teacher can upset the whole school. I went to Wendell Phillips, and those teachers were wonderful to me. They had known that I had worked in social work, had done work in the juvenile court. They thought it was wonderful to have such an addition to the school. They were just wonderful to me. It was a wonderful faculty. They kept saying to me, "Why hasn't your appointment come through?" It wasn't quite four months. And wouldn't I go to Mr. Lipsky, who was a member of the school board, and whose father-in-law was the editor of the Jewish paper, the Courier. "Oh," I said, "I wouldn't think of doing that." "Well," they said, "if you were Irish you would." In those days there were very few Catholic teachers in the high schools. Many of them were in the elementary schools. There was quite a furor, since 70 percent of the girls going to the Chicago Normal College to become teachers in the Chicago public schools had never gone to a public school themselves.

HERSTEIN: After my four months I was assigned to Wendell Phillips teaching these various subjects. Finally I got a job just teaching English, and I enjoyed the experience very much. We had some of the finest students.

INTERVIEWER: Now the teachers had no union.

HERSTEIN: Oh, I was going to tell you about that. I almost forgot. At that time there were two teachers organizations, the Principals' Club and the High School Teachers' Club, and Margaret Haley's famous organization, the Chicago Teachers' Federation, the first one in the world affiliated with labor.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, it was already in existence?

HERSTEIN: Margaret Haley was a great dynamic dedicated teacher. All her papers are at the Chicago Historical Society. She was a remarkable woman, Irish, and with an economic background. She would reveal the taxes that some of the rich firms did not pay. The Chicago Teachers' Federation was for elementary school teachers. And there was the High School Teachers' Club. The president of the High School Teachers' Club was a bright little woman that taught chemistry at Wendell Phillips. She was a real person, and she came and asked me to join. True to my training to share responsibility I joined. I think the dues were three dollars a year. Part of my training is that you always participate. My father used to say that these people carry the flag so far, you must pick it up there, like a relay race. Without any hesitation I joined the High School Teachers' Club. The age range between the teachers in Wendell Phillips went all the way from twenty-two to sixty-five or seventy. We had no retirement laws. One day one of the men teachers came to me and said, "We're getting another organization, more effective than this one, and that's affiliated with labor," and it was the Men's Federation and they were affiliated with labor.

INTERVIEWER: Why did they call it the Men's Federation?

HERSTEIN: Only men were members. They had to have it separate groups and they said they were organizing a union for the women and it was called the Federation of Women High School Teachers. He said, "Why don't you join?" "Now that sounds good." And I was having lunch, I remember, with Genevieve Sullivan and Mary Murhoe. We were the three young, very stylish teachers, so I told them about it and I said, "I wonder what it's about. I'll tell you, girls, it's only three dollars a year. I'll join and I'll tell you about it." I entered the labor movement as casually as that! And I was a member of the Federation of Women High School Teachers. I remember a teacher I knew, who was older than I, who taught at Medill High School. She taught Latin. She called me up and she said, "You must join." I remember when I became very active in the labor movement I said to her, "Listen, you led me astray! Don't forget."

INTERVIEWER: Let me ask you why they had separate unions for the men and women.

HERSTEIN: Well, that was always.

INTERVIEWER: You mean just custom?

HERSTEIN: Always, just custom. In fact Boston men left their American Federation of Teachers because it stood for equal pay for men and women. That was the way, it took a long time to get over that, but the two organizations cooperated very well. Well, I was in the Federation of Women High School Teachers and a lot of interesting things happened there about the war in 1916.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about that.

HERSTEIN: No, that's a separate story. But I want to tell you this. Now, we're in the war and I'm teaching at Wendell Phillips. That is World War I. We became the arsenal of democracy. We manufactured all the things that the warring nations in Europe needed. We didn't get in the war until 1917.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

HERSTEIN: One of the products we manufactured for the warring countries abroad was canned food needed for the soldiers. The packing-houses were all on the south side of Chicago. They couldn't get workers because many of them were in defense industries. Some of them were in the war. They recruited workers from the South and that was the beginning of the end of Wendell Phillips. When the Negroes who had been recruited by the packing industry came and brought their children to Wendell Phillips a great many white pupils got transferred. The kids told me the truth. They went to Hyde Park, which was more recent than Wendell Phillips--the building--and the enrollment of the school went down. Not enough colored children of high school age came in to take the place of the white children that left, and therefore the younger teachers at Wendell Phillips were supernumeraries.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, they let you go then?

HERSTEIN: Yes, it just so happened that in one of those summers while I was still teaching at Wendell Phillips my former high school teacher from Medill High School was teaching in the summer school at Crane and had to give it up and she recommended me to the principal of the Crane Technical High School and he called me up and asked me to teach there, which I did. When it came to be known among the high school principals that there were supernumeraries at Wendell Phillips they all came out to make their pick of them. I remember one man, I was so mad at him. He was the principal of a high school, and he looked me over as if I was a piece of cattle and I told the principal of Wendell High School. "Well," he said, "You know you aren't a bad looking little girl, you know." So this man at Crane wanted me very much. That was in 1917--the year the war was on. And he asked me how I liked the school one

HERSTEIN: day and how I liked the work. At Crane Technical High School, four shops were required, one shop every year, and theoretically they were supposed to have an academic program, which they had. They had history, English, German and French. In fact the assistant principal was a Frenchman. Mr. Martholf, the principal, asked me one day what I thought about the work there in the English Department. I said, "Well, it's very good but it's not quite as good as what we had at Wendell Phillips, because there the teachers have only five classes, and here they have six and it makes a difference." He said, "Yes, I'll work on that." One day he sent for me. "I got the program, so I can give one of you five classes, and I want you to have it." I said, "Oh, no. If there's a chance for an English teacher to have a program with five classes I want it to go to the oldest teacher in the English Department." That seemed just to me. So I taught there and after a few years in the high school, I was promoted to Crane Junior College, which shared the same building with the high school. Crane Junior College was abolished in 1933 in the worst wrecking program of a public school system. I was abroad that year. Now in the meantime I have neglected to tell you about my labor connections of that time. I became the delegate of the Federation of Women High School Teachers to the Chicago Federation of Labor during that period, before I went to Crane.

INTERVIEWER: This is while you were at Wendell Phillips?

HERSTEIN: Yes. Then, I was elected on the Executive Board of the Chicago Federation of Labor. I was the only woman on it for twenty-five years. The person before me was Mrs. Raymond Robins and before that I think Mary O'Riley of the Chicago Teachers' Federation. Miss Haley was still living at that time and was very active as business agent of the Elementary Teachers' Organization. I became very active in the labor movement. I always think of this incident which indicates again how casual my entrance to the American Federation of Labor was. I joined the Women's Trade Union League of Chicago which was conducting classes for workers. We had a committee consisting of representatives from the Women's Trade Union League and the Chicago Federation of Labor. I've got all of those pamphlets for you that tell the courses in labor history, parliamentary law, English, that we offered. One day, I think, this was before I was on the board of the Federation of Labor, I was still the delegate and also a member of the Women's Trade Union League. The Federation of Labor used to meet regularly the first and the third Sunday of the month at two o'clock in the afternoon. No exceptions. Oh, the Sundays I spent there! This Sunday schedule was adopted because workers used to work long hours and Sunday was their only free day. This schedule prevailed for many years. Agnes Nestor, President of the Chicago League, said to me, "The Federation of Labor is meeting, as you know, on Sunday. Please go over there and announce our classes and urge the delegates to come to enroll in our classes." I took the leaflets, went over to 175 W. Washington where they met, and the meeting room was blue with smoke. The delegates were mostly men, just a few women, because there were very few women organized in unions

HERSTEIN: at that time. I timidly approached the president, John Fitzpatrick, who was very gallant, and Ed Nochels, who was secretary. Nochels looked at me. They were having a hot debate before a city political election. They were having this hot debate and I was waiting to be called on. And I heard John Fitzpatrick say to Ed Nochels, "Hey John, what's that damn skirt here for?" John Fitzpatrick politely glossed that over and called on me. I faced that large group of men in fear and trembling. I thought, "Will they listen to me?" When I began to talk I thought they wouldn't listen to me. After I talked a little while, however, I was scared to death, because they were hanging on my lips and I said, "My God, what do they think I'm saying?" After my speech they all applauded and up walked several men and they said, "You're the person we're looking for. We have women working in our industry and we can't get them to join the union." And one was the clothing industry, the International Ladies Garment Workers. This man said to me, "You know we have girls working for these fashionable dressmakers. The dresses sell for $150.00. They are beaded by hand. It is very hard on the eyes. When we tried to organize them the head of this beautiful dressmaking establishment said to the girls, 'You don't want to belong to a union with factory girls. You here are artists'" He said their wages were very low but the owner kept saying, "Who wants to associate with factory girls?" The union had organized the girls working in factories. So this man said, "You're what we want. If we can get you to a meeting and if you can tell those girls that you are a high school teacher, a college graduate who belongs to a union, that will turn the trick." And that really was my real push into the labor movement. After that I became on demand all the time. I can't tell you how many union meetings I spoke at. They all wanted me, you know, the Carpenters' Union, this union and that union.

INTERVIEWER: Obviously not only to speak to women workers. They wanted you to speak to the men workers, too?

HERSTEIN: From then started my second career--one of great activity in the labor movement. About that time I met Tom Tippett in 1918 in the steel strike. Tom Tippett was a coal miner in Peoria, Illinois and had a very interesting history. I've got his book. His father was a preacher in England and at that time the English clergy were more favorable to labor than the American clergy. He emigrated to America. The mining camp where he settled was called Horseshoe Bottoms. His father became a miner and was a silver tongued orator according to the miners. By the time I met Tom his father had died after a long bout with T.B. There were eight children in the family and of course, when the father died, they all went into the mines to work. Tom worked in the mines and his history is a very interesting one which I can tell you about. At any rate at this time the steel strike was announced. There was a steel mill in Peoria and the men were going out and Tom came to Chicago and spoke to John Fitzpatrick. He wanted a good woman speaker. John Fitzpatrick said, "Oh, we have a wonderful one if you can get her. She's a high school teacher." "Oh,"

HERSTEIN: said Tom, "I don't want anyone like that. I want a working woman!" Later that same day, I had lunch with Tom and Ida Glick, a member of the Women's Trade Union League. She was from a poor Jewish family in Baltimore. I think she went to Goucher College. She got interested in the labor movement, was very much more left than I. She and Tom and I were having lunch together and he was telling both of us about the steel strike as it was developing in Peoria and about how angry the miners were and that they were going out before the date of the strike. Then I entered the conversation and he looked at me. "Are you the person John Fitzpatrick talked about?" I said, "I don't know," and then he told me. He said, "Will you go?" It was Saturday afternoon, I remember. I went over to Marshall Fields and I bought a nighgown, toothpaste, and a toothbrush and called my family--went with him to Peoria.

INTERVIEWER: Without ever going home.

HERSTEIN: When we got there, there was a great big meeting and there was a great deal of talk about violence. The miners know how to use dynamite because they have to use it to loosen coal and I knew about all of this. I went to this meeting and the place was lousy with Secret Service men, just lousy. We'd always know it. And there was a picture of me, I remember--I had a tri-colored hat--on a poster announcing the meetings. They'd take it off the wall and put it in their pockets. And so I had to make a speech for peaceful picketing without letting on that I knew there was danger of violence. I said, "The men who are coming in here to take your jobs don't know that you're on strike. They are poor devils out of jobs and these detective agencies like Hargrove Detective Agency of Chicago have hired them and have not told them there is a strike situation here. I'm sure that if you go up to the top of the mine at five o'clock in the morning when the miners come for work and go with your children and when these men approach the mine, say to them, 'Do you want to go in there and take the bread out of my children's mouths?'" Oh, I was like Joan of Arc. Somebody once said at that time, that I was a cross between the Virgin Mary and Joan of Arc. I was very eloquent. I always tell that I got the youngest picket on the picket line. She was six months old and her mother and father did what I said. They joined the group at five o'clock in the morning with the baby in their arms and as these scabs came in--and it was true that they didn't know there was a strike--they said, "Now, you're going to take the food out of my baby's mouth." So, I always tell that I got the youngest picket, six months old, on the picket line!

INTERVIEWER: Did the scabs turn back?

HERSTEIN: Some of them did. This was just a few days before the steel strike started. And then when it started I was deeply involved in it. John Fitzpatrick had been appointed by Gompers as chairman of this effort to organize the steel workers, and Bill Foster, not then a communist--he was in IWW from the West--had been appointed secretary. He managed the activities in the East, Pennsylvania,

HERSTEIN: and Fitzpatrick in the Illinois area. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers, who'd been kicked out of the Chicago Federation of Labor or got out of it, were a very successful union and because they thought the world of Fitzpatrick, gave $10,000 to the strike. Fitzpatrick told me the story of his connection with the Amalgamated. It was a fight between the United Garment Workers, who were mostly old Scotch and English and unprogressive, and the immigrant groups who were very much more militant. And when the fight occurred, the group under Sidney Hillman and Bessie started the strike.

INTERVIEWER: Mr. Rosenblum told me she was almost better than Sidney.

HERSTEIN: She was working in Hart, Schaffner and Marx, and things got so bad that she jumped out on the sewing table and said, "We don't have to stand for this! Let's get out!" And they marched out. She was Bessie Abramowitz and Sidney was leading the strike and subsequently they were married. She's still on the board of the Amalgamated and whenever she goes to Washington she goes to see Elisabeth Christman and she says, "I have to stand up and tell them where to get off at when it comes to women." Well, it was a bitter time, you see, and the story is that in some way Sam Gompers had been obliged to the president of the United Garment Workers and then this thing happened and he came down to Chicago. Fitzpatrick had no use for him and he said to Fitzpatrick, "I guess the garment workers are having a hard time"--and don't forget they were out of the Federation by that time.

INTERVIEWER: This is when the garment workers were on strike?

HERSTEIN: That's right. Seventeen weeks I think. And Fitzpatrick said to Gompers, "You bet they're having a tough time, and my place is standing shoulder to shoulder with them on this." And here he was, an official of AF of L, and he took a stand with the rebel union. It was the proudest achievement of his life he often said, really, working for the garment workers. It was a long and bitter strike.

INTERVIEWER: But they won?

HERSTEIN: Eventually. Sam Levin told me that Hart, Schaffner and Marx gave in first and were called traitors by all the rest of the manufacturers. Just in recognition of a union. They won the strike, but the agreement conceded only meager rights to the workers. No union person was to be allowed to walk into the factory. And how could you organize anybody? And Sam said the first break came once when one of the supervisors in the factory came to him and said, "Look Sam, I'm having an awful lot of trouble and I just can't handle it." Two factory workers were fighting with each other. It wasn't so much about the union as dividing the work so he said, "Will you come in and help us?" Sam said, "You know according to the agreement no union man can come in." "Well, we'll fix that." And that was the first time he went into the factory. He said when he thinks how impatient people are, that each victory came inch by inch. But they won. It wasn't so easy.

INTERVIEWER: There's something I want to ask you. I've read different opinions on this. Some people think that Hart, Schaffner and Marx came around a little faster because they were Jewish and the workers were Jewish and other people say it made no difference.

HERSTEIN: Well, all the manufacturers were Jewish.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think if they had been something else, it would have been a little harder? Or was it just as hard?

HERSTEIN: Overall, the clothing manufacturers were all Jewish. It was Abt and Sons, Harver, Decker and Stein. They were all Jews.

INTERVIEWER: Was there any way in which religion helped persuade them to give in?

HERSTEIN: Oh no, Rabbi Hirsch, the noted rabbi of Sinai Temple, gave a sermon during the strike. He said, "Well, this is a case of the rich Jews persecuting the poor." Oh, the manufacturers were furious! No, it was probably better judgement and realization that the time had come for unionization of the industry and here's another thing. One of the big clothing manufactures was J.J. Abt and Sons; Isaac Abt was the famous pediatrician in those days. The Abts were a very wealthy family. He was the twin brother of Jacob Abt. They were the wealthy Jews, you know. Now the other members in the family were in the clothing business and one of these was Jacob Abt and now his son, John Jr., is the lawyer of the communists.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, is that the same Abt?

HERSTEIN: I'll tell you a long story about that.

INTERVIEWER: Do you want to tell me the story about the Abts?

HERSTEIN: In 1916 there was a bitter feud between the Board of Education and the Chicago Teachers' Federation, which was the union of elementary school teachers organized by two great leaders, Margaret Haley and Catherine Goggins. The issue was that 68 teachers were dismissed for belonging to unions. They didn't quite say it that way but all the officers of the Chicago Teachers' Federation were dismissed and just a few that weren't connected with the union thrown in extra. At that time Jacob Loeb was on the School Board. He opposed the teachers union in this whole fight, and he was very close to the Abts. In fact, the Abt children called him Uncle Jacob. In the summer of that year I went with some friends to Estes Park, and among the people that we met there were Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Abt and their two children, Marian Abt, who was about sixteen or seventeen, and Johnny, who was fourteen. There were other people there, friends of ours, and we began discussing the teachers' fight. I remember that Marian sent a card to her uncle, Jacob Loeb, who was president of the School Board and fighting the teachers. She said something like this: "I've met one of them and I think they're

HERSTEIN: fine." We became quite friendly. I wasn't trying to convert them but they were very open-minded and socially conscious people. Johnny, then, was about fourteen and had not been very well and his mother was very solicitous of him. I remember that one time we went horseback riding and we were caught in one of those quick hailstorms in the mountains. I drove with him and Regina Stulz, who was his age and the daughter of Rabbi Stulz, and I chaperoned them back to the inn where we stayed. Well after we got back from Estes Park we kept up a sort of a desultory relationship. Of course, they were wealthy German Jews and I was a Russian Jew, but our relationship grew. As time went on one of the people in our group was Ethel Kawin who was engaged to Walter Bachrach whom she subsequently married. Through Ethel Marian met Arthur Bachrach, who was the brother of Walter, and they were married. I heard of them occasionally and the first thing I knew as the years went by was that Johnny had married Jessica Smith, who was thought to be a very active member of the Communist Party. Marian and Arthur had sons and they had become very proletarian, especially Marian. This boy, from a family where everybody went to college, got a job as a seaman and the first thing I knew was that Marian had joined the Communist Party, very openly. Subsequently she and Arthur were divorced, but she was very active in the Communist Party, which was a shock to all their aristocratic German Jewish friends.

INTERVIEWER: I can imagine.

HERSTEIN: She was very active. And every now and then she would get in touch with me and ask me something. I knew she was a member of the party and she'd ask me certain things, something she'd want to get into a labor paper, and I'd say to her, "Marian, you can't get that in a regular labor paper. Everybody knows that guy"--somebody from Milwaukee, I remember--"is a member of the Communist Party and the American Federation of Labor repudiates the Communists."

Johnny became more and more involved in the Communist Party and his father died rather suddenly. He had a gall bladder operation or something like that, and somebody said at the time the trouble was there were too many doctors in that family. He died rather early, unexpectedly. Of course the uncle, Dr. Isaac Abt, continued as the great pediatrician and his son, Arthur Abt, also studied medicine at the University of Chicago and became a well-known pediatrician. Marian's mother stuck with her children--not that she was converted to their cause--and Johnny drifted farther and farther away from them, but Johnny went up and up in the Communist Party. He's their top lawyer now. I remember there was a case here about a fellow by the name of Claude Lightfoot. He was a member of the Communist Party. There were some charges against him some people thought not justified. I think the ACLU was interested. They weren't taking a part in it but they decided they'd hear both sides. At one meeting of the regular mid-monthly meetings of the ACLU, a representative of Johnny's staff came. We had had the government tell its case the week

HERSTEIN: before, and he was discussing the case and I said, "Well, you know maybe Johnny got corrupted by me. Guilt by association." I said, "I could find you a picture of Johnny and Regina Stulz and me together at Estes," and he laughed. Well, later when I got home my sister told me that Johnny Abt had called, and I was sorry I wasn't there, but I have never heard from him since. There was the Smith Act which made membership in the Communist Party a crime and Marian Abt was called before that committee. They asked her, "Are you a member of the Communist Party?" She said, "Yes, and I'm proud of it," and then I think she was found guilty and the case was being appealed. In the meantime she became very ill with cancer and everybody felt very bad and somebody got up a petition to urge the government not to prosecute, not to carry out the verdict, because she was really dying of cancer. I was so surprised at the people who signed and didn't sign. Now a lot of the families' friends, people from Hull House, signed it. They weren't Communists, but it was the humane thing that appealed to them. There were some people that were so bitter that they never would sign it. She died soon afterwards; she never went to prison. Her mother is living in New York and I understand in very humble circumstances--separated from all the people that she knew. Just call the roll of the upper class German Jewish families and that's what she belonged to. I've always been sorry that I didn't realize that she was there and I haven't seen her in 25 years. But I used to go to New York every year as a member of the Board of the American Labor Education Service. We'd have our board meeting, and they always wanted me to be there, although it was expensive for me to come, expensive to the board; and I thought after a while, "I wish I had thought of her," and I would have liked to call on her. I know some old friends have called and one of them even gave her a coat that they thought she needed. Now, as far as I know, she is still living, but Johnny is very prominent as the lawyer of the Communist Party and he's the lawyer now for Angela Davis.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that his parents' or friends' anti-union attitudes had anything to do with him going so far in that direction?

HERSTEIN: Well, they weren't so anti-union.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, they weren't?

HERSTEIN: No, that strike was one of the inevitable things in the development of trade unionism. Marian and Johnny got interested, you see, somehow or other in the Communist Party and then the father died. And, as Len Dupres often says, when you think back you have to judge people's actions in the milieu in which it took place. Now some of these wild radicals that are scornful of us previous reformers don't take into consideration what was happening at that time, and how courageous it was to take that position. The Jewish settlement was called the Maxwell Settlement. It was called that because it was on Maxwell Street. Now to go and to have a class in a social settlement in those days was quite the liberal thing to do. And Millie Abt--her name was Millie--and

HERSTEIN: her husband Jacob, who was a Yale graduate, belonged to this prosperous firm but both of them had classes at the Maxwell Settlement. And as Len said, for that time, that was the liberal thing. Their friends were being debutants and having their coming out parties and all that sort of thing. I suppose someday we'll run across Johnny again. They say he's a very, very good lawyer.

INTERVIEWER: That would be interesting, to see him again after such a long time.

HERSTEIN: I would like to see him again and I'm sorry I didn't take advantage of the times when I was going regularly to New York to go to see Millie Abt. I'm always the kind of a person that goes to see the guy that's supposed to be down and out. Sometimes I hear about Millie through Mrs. Samuel Alschuler. She has friends that knew her and occasionally have seen her.

INTERVIEWER: That's a good story. I'm glad you remembered that one. You mentioned at one time making a lot of speeches at the time of the 1919 steel strike.

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes.

INTERVIEWER: I wonder if you could tell me a little bit more about what you recall of that.

HERSTEIN: I told you how I casually entered the labor movement that day when I made the speech for the classes at the meeting of the Chicago Federation of Labor and all those men came up and wanted me to speak to their unions. From then on I was steeped in the labor movement and I was always in demand and always making speeches for unions. I remember one time a member of the carpenters' union asked me if I would speak at his union at a certain night on some educational subject. "Oh, yes," I said, and I went and very foolishly I was trying to almost review in a way Dewey's book, Education and Democracy. Of course, Dewey was a very hard writer, very hard to understand, but I digested it and took sections of it. I remember the meeting was in Wicker Park Hall on the Northwest side. I got there and they introduced me and I looked at the audience and I thought, "My, these poor fellows have worked all day and they're bored with this." So after about twenty minutes of speaking I brought my speech to a close. The next week I met this man, this carpenter who had asked me to speak, and he said, "Miss Herstein, there must have been a misunderstanding. Why did you leave so soon?" He said, "You know, we made it a special order of business for you to speak. All of the business was suspended." And I said, "Oh, I looked at them and they looked so tired. And I thought how terrible to inflict more speaking on them." He said, "The trouble with you is that you don't know how Swedes listen. You're used to more of these excitable Russian Jews." And it turned out that they were rapt in attention and I thought they were bored. That's one time that I mistook my audience!

INTERVIEWER: That's an interesting ethnic difference. The difference in the way people listen.

HERSTEIN: Wasn't that interesting? I very rarely misunderstand an audience. I've often stopped before because there's just a point at which you can't go beyond that. You can't hold the interest beyond that. And from then on I was very active, always at the command of anyone that wanted me. I'd say for ten successive years on Labor Day I spoke in the coal fields of southern Illinois through the efforts of Tom Tippett. And I have spoken at Mount Olive.

INTERVIEWER: You have?

HERSTEIN: Oh my, that's a very interesting story. I thought I would dig it out for you. Tom Tippett wrote an article about it and I've got it somewhere and you ought to hear it. That's the Virden Riot.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell it now or do you need to look it up?

HERSTEIN: I'd have to look it up. There apparently was a very bitter strike situation and there were workers killed. It was very bitter and every year after that to this day not a mine works on the twelfth of October. It so happens that October 12 is a school holiday in Chicago--Columbus Day. Of course, I took advantage of it and every October 12 for years found me speaking at the memorial services for the victims of the Virden Riot in Mount Olive. At the time the steel strike occured, I was very much enmeshed in the labor movement and very close to John Fitzpatrick. I told you the story about how Tom took a group from Peoria and I got that youngest girl and the baby on the picket line. There was a steel workers union in Joliet, Illinois in those days. They were organizing and the men, the members of that union, used to have me come out during the strike time to talk to their people. John Fitzpatrick, a chairman of the organizing, was in charge of the midwestern area. There were several steel mills in this area--in South Chicago and Gary, Indiana. Foster was in charge of the eastern area, Pennsylvania. The first place where they could have meetings was Youngstown, Ohio. They had the State Constabulary in Pennsylvania--I don't know whether they have it now. The police rode horses and would break up meetings. There's another little interesting story. Several years after that Tom Tippett was telling me he was making a speech in Pennsylvania and through the corner of his eye he could see the State Constabulary coming down, so he thought he'd better finish his speech quickly before they broke in and interrupted him, forced him to stop. But they rode up and they said, "Say, young man, is anybody interfering with your speech? We don't have that here! We have free speech!" And he nearly keeled over. The answer was that Gifford Pinchot, the great conservationist and liberal had become Republican Governor of Pennsylvania.

INTERVIEWER: And that made a lot of difference?

HERSTEIN: It made a lot of difference. Well, the strike went on for several weeks and we lost the strike.

INTERVIEWER: I wanted to ask you one question about how it was financed. I remember that the clothing workers gave a lot of money to that strike. I read somewhere that there were about 24 different craft unions that were involved in it and they only gave about $100 a piece. Was it because they were that poor or were they not that interested?

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes, they were poor and the financing was very honestly done.

INTERVIEWER: Did the craft unions support it as well as they were able, financially? It seems to me that the clothing workers were doing more than they were.

HERSTEIN: There were a lot of liberals, too, that gave money. William Foster was the secretary and in charge of the funds and was very circumspect about the funds. At the end of the strike there was a hundred thousand dollars left and Foster returned it to contributors. He was an interesting character but, alas, became a Communist later. That was too bad, because it ended his usefulness in the American labor movmement.

INTERVIEWER: Can you describe him a little bit as you knew him?

HERSTEIN: Oh yes, I will. Now I'll just tell you one other thing about the strike. Some time after the strike was over, I was in Joliet again with these men that were the local officers and I began to reminisce about the strike and I said, "Oh, say, I remember this one and that one but what about the fellow that was the president of the local, what about him?" Well, he was lucky to get off with his life. It turned out that he was a spy.

INTERVIEWER: The president of the local?

HERSTEIN: He'd sit next to me at all these meetings and was vociferous in attacking the steel bosses. The way they found out that he was a spy was one night, late at night, he was handling his stuff, mailing it to headquarters in Pennsylvania. For some reason or other they had to come back to the union hall for something and they caught him. They caught him right then and there handing over his spy stuff. And he dashed away. They would have killed him, I think, and it would be understandable. All those weeks he had been there betraying them.

William Z. Foster, of course, became a very interesting person. William Z. Foster apparently grew up in the West and he was a Wobbley--IWW. Then he drifted to Chicago and was a member of the Carmen's Union and was a delegate of the Carmen's Union to the Chicago Federation of Labor. He was a very meek looking person and he was prominent in the packers' strike. The federal mediator that was appointed in that strike was Judge Samuel Altschuler. The evidence about conditions in the yards was pretty shocking.

HERSTEIN: Foster said to the judge that there was a demand of the union of these workers. He didn't think it was quite reasonable. But Foster said they wanted that and he presented their claim. That impressed Judge Altschuler with his integrity. After the steel strike, there was some big railroad accident. Trains were derailed, but they blamed William Z. Foster for it because he had been the leader of the strike. Foster had become a national figure, but, alas, the target for blame in every industrial dispute, or even accident. At that time the steel industry was very powerful and the press was with them. He was the meekest looking person. He was married at that time to a woman who had been the wife of a man in California who was a noted anarchist--Fox, I think his name was. These stories came to me later. There was quite a radical group in California around Emma Goldman and this man Fox. She was his wife and she had two children, a son and a daughter. The daughter was married to a lieutenant of Foster's, Joe Manley. He was Irish. He was in the union and worked valiantly in the causes but he was attacked by the Communists who resented their practical exclusion from the strike activities. He went back to his job which was a structural ironworker--very dangerous. He fell from a high scaffold and was killed. He was Irish--very interesting. Then along came Earl Browder, who was an avowed Communist. I told you something about his history, didn't I?

INTERVIEWER: No. I don't think so.

HERSTEIN: Well, Earl Browder came from the area of Wichita, Kansas and his father was a fundamentalist preacher, non-conformist. When the sects of this fundamentalist church had some dispute about the "second coming" or something concerning theological dogma, he left in protest. The family was very poor--very poor. And Earl was married to a farmer's daughter. They were both about nineteen. I think she was an epileptic. There was a child born to that marriage. He had protested the war, not as a pacifist, but as one who would fight in the war when the workers arose against their masters. He was tried and sent to Leavenworth Prison. He told me once that he, as a young boy, wanted to take lessons on some musical instrument. It cost about a quarter a piece for the lessons, but the family didn't have the money. But when he was in prison and was asked what he would like to do, he said, "Well, I'd like to play the flute or some other thing." So they had him play when the prisoners were having their meals. He went to prison in protest against the war; his brother went to prison and also his brother-in-law. They were very outright in their opposition to the war.

INTERVIEWER: That was World War I?

HERSTEIN: World War I. After Earl got out of prison he drifted to Chicago and somehow or other he met William Z. Foster and he worked on him, and he--Earl--established the Labor Herald--sort of a little magazine. Well, at that time a lot of the secret service men or F.B.I. had infiltrated the Communist Party. I remember that Ed

HERSTEIN: Nochels, who was secretary of the Chicago Federation of Labor, when he let some of the unions come and talk to them, he'd say, "Well, I don't know which one of you is an F.B.I. agent." And it was true. They were in the unions. And they do that now. But the stupid thing is for the union not to be able to spot them. The Communists decided to have a convention and where did they hold the convention--of all the stupid things you've ever heard of--at Bridgeman, Michigan. Bridgeman, Michigan is a farming community where everybody knows everybody, and when one of these long haired swarthy commies came from New York, they spotted him right away. Really the purpose of the convention, the big resolution, was for the Communist Party to stop being underground and come out publicly. Of course the party was full of government spies and the spies gave them away and they were all arrested. Now among the people arrested were Bill Foster and Earl Browder and several others. The first one that they arrested and wanted to try was William Z. Foster, and the reason was that he'd become very prominent as the leader of the steel strike. To be able to prove that he was a Communist was a feather in the cap of industry. The trial was held in Michigan. That's where they were arrested. And John Fitzpatrick went out to that trial every single day and he persuaded Frank Walsh, the distinguished lawyer, a man a good deal like Clarence Darrow, to come to defend Foster. It was because Fitzpatrick urged him to do it. Walsh had done some very fine things for labor. Now, most lawyers didn't want to touch the thing, but Walsh took it because Fitzpatrick asked him. There was a jury of twelve people and one was a woman. She was a typical American, long American ancestry. Somehow or other Walsh sensed that she had a sense of fairness and his whole defense was this: that they had no proof that he was a member of the party, that he went there to make a speech, which he had a right to do. Most of us thought he wasn't even there, but that this was the way to crucify an effective labor leader, a method tried again and again in the history of American labor. You singled out the leader and made some fantastic charge against him and thereby you killed the effectiveness of this leader. Well, the jury split, 11-1.

INTERVIEWER: And the one was the woman?

HERSTEIN: And the one was the woman.

INTERVIEWER: Was she the only woman on the jury?

HERSTEIN: I think so, and of course he'd have to be tried again. Incidentally, he never was tried again.

INTERVIEWER: Was this right after the strike or during the strike?

HERSTEIN: Right after the strike. It was after the strike, and he gained distinction because, although the strike was lost, it was recognized that it was one of the most effective attempts. One day, I was walking down the street with Tom Tippett and all of us were great admirers of William Foster. He was such a good organizer

HERSTEIN: and Tom said to me, "Lillian, what would you say if I told you that Bill Foster actually had been at that Communist meeting?" "Well," he said, "It was one of the mistakes." There were some very left wing commies in Minnesota. They were Trotskyists and the Dunn brothers--they were in the Teamsters' Union--I think they goaded him, taunted him with being afraid to come to talk to the convention. He didn't want to be yellow, he said. Then Fitzpatrick told me the same thing, and he said, "Well, that was a mistake he made." He said, "In all the time we were defending him we didn't know he'd been there but being there didn't make him a Communist." Well it was after that, that William Z. Foster made his trip to Russia and that's where the conversion took place. When he was there he met John Reed's widow. Did you read about John Reed?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

HERSTEIN: I have his book, Ten Days that Shook the World. He belonged to a very prominent family.

INTERVIEWER: Did you know him?

HERSTEIN: No. But in a book about him Clarence Darrow writes a preface in which John Reed's father talks to Clarence Darrow. This young man was a student in an eastern university; he was very idealistic. His father said to Darrow, "Help him. I hope you'll help him if he needs it." John Reed went to Russia and was very highly regarded by the Russian Communists. He got typhus and died. He was the first of the heroes buried at the Kremlin. Later Foster came there and met John Reed's widow. They came back to America, and I remember a big meeting at the auditorium where he spoke and she spoke. And she said John Reed died because America wouldn't send medicines to Russia or something like that. But by that time Foster had become a member of the Communist Party.

At that time many of us were engaged in organizing a really big Farm Labor Party. There was a man by the name of Brown, I remember, from the far west who was in our group and John Fitzpatrick. It was going to be a very effective party and the unions were asked to send delegates. I spoke to various meetings asking them to send delegates, and John Fitzpatrick and I were national committeemen of this newly organized party. I was teaching for a living all this time. I was doing everything gratis and I would rush into a meeting. I came to the Chicago Federation of Labor for a meeting with the executive committee of this newly organized Farmer Labor Party. Just as this convention was convening, and as I walked in, I realized the atmosphere was rife with anger and terror. I heard John Fitzpatrick say, "The head of the Communist Party has no responsibility; I have responsibility for 500,000 working people." This was the repudiation of Foster and the activities of their group. There were delegates from Minnesota who were bitter against the Communists. They'd had their troubles with them with the Dunn Brothers of the Teamsters. Well, it was a shocking thing, and the next day the convention started. I was sure that this was not to be a Communist convention but a big convention to found a great Farmer Labor Party.

INTERVIEWER: The Farmer Labor Party?

HERSTEIN: That's right. I was on the credentials committee. I remember there was a very fine man by the name of Rodriguez, who was a good Socialist, and he'd been a member of the city council, elected on the Socialist ticket. He was very handsome and very intelligent politically and a very popular speaker. I was on the credentials committee and I would read the credentials of so-and-so from some organization to be seated as a delegate. And I'd say, "Well, is that a union? What do they make?" They had packed the convention--workmen's circles--and I questioned every one, not realizing what had happened. Someone said to Rodriguez, "My God, someone ought to tip the gal on that committee, tip Lillian Herstein off." And he said, "The way she sits there and doesn't seem to know a whole lot, she's ten times better, when she innocently says, 'Is this a union?'" And then when it came to vote I wouldn't seat these so-called delegates. I'd say, "I never heard of that union! What do they make if it's a union?" I was overruled many times and the credentials of those I had questioned were nevertheless seated. Then we come to the day of the convention. It was very sad. Everybody was broken hearted, the liberals, because here was John Fitzpatrick and Foster, whom the liberals all over had learned to worship because of their activity in the steel strike and in packing strikes, and when there occured the split a little later right on the platform between Fitzpatrick and Foster everybody felt terrible. But at a certain point at the convention it was apparent that the Communists had the majority in spite of all.

INTERVIEWER: In spite of your not seating?

HERSTEIN: Yes, oh yes. They packed the convention, and there was a resolution brought in and our group, really now in the minority, wanted the resolution to be referred to a committee and then be brought back to the convention. The majority group wanted it passed right away. I tried to get the floor and Foster said to Tom Tippett, "What's the matter with Lilly? What's she doing? Tell her not to ask for the floor." And Tom said to him--Tom was a great admirer of Foster's--"Well," he said, "Bill, you can't tell Lillian what to do." He said, "She admires you a great deal and was influenced by you a great deal, but she did it because she believed in you." I got the floor and the chairman said, "Let's have Miss Herstein come to the platform; she's so little nobody can see her." I got up on the platform and I said, "There may be nothing very important in this resolution but why not defer to the request of the minority to refer it to a committee?" I said, "You people are in the majority but there's nothing much at stake except a matter of procedure and it would make for a more peaceful discussion of things." The story of the convention was written up in the New Republic. And I said, "It's just like a good salesman who's trying to sell a woman a new washing machine and she's just frightened. She's afraid the thing will cut her hands off. A good salesman wisely gives in to her fears and says, 'Let's try it another time.'--so why not

HERSTEIN: do this?" Well, they all began to cheer, since I was the first speaker of our side who didn't damn the Communists, therefore, their own Communist group applauded me. That frightened Bill Foster and he got up innocently and asked for the floor and the chairman said, "I think you're out of order, Mr. Foster." Foster quickly said, "That's alright, I only wanted to speak against Miss Herstein's motion." You see, that was the sign to all of them not to vote with me. That's how he did it and so we lost. This convention, including this incident, was written up in the New Republic.

INTERVIEWER: What was the resolution?

HERSTEIN: Oh, it was nothing very important. It was just one of those things, and they could have referred it back, but they were drunk with power.

INTERVIEWER: Now what happened between Foster and Fitzpatrick on the floor?

HERSTEIN: At one point in the convention Fitzpatrick just repudiated Foster. There occurred the memorable confrontation between Fitzpatrick in the Great Steel Strike of 1918 and earned the great admiration of all liberals and progressive elements in the American labor movement. Fitzpatrick had supported Foster all through his trial connected with the Bridgeman Convention. I always tell people that when you think how far Fitzpatrick went in defending Foster all the time that the trial of Foster was going on and went where the trial was being held in Bridgeman. He got Frank Walsh, the distinguished labor lawyer, to take on the case in defense of Foster. Emissaries from Gompers would come down to Chicago to warn Fitzpatrick against playing with these wild people. And all the time he stuck to his guns, which was really very remarkable and then to be betrayed this way. You see--incidentally, that's one of the reasons when people want me to write a biography of Fitzpatrick, that I feel so bad about what happened to him subsequently. He got so bitter over all this that he was bitter against any innovations and that accounts for his bitter opposition to the CIO when it was formed.

INTERVIEWER: Anything that Communists and other reformers had to do with?

HERSTEIN: Yes. "I was burned once," he would say. It was too bad. Well, Foster then became very prominent in the Communist Party and so did Browder.

INTERVIEWER: Did this ruin the Farmer Labor Party?

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes, I said to Earl Browder at the time, "Earl, this is what's known as a victory gained at too great a cost. You won the convention, but you lost the cause."

INTERVIEWER: Browder?

HERSTEIN: Browder. Browder had also been arrested for attending the Communist convention in Bridgeman. Foster's case was never continued after the jury split on conviction: eleven for, one against. That ill-conceived convention in Bridgeman. This was before the split happened. Right after the Bridgeman case we needed bonds for Browder. A big meeting was held, I was asked to speak at the meeting and, by George, I did and I remember Browder saying to me at the time, "Lillian, this was the most dangerous and the most typical thing for you to do." And that was before this split. Well, both of them, Foster and Browder, became very prominent leaders in the Communist Party of America. Of course, I'd always had the feeling that the real Communist Party in Russia never had much respect for the American Communist movement because the Russians felt they didn't amount to much. They were too small. I wish these young radicals would understand that. It didn't amount to anything because the American labor movement was conservative. We want more now. It was accepting capitalism; their slogan was Gompers statement. Politically the AF of L said, "Elect our friends, and defeat our enemies in the existing parties, Democratic and Republican." I was moderate myself. I didn't fall for any of this. I was open-minded. I would listen. So they--Foster and Browder--became leaders in the American Communist Party. Eventually, I don't know what the issue was--Browder and Foster split and there was another Communist leader called Lovestone. There were now two dissenting Communist factions; the Trotskyites and the Lovestonists. Subsequently Lovestone left the Communist Party and later became the advisor of David Dubinsky, throwing the Communists out of that union. The Communist controversy nearly killed that union. The union turned to Lovestone for advice and he became their advisor in international affairs and I know many a fine Socialist or a liberal whose request for a visa to go abroad was spiked by J. Lovestone.

INTERVIEWER: They seem to spend more time killing each other off than anything else.

HERSTEIN: Well, he was through, you see, he was through and he went regular, was an informer from his earlier experience and the International Ladies Garment Workers had a terrible time. The Communist controversy nearly ruined their union.

INTERVIEWER: They don't seem to want to talk about it. I know there was a tremendous squabble in that union. Tell me about it.

HERSTEIN: They were a very big union, a very strong one, and many of them were Russian Jews and when the revolution occurred everybody was glad because they felt this meant the end of Czarist tyranny, of pogroms and serfdom. President Wilson declared, "The acid test of the cause of the allies will be the treatment of Russia by her sister republics." Everyone knew of the tyranny of the Czar, and they were glad, and then came the disillusionment. At meetings of various locals of the International Ladies Garment Workers, bitter

HERSTEIN: conflicts arose between those who had become disillusioned and those who followed the Communist line. One of them that belonged to the Communist Party, or was controlled by them, would bring in a resolution on foreign policy--something in favor of the Soviet Union which had nothing to do with the problems of the union. He would tell about what a wonderful place it was. Then another delegate would get up and say, "It's wonderful all right. If I didn't send my sister in Russia food, she'd be starving," and the fight was on. It wrecked the union, brought the membership way down.

INTERVIEWER: Members couldn't talk about anything but foreign policy then?

HERSTEIN: Anything that the Communist Party ordered them to bring in to the American Communists to tell them what to do--their members or fellow travelers to do—they would do and that would split the union. They pursued such tactics in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, which had a large membership of Russian Jewish immigrants. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers under Sidney Hillman had been very friendly with the Soviet Union and started banking relations with them. Unfortunately, in the International, the president of the ILGWU died in the middle of the controversy--a very strong man he was. The second president died. It was not until David Dubinsky became president--Dubinsky was a labor statesman--had the situation stabilized. And, of course, there was bitterness against the Communists who'd wrecked their union. There's no question about it. From 175,000 they got down to 50,000 or 75,000. Dubinsky proceeded to kick out the commies, which he should have done, because they were wrecking his union and that's the time he got help from J. Lovestone. There's nothing like these reformed Communists! You know what we have in the ACLU with Ira Latimer. You know that story. Lovestone had led a faction of the American Communist Party, but lost out in the fight and left the party. Latimer, who had been Executive Director of ACLU in Chicago, later left the party and now he agitates for "right to work" laws and other reactionary legislation. Earl Browder was one of the leaders of the American Communist Party and became the head. He made frequent visits to Russia. On one of these visits he met and married a Russian girl, a Jewish woman. She had belonged to a wealthy Jewish family. She had graduated with honors from the University of St. Petersburg, before it became Leningrad and Petrograd. But when the revolution came she got interested in the revolution and became an ardent Communist. She and Earl married, and they had three children and I'll tell you about that. Russia, in the second world war, was one of our important allies. After the war Earl was the proponent in the World Communist Party for cooperating with the western allies. Stalin was opposed. Russia wasn't in the war long. Their country was devastated, that seige of Leningrad was terrible. Stalin was opposed after the war to fight the West. By that time he was paranoid, and his whole policy was to fight the influence of the United States. Earl Browder thought that was a mistake and in the International he preached the other gospel. Therefore, he was read out of the Communist Party. Now subsequently I don't know

HERSTEIN: when it was that Bill Foster died. But it was Earl who was the head of the American Communist Party. I didn't hear about him for years. I used to know him very well, and I used to preach against his influencing Foster to become a Communist. I said Foster could have been a very effective leader in the American labor movement, but he lost. In spite of my differences with Earl Browder, we remained friends. About three or four years ago I received a telephone message. My sister said, "Somebody by the name of Browder called you up and this is the number." I never thought of Earl, so I called and the maid answered and she said, "I'll call Mr. Browder." The man answered and I said, "My name is Lillian Herstein, and I received a telephone message from somebody by the name of Browder." He said, "That's right, I'm Felix Browder. I'm a professor of mathematics at the University of Chicago and my father is Earl Browder. He is visiting me, and he's very eager to get in touch with you."

INTERVIEWER: Did you see him then?

HERSTEIN: Oh, I was so much surprised. Mr. Felix Browder said, "I'm having a group of my friends and colleagues of U of C at my home to meet my father. He is very eager to see you. Can we come and get you?" I said, "Fine," so he came and I went over and there was Earl. He's younger than I am--not a whole lot--but younger, but much more frail, and he walked with a cane. We had a lovely visit--he and I. There were members of the mathematics department and I remember the little hor d'oeuvres that had flags of every country and so on and they were talking, you know, and I said to Earl that I hadn't any idea what they were talking about and he said, "No, it's all mathematics. It's Greek to me." We had a very pleasant evening, and then Earl told me the story of the family. When they came back from Russia this Felix was about seven years old and they had two other children, three boys, and they moved to New York. I don't know what the community was--a public school--but certainly very intelligent teachers. This boy couldn't speak one word of English, just Russian. He was seven years old and they began teaching him and he was a whiz. Just a whiz! He learned English right away. He learned mathematics. He was brilliant. And then he went through high school. He got a fellowship to M.I.T. Later he was in the American army, and when it came for him to be discharged from the army, the officers didn't want to give him an honorable discharge because, as they said, "He had associated with people who were Communists and who advocated overthrow of the U.S. government." The army appointed a lawyer to defend him. He wasn't a very brilliant lawyer, but one of those very consistent people who revered the U.S. Constitution and knew the Bible. They asked whether he had associated with people who were Communists and advocated the destruction of the U.S. He said, "I associated with my parents, my mother and father, who were Communists and of whom I'm very proud." The lawyer turned to the Bible and the Constitution of the United States and he said, "Here's the Bible, 'Honor thy father and thy mother.' There's nothing in the Constitution that forbids a man from associating with his own parents." So Felix

HERSTEIN: got an honorable discharge. Then he got his doctorate degree in mathematics with great distinction, but he had a terrible time getting a job. The mathematics department of the University of Colorado voted unanimously for him to be employed. When they learned that he was the son of Earl Browder the trustees threw him out. He had a very bitter experience, and his first job really was at Brandeis University. Then he went to Boston University and now he's one of the top men in the mathematics department of the University of Chicago. The two other boys are mathematicians too, and one teaches at Princeton University. That's the one that Earl lives with. The other one teaches at Brown University. I said to him, "Earl, how did it happen? Weren't they interested in politics?" "No," he said, "they weren't." He said as kids they were always doing crossword puzzles and anything that had to do with mathematics. Now the reason Earl was here was that the University of Illinois at Champaign had invited him to make a speech. Of course an ex-Communist they weren't so afraid of. That's why he was here in Chicago. About a year afterwards he wrote me again that he was invited to speak at some college at Iowa. By that time his son Felix, from the University of Chicago, was visiting professor at some California university, maybe Berkeley, and so they weren't here. Earl was staying at the Sherman Hotel and he invited me to have dinner with him. I had dinner with him and we had an interesting visit, and then he took me to the bus. That's an interesting story, isn't it?

INTERVIEWER: It surely is.

HERSTEIN: And you know I was telling this story once when Ab Mikva was around and Ab said, "You don't mean to say that this Felix Browder was related to Earl." I said, "It's his son." And the reason he knew the family was that they'd bought one of these university houses and when the wife wanted to have the lease looked over, whatever the legal business was, she engaged Ab Mikva. He had no idea who she was. She, by the way, is a Ph.D. from M.I.T. in something called crystallography. You can have some fun with that one--crystallography. I don't know what that is, but she has a doctorate degree in that. They have a couple of children and the other son had children, too. The one at Princeton. Earl lives with, unless he's dead now. I ought to call them and find out.

INTERVIEWER: And none of them have anything to do with politics?

HERSTEIN: No, they're not interested. And he said, "We didn't try to influence them either way, but I guess when you have a couple of little geniuses around who are grabbing everything that has anything to do with mathematics there is no time for political propoganda." When Felix was being questioned, the head of the mathematics department of M.I.T. testified for him and said, "In the 77 years of the existence of the mathematics department at M.I.T., Felix Browder was the most brilliant one we have ever had." The experience made him very bitter being turned down again and again for a job. His younger brothers had an easier time. At

HERSTEIN: this party at his house where all these mathematicians were around I got introduced to a mathematician by the name of Isaac Herstein.

INTERVIEWER: Related to you?

HERSTEIN: No. So he said, "Ever since I got here, Miss Herstein, they've all asked me if I knew you." "Well," I said, "you should have gotten in touch with me." He was a Polish Jew and had to escape when the Nazis came there. He escaped to Canada and apparently studied mathematics there. He's one of these brilliant guys, and he lives at 5000 East End. But I've never seen him since and I'm sorry, because I really would like to. We talked about the name and he said there probably is a relationship, because there was a Herstein family. Although we came from Lithuania, he came from Poland.

INTERVIEWER: Probably a distant relative.

HERSTEIN: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever see Bill Foster after that split?

HERSTEIN: I never saw him after that. And I didn't see Earl all those years until this incident of his son's. Earl has large grey eyes, and you know he had very little formal education but he certainly made up the gaps. He was a voracious reader. I'll tell you another interesting man of that group. When the Bolshevik Revolution occurred they sent their people all over to win people over to the cause. The man put in charge of the American program was an Italian Communist by the name of Louis Fraina and he was the official from the Communist party to do their work. Then a split occurred and he left the party; because he split with them on policy, they accused him of embezzling funds and all that sort of thing. But he left the party and took the name of Corey, Louis Corey. Subsequently he studied and he taught at Antioch College. Finally he drifted to Chicago and was the educational head of the Amalgamated Butcher Workmen. He had a daughter. You may have heard of her, Olga Corey. His wife was a Russian Jewess. He was very bitterly anti-communist. I mean he was the kind, by this time, that could see a red under the bed. But he lectured several times for the Janitors Union Local 25, invited Peggy Bausch, a friend of mine and in charge of education of the union. Corey was one of the few men I have known who never had a formal education who gave a historical survey in which there were no gaps. He was very good. Well, a very unfortunate thing happened. You know, I hate to tell you about these gods that have wooden feet.

INTERVIEWER: Well, all of them do, so we might as well accept that.

HERSTEIN: You'd better believe that. Corey was educational director for the Amalgamated Butcher Workmen of which Patrick Gorman was secretary-treasurer and the powerful head. Pat began getting dissatisfied

HERSTEIN: with him. No special reason. Pat was a very fine man but temperamental. Corey didn't know this, but I learned of it. Just at this time it was discovered by one of the good spies that Corey never had become a citizen of this country, which was a very stupid omission on his part, and the Federal Government was starting a suit to deport him. Len Dupres said at the time, "There is no chance that the government would deport him." They hadn't any more chance of doing anything to him, you know, and damn it all if Gorman didn't make that an excuse to dump Corey. We felt terrible about it. Corey picked up and went back to New York. Olga stayed here. Olga worked for Roosevelt University and in several liberal organizations. She was a young girl, you know, and subsequently she went back East where her father died of a heart attack. But people who've been making a study of the Communist Party in America have come to me and said, "Do you know there was a man by the name of Corey, who was very prominent in the Party?" and I said, "Yes, I'd heard about it." "And did you know that he was Olga Corey's father?" I said, "Yes, sure I did." As I have pointed out Earl went back to Russia after they had dumped him to try and convince Molotov they were wrong in their opposition to the Western allies but he wasn't effective. They had decided on this policy of fighting the Western democracies and pushing the United States out of Europe. That's what they'd like to do now, too. And we've been so busy with this darned Viet Nam thing, where we have no interests, and neglected the Middle East, which is where they are going to fight us. That's what they want right there. That's what the Czar of Russia wanted always. We're back to the Czarist days. The Russians have swung back--real nationalist, in spite of all that they say. Maybe it was a mistake that we didn't let Patton go into Czechoslovakia and let the Russians go in. So there we are. What do we do from here?

INTERVIEWER: There's one thing I was going to ask you. I didn't want to interrupt the stories because they were good, but I wanted to ask you if you could recall anything about the 1919 steel strike and race relations in that strike. It seems there was racial strife in the packing strike which preceded the steel strike.

HERSTEIN: Oh, it was certainly Negro antagonism in the packinghouse workers strike.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, it made racial tension, I suppose, much worse. What about the steel strike?

HERSTEIN: I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: Was there anything at all?

HERSTEIN: I didn't feel that at all.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever travel to Gary when you were making your speeches during the steel strike? You said you went to Joliet, which is pretty far.

HERSTEIN: Well, I think I may have gone to Gary. I was in South Chicago. Now, about the packinghouse workers strike, I told you about that master's thesis that deals with that subject.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

HERSTEIN: Now, that shows the whole racial problem. The thesis was written by William Tuttle and the strike when we had the race riots.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

HERSTEIN: Oh, they were terrible. And this thesis deals with the question as to what extent the bitterness between the Negroes and the white workers contributed to the violence of those terrible race riots which occurred in Chicago often. The packers used the Negroes as scabs. John Fitzpatrick long ago told me that any man who wouldn't scab to give his wife and children food isn't a man and you couldn't blame the Negroes for scabbing since they were kept out of the union. By the way, I told you that I have the original agreement of the packinghouse strike.

INTERVIEWER: No, I don't think you did.

HERSTEIN: Yes, it's called "Over the Top" and John Fitzpatrick gave it to me once.

INTERVIEWER: You mean you have the actual document?

HERSTEIN: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: In your possession?

HERSTEIN: The actual document and he tossed it over to me. There's his picture in it and a picture of Samuel Altschuler, who was the arbitrator in the case appointed by the U.S. government. Altschuler at the time was a Federal judge.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

HERSTEIN: I have the whole thing, the word-for-word agreement.

INTERVIEWER: One of the things I was wondering was whether or not any of the leaders of the strike did anything in the steel strike to try and prevent the racial feelings that had developed in the packing strike.

HERSTEIN: Well, I don't think it was an issue in that strike. Many of the strikers were Poles.

INTERVIEWER: In Gary, they did bring in quite a few Negroes during the strike.

HERSTEIN: During the steel strike?

INTERVIEWER: But still there seems to have been no real racial explosion.

HERSTEIN: No. No.

INTERVIEWER: And I just was curious to know if they had gone out of their way somehow to try and forestall it.

HERSTEIN: I don't know. I don't recall that feature of it. The strike was spectacular and attracted world-wide attention. I always said to the CIO, when they finally organized the steel industry in 1936, that we'd paved the way for them, because we'd dramatized for America that twelve hour day and the other terrible conditions in the steel industry.

By the way, just let me say something about that before it escapes my mind. When I was at Northwestern University, I had a classmate by the name of Frank Morris. He was engaged to a girl from his hometown. They subsequently married and he went to Gary and worked as an engineer in the steel mills. He knew nothing about unions. The time came when they had three boys, three children. He was working twelve hours a day, seven days a week, and the whole situation just crushed him. He quit and I remember his coming to Chicago, to Evanston, with those three boys and they hardly had anything to eat but he could stand the work and conditions no longer. Years afterwards I was lecturing at Brandeis University and I got in touch with Frank and Edith Morris; they were living in Boston then. They called me and took me out everywhere and they talked about those days in the steel mills of Gary. After fifty years, without thinking of unions or anything, he still talked about what a terrible situation it had been, a nightmare, such a terrible thing that a man with three children had to quit the job.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me a little more about the teachers union? You talked about just the beginnings of it, but there must be a lot more you could tell me about the teachers union.

HERSTEIN: Oh my, a whole lot. Now back in 1916 when the 68 teachers were fired for belonging to a union, they were out a whole year. We were already organized in the Federation of Women High School Teachers. But we weren't very large, and nothing was done to us because we were too insignificant. There was the Men's Federation. But Margaret Haley incurred the wrath of the rich tax dodgers because she had exposed their terrible tax dodgery. In fact, she pointed out the infamous 99 year lease of the Chicago Tribune. According to the ordinance of 1787 a big section of Chicago was allocated for educational purposes and as the city grew this became valuable property right in the loop. One site is at Dearborn and Madison, where the old Tribune Building is. At that time they had 21 members on the school board and the representative of the Chicago Tribune held out for the lease until they got the last member. They called it the "Midnight Lease" and they got an eleven to ten vote and the board granted that lease. They leased that land to the Chicago Tribune for 99 years at a rate about half of what the rent around there was, without a revaluation

HERSTEIN: clause. A lot of the property! Lewis F. Post was at one time a member of the school board of Chicago. He was a single taxer. He used to say that that ordinance that left that property to the Board of Education for educational purposes could bring the revenue almost enough to support a public school system in Chicago without any other taxation. But a lot of it is gone and that is why the vested interests were fighting Margaret Haley. She was quite a leader. In the midst of this fight, Katherine Goggen, the secretary of the Chicago Teachers Federation, was run over by a truck and killed.

INTERVIEWER: Katherine.... What was her name?

HERSTEIN: Goggen. She was the secretary. Margaret was the orator and the organizer. Katherine was the quiet administrator; a wonderful team. And Miss Haley would go to Springfield and bring in legislation to get the 69 teachers back but lost every time. But they stuck it out till the end and this is what happened. There's always a difference of opinion as to what should have been done, and those teachers were out of a job.

INTERVIEWER: How did they live?

HERSTEIN: Well, just on anything that we all contributed. The story that we got was that the labor leaders--John Fitzpatrick--advised the Chicago Teachers Federation to drop their affiliation with labor and in that way the teachers got back. Some people feel that if they'd held out a little longer they wouldn't have had to do it, but that's really what happened. But Margaret Haley's influence with the labor group still held, because they remembered her many services to labor and she used to lobby for labor legislation in Springfield. Someone once said she'd die talking to the legislature, but you see nothing was done to the other teachers' unions. We were too insignificant. We just didn't say anything about it. We just stayed on. This in spite of the Loeb rule passed by the Chicago Board of Education that teachers couldn't belong to a union.

Mrs. Trowbridge, who was the president of the Federation of Women High School Teachers--my union--was going to go to a national convention of the Women's Trade Union League and she had to get a leave of absence. She went to see the superintendent, and he looked at her and he said, "Well, what about the Loeb rule?" She gave him a clever answer; she said, "It has not been operated against us," and she went. Then, of course, when we weren't paid in the thirties, efforts were made to form one union that all the teachers could belong to. A big agitation was started for us to give up our charters and all go into one, the Chicago Teachers Union. That was 1936 or 1937. And that's what we did, and that's when we got John Fewkes. But there were people in the Chicago Teachers Federation, a little group, that held out and had their office at 127 N. Dearborn.

INTERVIEWER: So they still had a separate union?

HERSTEIN: Well, they met. They were sentimental and they had all the records. By now, most of them have died, but the few that were living recently gave all their material to the Chicago Historical Society. That would be very interesting to review.

INTERVIEWER: And Margaret Haley? I think somebody is writing a book on the Chicago Teachers Union right now. Isn't there a woman who is writing a book on it?

HERSTEIN: Well, I met somebody at the Citizens Schools Committee. Her name is Kamen. I think you are right. She was writing something on the Chicago Public Schools or something. Seems to me several things have been written. A man from the American Federation of Teachers came to see me and he was writing the history of the AF of T. He went through all this material and he told me he found a lot of interesting things. He told me things I never knew. He said that Miss Haley had traveled all over the country trying to organize the elementary teachers. He said she was quite remarkable and she was opposed to World War I.

INTERVIEWER: And was she part of the Women's Trade Union League, too?

HERSTEIN: No, she wasn't. I think she was a member, but not active. We organized the Chicago Teachers Union and by that time the CIO had been organized. The CIO was built along industrial lines. There was no question that neither steel nor meat packing could be organized except through an industrial union. The liberals were all very enthusiastic about the CIO. A movement was started to have the Chicago Teachers Unions, AF of T, join the CIO and we had the convention in 1937 in Madison, the Jewish Convention that the large United Chicago Teachers Union had attended. I just got back from Europe. I was in a minority and on the resolutions committee there were fine Socialists like Joel Seidman, whom the commies hated like poison but who were for the resolution that we join the CIO. And I said, "Look, Joel, our people won't do it." And I said, "You might as well look at the facts. The help that a teacher's union gets is not from the national American Federation of Labor but from the local one, because education is a local matter in America and in many cities where you have a strong teacher's union like Chicago and St. Paul you don't even have a CIO council." Even Sidney Hillman, who was one of the strong men on the CIO, saw that, and he hoped that we, in a way, wouldn't. We had no choice in Chicago. Who would you go to for help? So that resolution was brought to the convention floor and I presented the minority report against our going into the CIO and subsequently I did write an article about it for the union paper. I think I have it. There was an article pointing out the other side. And then a very bitter fight developed in the New York local. They had a lot of commies in their union and it was a bitter internal fight.

INTERVIEWER: Over the same issue of joining the CIO?

HERSTEIN: No. No. Something else. Well, it's the same stuff as the commies trying to bring into the union whatever the Russians tell them,

HERSTEIN: similar to the problem of the ILGWU. There was a very bitter fight. Lindville and Leftkovitz were the people that had built the New York Teachers Union from the beginning. They were all Socialists, and they were all, I think, more socially minded than we middle-western people were. It was a terribly bitter fight and the question was what to do with this faction. Well, we had public meetings where both sides were discussed and some very fine people, who were not Communists, objected to having the group thrown out. Of course, they'd always tell you they weren't Communists, but Bella Dodd was one of them. Remember Bella Dodd? She with the big black eyes? She was the leader of the Communist group. But there was this other matter of throwing them out of the New York Union, or the AF of T. They succeeded in defeating me for president. I'll tell you that incident. We had meetings. We had one in Orchestra Hall and the people who were opposed to throwing them out spoke and the people who were in favor of it spoke. Then, we had articles in our magazine. And finally we had a referendum of our entire membership. They voted to throw them out, but the fine liberal group got so weary of them that they withdrew from the New York local. That left the union to these commies, and it didn't amount to much.

INTERVIEWER: You mean they withdrew from leadership in the union?

HERSTEIN: No, withdrew from the union.

INTERVIEWER: Clear out? Withdrew from membership and everything then?

HERSTEIN: That's right, and I remember one New York teacher told me, "Oh, it feels so good to be able to go home and read a book." She said, "You'd come to school, you'd been at a union meeting and the next morning when you'd come to school the principal shows you the headline in the New York paper: "New York Teacher's Union Endorses Soviet Policy!" and I'd say, "They did not. I was at that meeting." And he said, "Now, wait a minute, when did you go home?"

INTERVIEWER: They did it afterwards?

HERSTEIN: Why, yes, they'd have a caucus, enough to do it. We were sorry that they dropped out. Now they're a very big union, but of course, they're in this awful situation about the Negroes. There's no bright spot anywhere. There's no spot where there's any solution. You don't know what to do. You take big communities like Chicago and New York, you have solid blocks of Negroes.

I remember when Kelly was Mayor of Chicago and it was a hard time for schools. There really was an oversupply of teachers and they could do what they wanted with us. Kelly conceived to outwit us, and he got his man McKay as president of the school board. It was the time of the Depression and he was going to get us out of a financial jam. We were paid in tax anticipation warrants, which is the way the board always pays, and they carried 6 percent interest. But who could keep them? Teachers were selling them for $75.00, which meant they lost $25.00.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, my.

HERSTEIN: Oh, my, it was very bad. Well, then there were all kinds of proposals--what to do--abolish the teacher's colleges or the junior college or what? And I had lobbied a bill through, although Margaret Haley at that time thought it was not necessary. The junior college had been in operation for 22 years, but there was no law that created it and so we introduced a junior college bill and I lobbied it through successfully. Then Kelly began wrecking the schools. It was terrible! He had the bright idea of having a fund. The big football game of the year was between the champions of the public high schools and of the parochial schools. It was a marvelous game, you see, because whatever team won in each league was a pretty fine team. His proposal was that all the teachers buy tickets, and from that fund he would send provisions in baskets to the poor families delivered by his precinct captains. Don't you think that's cute? Well, we opposed it. There had always been a fund for years. We used to pass the hat around. And the children contributed, and then, through an authorized social agency, the money was distributed to the poor families on Thanksgiving and Christmas. We did it every year. We had the approval of the Chamber of Commerce and every social agency.

INTERVIEWER: This puts you on the same level as the precinct workers who have to contribute to the slush fund.

HERSTEIN: So we objected. It came up at the Chicago Teachers Union meeting, and we said, "Just don't buy them." But the teachers would say, "But my principal came up with tears in his eyes; he had been given fifty tickets and if he didn't sell them to us he'd have to buy them." So we said, "Let him buy them." But they felt sorry for the principal and at that time I said there's no point in our contributing to the political slush fund of Mayor Kelly. That got to Mayor Kelly. He told John Fitzpatrick that after all he did for labor to have a member of their executive board to say that. Well, Fitzpatrick said, "I don't know about what you've done for labor, but I'm certain that if Lillian said that, she probably meant it and she probably knew what she was talking about." While he was mayor the pressure was brought on the principals to sell a certain number of tickets and the teachers would buy them. They felt sorry for the principal. Well, he finally went, so that went with him, but Mary Herrick and I and several of us never contributed to that slush fund.

INTERVIEWER: When Mayor Kelly went, you mean, that was the end of it?

HERSTEIN: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And the next mayor didn't try it?

HERSTEIN: Not until the North Central Association of Colleges and Universities came out with the statement that they would take the Chicago High Schools off the accredited list if these practices continued, and that's when Kelly had to step out and we got Kennelly as the reform

HERSTEIN: man. By that time, Daley got ambitious and wanted to be mayor and he defeated Kennelly in the Democratic primary. By a small margin, he defeated Robert Merriam, for mayor, one-time Democrat and non-Republican.

INTERVIEWER: How did the union operate when you got the unions together under Fewkes?

HERSTEIN: Well, that's a sad story. He was a handsome hero and these elementary school teachers, you know, they just oozed admiration and he did a lot of things I didn't approve of. I got off the board. I was on the executive board of the union then.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of things did he do?

HERSTEIN: Oh, several things on his own. I mean, he didn't consult the union. There were several of us. I told the rest to stay on but I got off. I was so active in other things that I didn't want to bother with it much more. Then, you know, he did the dirty trick on me. When I retired I'd been their delegate of the Chicago Teachers to the Chicago Federation of Labor for years and their Federation spokesman. Anytime the teachers wanted anything they'd have me present it to the Federation. Then when Fewkes became president we were entitled to more delegates, about fifteen or sixteen, and they never opened their mouths. Then I retired from teaching in 1951 and, by George, he brings in a motion that I should be dropped as a delegate because I was retired and that was contrary to the union constitution. Alice Gordon, one of the delegates to the union's house of representatives, put up a big fight for me, and somebody said that's the meanest thing, to think of Lillian's connection with the labor movement all these years. Len Dupres took up the cudgels for me. There's nothing in the constitution that forbids a retired teacher from being a delegate to the Chicago Federation of Labor. So then the various unions in the city met and they said, "Well, to hell with him. We'll make Lillian our delegate." Well, finally it was decided I should go in as the delegate of the Women's Trade Union League.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, that makes sense.

HERSTEIN: That was in all the papers, and shortly after that there was a big dinner in honor of Dr. John A. Lapp, who was a lay Catholic and a very fine Liberal. He helped to establish the Citizens Schools Committee. Mr. Fewkes' secretary called me and said, "Oh, Miss Herstein, Mr. Fewkes is in Springfield lobbying and he can't use the tickets to Mr. Lapp's banquet. He wants you to use them." I said, "You tell him that the game is over. All these years that he's been mistreating me in the union, I never told my union friends because I didn't want it to hurt the union, but now that's over. I'm going to Dr. Lapp's dinner, but not with a ticket from the Chicago Teachers Union." He got cold feet and one of the newspaper men said to him, "Gee, you were a fool, Fewkes, to drop her from the executive board." About that time they were getting ready for my banquet. "Why," he said, "everyday

HERSTEIN: there's another story about her banquet in the papers. You don't have any sense of press relations." Fewkes had ambitions; he pushed John Desmond for president of the Chicago Teachers Union, and he ran for the presidency of the American Federation of Teachers against Cogan. He was a union teacher from New York, a Socialist probably. The election was to take place at the American Federation of Teachers convention which was held in Chicago at the Edgewater Beach Hotel. One night there was the usual banquet and they invited me. Fewkes was thoroughly defeated by a three to one vote. There was nothing for him. He'd put Desmond in as president of the teacher's union. I think he once flirted with the idea of being the legislative representative of the AF of T in Washington. But that already was held by another former president, who still holds it. And so he is out. Somebody told me that he was selling automobile accessories.

Now there is a Black Caucus in the Chicago Teachers Union and in the American Federation of Teachers. There is this order of the Federal Government to the Chicago Board of Education to integrate. The teachers that were teaching longest had the right to choose the neighborhood in which to teach and that's only fair. But how can you unscramble that whole thing?

INTERVIEWER: That's pretty complicated right now, I guess.

HERSTEIN: We got Willis for Superintendent of Schools, who turned out to be a racist.

INTERVIEWER: Who is Mary Herrick? I've heard this name a lot.

HERSTEIN: Well, she was the president of the Federation of Women High School Teachers three times in succession. She really established the Citizens Schools Committee with Dr. Lapp as president and Mrs. Yarras as executive secretary.

INTERVIEWER: Is she still around here?

HERSTEIN: She died. Tess died.

INTERVIEWER: Oh. This was one of the things I wanted to ask you about. How much did the union actually accomplish in terms of the people who were in it wagewise, pensionwise and all that sort of thing?

HERSTEIN: What do you mean? How much did I accomplish?

INTERVIEWER: No. When you went into this one big union in the thirties, did they do a better job of bargaining for things, for wages?

HERSTEIN: Well, they never had bargaining rights until recently, but they were quite effective.

INTERVIEWER: All teachers' unions are limited by the city budget and that sort of thing, I suppose.

HERSTEIN: Oh yes, that's very common. In fact, the budget of the public schools in any big city is the biggest part of the budget. And we had a president who was in for just one year before we combined in the big union. That was Helen Taggart. She was very good on finances. Poor thing, she's now in a nursing home somewhere and hardly knows anybody.

INTERVIEWER: There were a few things I wanted to ask you about the Women's Trade Union League and the Chicago Federation of Labor City Federation in terms of this early legislation that the state passed to protect women.

HERSTEIN: They did a lot. I think the unions were almost afraid of fighting for child labor legislation.

INTERVIEWER: This is one of the things I wanted to ask you about, because I got the impression from talking to you that some other groups were really more aggressive in terms of pushing hard for action on certain issues than the unions were.

HERSTEIN: Well, you see, they had a different kind of influence. Don't forget unionism wasn't popular in this country and was not strong and had to fight for its very existence. And you take this group from the Women's Trade Union League like Mrs. Kelly and Mary McDowell and Mary Dreier, they had an influence really because of their status. And in addition to that, they were very genuine and self-sacrificing. When any great reforms happen, everybody tries to claim they did it, but it's many forces in society that bring reforms about.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

HERSTEIN: Like now, there are many forces, aren't there?

INTERVIEWER: Sure. Now do you want to talk about the Women's Trade Union League or the Consumer's League?

HERSTEIN: As I have told you previously, my oldest sister, who was employed as a saleswoman in Marshall Fields, became interested in the Women's Trade Union League. They had interesting meetings on Sunday afternoons and she was very much inspired by the national president, Mary Drier Robins. Then I became interested in the League also. The original Women's Trade Union League was organized in England, in London, and on visits which Jane Addams and Mrs. Robins and others made to London, they were impressed with this organization and they worked to establish a similar organization in Chicago. They organized the National Women's Trade Union League with headquarters in Chicago. In addition, they organized local leagues. There was the Women's Trade Union League of Chicago, the Women's Trade Union League of New York City, the Women's Trade Union League in Boston, and one in Kansas City, Missouri. The purpose of the national and local leagues was to work for protective legislation for women and for children. Membership was limited to women trade unionists.

INTERVIEWER: So strictly speaking Jane Addams herself couldn't belong?

HERSTEIN: At this time, the failure of the AF of L to work hard at organizing women in unions and to include Negroes in their unions created a pool of "scab" labor for employers. The other group of women who were admitted to membership in the League's national and local were socially minded influential women like Mrs. Raymond Robins and Jane Addams, who really founded the organization; Mrs. Amy Walker Field, whose husband was a professor at the University of Chicago and whose father was a distinguished and highly respected judge in Chicago; Mrs. Katherine Dummer Fisher--the Dummers and the Fishers were among the oldest Chicago families; one of the Fishers had been Assistant Secretary of Agriculture under Woodrow Wilson. They all were people of means and devoted to the commonwealth. Mary McDowell, head of University of Chicago Settlement; Ellen Gates Starr, cofounder with Jane Addams of Hull House; Grace Abbott, chief of the Chidren's Bureau of U.S. Department of Labor, and many others. These women were designated as "allies." They served the cause, but insisted that the power reside in the women trade unionists who were to be the only representatives on the board of the League. They not only contributed funds generously, but were influential in getting a hearing in many a labor dispute. They had status and prestige in the community. Sometimes a hard-pressed union of men appealed to the League for help, and our influential "allies" were able to get them a hearing.

At this time the "Consumer's League" was operating under the leadership of Mrs. Florence Kelley. Although the two organizations were working for the same causes, there was no formal cooperation.

INTERVIEWER: Did these two organizations cooperate?

HERSTEIN: Well, I wouldn't say they cooperated. They were each working in their respective fields and working on the same problems. The conditions would be different. In some places the Consumer's League was very effective, like in Cleveland, Ohio where the headquarters were; in other places the Women's Trade Union League was more effective.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of women belonged to the Consumer's League?

HERSTEIN: Oh, they were very fine, like Mrs. Kelley.

INTERVIEWER: What I meant was, did they include working women, too, or were they more of a middle class group?

HERSTEIN: Well, they were both. They got up what they called a White List and no industrialist could be on that White List if the conditions in his industry were bad for women or children. In this way, the Consumer's League was not guilty of boycotting, which was illegal; they just had a White List. Many owners of industry improved working conditions for women and children so they could get on the White List. The Women's Trade Union League worked and got the reduction of the working day first to ten hours a day; it had been twelve.

INTERVIEWER: Was it by state law that they got the ten hour law?

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes, by state law, and then they worked for the eight hour law and they won in some states, in New York and in Illinois, but the Illinois law was declared unconstitutional. And it took 27 years actually to get the eight hour law in Illinois. But of course in those 27 years, many women had got the eight hour day through their unions and various activities. It was a great blow to Mrs. Kelley when the Illinois law was declared unconstitutional. Working conditions and laws affecting working women and children were very different in different states. The standards in New York were probably the highest. They were high in Illinois and in Massachusetts. But the Southern states.... There was a time when some of them had no child labor law. If a manufacturer observed the good law of New York City he was penalized, and the temptation was to move his factory to New Jersey where they didn't have as good a law and therefore his labor costs were lower. In fact for an industry to move from a city where there is a strong union and therefore good working conditions to another city is quite common practice exercised even now.

And so the realization came after many years that we ought to have a federal child labor law that would apply to all the states and a federal child labor law was passed. It operated a little while and then some taxpayer protested its constitutionality. That's the usual procedure, to get a taxpayer to protest, and it was declared unconstitutional.

INTERVIEWER: In getting it passed in the first place, were these organizations working for the federal law?

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes, very much, because they saw how their efforts were defeated by the different conditions in the different states. It was just like the textile industry which simply moved from New England to the South to escape the union and good working conditions. Indeed the textile industry to this day is largely unorganized because it has moved to the South.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

HERSTEIN: They saw that their efforts were defeated. One federal law was passed. It operated for about a year and a half and then it was declared unconstitutional. Then another law was passed that tried to avoid what had made the other one unconstitutional, but that was declared unconstitutional. They proposed an amendment to the Constitution of the United States which would enable Congress to pass a federal child labor law. It was an enabling act; it was not a law. Well, everybody was for it--the President of the U.S. was for it. It was therefore a great shock when, on its first test, it was defeated.

INTERVIEWER: How do you account for its defeat?

HERSTEIN: Well, I'll tell you what happened. Massachusetts had a very good child labor law, so did Illinois and so did Ohio. And they had nothing to fear from a federal law because neither of the two federal laws that had been declared unconstitutional went as far as the Massachusetts law. Much to the surprise of everybody, because everybody was for it--I mean, the President, all of Congress was for it--when it came up for ratification before the Massachusetts legislature, Bishop O'Connell of the Catholic Church appeared against it. Robert Watt, who was a top official in the Massachusetts labor movement--he was a painter and decorator and he was subsequently the worker delegate to the ILO--appeared for it. He, too, was a Catholic. That group of Catholics represented by Bishop O'Connell, called it the "Youth Control Act" and he raged. At that time Illinois had a most liberal Archbishop by the name of Mundelein. He was socially minded. And Monsignor Ryan, who was in the Catholic Welfare Council, stationed in Washington, was another great liberal. Both of them declared, "Bishop O'Connell is not speaking for the Catholics of America. He's speaking for himself." The amendment was defeated in Massachusetts. Illinois ratified it with the help and influence of Mundelein. In New York, Al Smith, who was a Catholic and a liberal, came out for it, but it was not passed in New York. I don't know if they ever got it passed there. It's been going the rounds. That's the 20th amendment to the Constitution. Other opposition that developed was from certain farm organizations. The amendment would give power to Congress to pass a law regulating and limiting the work of children up to eighteen years old. At that time there had developed large farms owned by absentee landlords, where children were exploited. In Illinois boys of sixteen could work in coal mines--a hazardous occupation. That was the reason for the limitation to youngsters of the age of eighteen. Of course, it was charged that the amendment originated in Russia, although Russia at that time didn't have a child labor law herself.

INTERVIEWER: Who brought this up?

HERSTEIN: Oh, the opposition, of course. The Communist thing--that was the classical procedure used to defeat any liberal legislation of liberal community activities, and it still prevails. The Soviet Union couldn't have much of a child labor law, because they didn't have schools enough to which to send the children. And then the opposition concentrated on Mrs. Kelley of the Consumer's League. They brought out the story that she was married to a Russian.

There was another organization, the National Child Labor Committee, which had always worked for child labor legislation. Finally, we had to get Mr. Owen, who had been head of the National Child Labor Committee for twenty years and had come to Chicago to speak, and he made a very fine analysis, answered every argument. Then in the question period a man got up and said, "How about this Mrs. Kelley's husband? Wasn't he a Russian?" After the painstaking speech that Owen made and answered the questions, he pointed out how many irrelevant things had been brought in. He said, "This is

HERSTEIN: typical of the irrelevancies brought into the discussion. Now for the sake of this gentleman's question I'll answer that. Mrs. Kelley's husband, from whom she was divorced 25 years ago, was a Pole. Now," he said, "I suppose if Mrs. Kelley's husband 25 years ago was a Russian the amendment is no good, but if he happened to be a Pole, it's all right."

I spoke in some town in Indiana, a farming community where the farmers had been made to believe that if the amendment passed--they couldn't get into their heads that it was not a law, it was an enabling act--that it would mean that farmers couldn't make a daughter under eighteen milk the cows or the son under eighteen do the chores on the farm. It had the farmers all worked up and I remember at that time in this rural Indiana community, after I got through speaking, an embattled farmer arose just livid, "I'd like to ask the lady a question." I said, "Very well." "Where were you born?" I knew what he expected, so I played with him a little while. I said, "Now, that's typical of the irrelevancies that have been introduced in this campaign. What difference does it make to an exploited child where I was born?" I kept playing with him and showing its irrelevancy. Finally, I said, "I'd just as soon tell the gentleman where I was born. I was born in Chicago." And he simply collapsed. He just couldn't come back.

Then we actually had to get Miss Jane Addams in the campaign. A meeting was arranged in one of the buildings at the University of Chicago and many students had come. Miss Addams explained the law, and the exploitation of children, and made a very good speech. Then in the question period, a Mr. Taylor arose; he was the lobbyist of the Illinois Manufacturers Association and Agnes Nestor, President of the Chicago League, often encountered him in the Illinois legislature when we were lobbying. Taylor said, "Now, Miss Addams, since we have such a good child labor law in Illinois, why do we have to have a federal law in Illinois?" And he went on and and on, and you could see that his argument impressed the audience as logical. Miss Addams, as you know, was a Quaker and a pacifist, and people always misunderstand pacifists. They think they are meek pious people when they are real fighters, only they don't believe in violence. She fixed Mr. Taylor with her eye and said, "Mr. Taylor's tender solicitude for a state labor law wouldn't leave us so cold if we didn't remember his efforts over the years to prevent Illinois from passing a child labor law." He just went to pieces and the students howled. Of course conditions for children have improved everywhere since then.

Then the League offered courses, night courses, to their members.

INTERVIEWER: You mean the Women's Trade Union League?

HERSTEIN: That's right. I was very active in that, and we had a joint committee of the Women's Trade Union League of Chicago and the Chicago Federation of Labor. That was very handy, because we could announce the classes at the meetings of the Chicago Federation of

HERSTEIN: Labor, and the Federation met the expenses in printing. We usually held the classes in the headquarters of the Women's Trade Union League. The courses that were popular were English, Parliamentary Law, Public Speaking, and Trade Unionism. For many years I taught English and Public Speaking in the Chicago Labor College. One time we had a marvelous woman who was a wonderful parliamentarian and that course was very popular. Then the students wanted a course in Economics and we got Paul Douglas to teach it. This went on for several years. When Mr. Bogan was superintendent of schools, he was very friendly and he liked to feel the public schools could do everything. He said, "Lillian, what do you give in the night school in your trade union classes that we couldn't give in the public school, because I'd like to do it." I said, "Well, in the first place, as you know, Mr. Bogan, the class load is limited in the public night school, it must have fifteen students, and the League will give a class if there are maybe three or four. And the amount we could give to the teacher was very little." I often tease Paul Douglas about the low wage he accepted; we gave him three and a half dollars a night. Subsequently Paul Douglas became U.S. Senator from Illinois.

INTERVIEWER: Three dollars for one class?

HERSTEIN: Yes, and many of the teachers who became members of the Federation of Women High School Teachers, which by that time was affiliated with labor, took the courses under him in the Women's Trade Union League. We used to say, "Paul, you organized the Federation of Women High School Teachers." Well, we did that for many years. In strike situations, the League was very helpful. I remember when we had the big waitresses strike in Chicago at Henrici's on Randolph Street. Henrici's is now at the O'Hare airport. Ellen Gates Starr, who was very closely associated with Miss Addams in Hull House and came there almost the same time that Miss Addams did, was picketing as a member of the League in that strike. One day she was walking with the pickets on Randolph Street and a policeman got hold of her, was going to arrest her. And as she was walking along, whom does she meet but Mary Anderson. Mary Anderson was a Swedish immigrant. She was a boot and shoe worker who had come to America when she was about sixteen. We had helped to organize the boot and shoe workers and Mary Anderson was a member of the League. She was walking down Randolph Street, and she was just horrified when she saw a great big policeman holding Ellen Gates Starr by the wrist. She said, "Miss Starr, what are you doing there?" "I am exercising my rights as a free-born American citizen," Miss Starr replied. It was really very funny. And there were several times when we had to deal with very intransigent employers who would not confer with labor people, but an ally like Mary Walker Field, because of her status--as I said, her husband was a professor at the University of Chicago and her father was a prominent, highly respected judge--could get us an entree. The League, through the prominence of its allies, helped many a men's union.

INTERVIEWER: Can you give me some examples?

HERSTEIN: I don't remember, but I can remember that they helped in that way. And I remember at that time, Rabbi Hersh of Sinai Temple was very much interested and Father Seidenberg of Loyola. Because of their positions in the community they could often get a hearing for a labor group.

INTERVIEWER: What was Seidenberg's connection with Loyola?

HERSTEIN: He was dean. He built the School of Commerce of Loyola. He did a marvelous job. He was a very remarkable person. He was Swiss and a convert. Very often there would be an intransigent employer who happened to be a Catholic and Seidenberg would be called in. The man wouldn't talk to the working man or to labor. And Seidenberg would say, "Now, son, where did you get that idea that you can't talk to anybody?" And Rabbi Hirsch rendered a similar function. Seidenberg was so tactful that he was on the board of the Chicago Public Library, a very difficult place for a Catholic, because of the Catholic Index with its list of forbidden books. But he functioned so fairly between the Catholic demands and the demands of a democracy that he always was greatly admired. He did it very well. And I remember, too, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom--that was Miss Addam's favorite organization, you know. That was a peace organization.

INTERVIEWER: They did work with these trade unions?

HERSTEIN: No, no, this was a different organization, but they always meshed in, bumped into each other.

INTERVIEWER: They had overlapping memberships?

HERSTEIN: Well, yes, you see, if you belong to one "do-good" organization, you'll always meet the other do-gooders. The Women's International had a convention in Mexico, and I went to that convention, and Father Seidenberg also went.

INTERVIEWER: This is the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom?

HERSTEIN: That's right.

At that time there had been a revolution in Mexico, and a big revolt against the church. And the revolutionary government that was in power had passed a law that no priest or nun could appear on the streets of Mexico in their clerical dress. It was a very interesting time. I remember that we had a conference on labor, and Father Seidenberg was the main speaker, and I introduced him. The Bishop of Mexico, who was the chairman of the meeting, said he could make a good speech like Seidenberg, too, if he had such a charming person to introduce him.

This period was very trying, as many of the members of the American Federation were Catholics, and pressure was brought to bear that the AF of L interfere, but the pressure was resisted.

INTERVIEWER: Going back to the Women's Trade Union League, were their classes only for women?

HERSTEIN: Oh, no, for both, probably more men than women. You always found a group that, pathetically, was eager for education. It was all very sad, because a lot of these people would go to night school. But who were the teachers? They were tired teachers trying to add to their inadequate salaries teaching tired workers. They never corrected their papers. You could tell, when I got them--such spelling that you never heard of. They spelled phonetically, the way they talked, but how did that escape the teacher? It escaped them because they never read them. In addition to these night classes there was the activity of the National Women's Trade Union League, which inaugurated in a modest way the first Resident School for Workers.

At this time, there were several activities arranged to give workers--many of them had gone to work at the age of twelve, many were immigrants--opportunities to study. There were the night school classes conducted by the public schools and taught by public school teachers who needed the money to eke out their inadequate salaries. Then private schools were developed, which tried to improve on the public night schools. They charged tuition. Some of them were quite good, and the more ambitious workers enrolled in them.

I myself at this time had been a teacher in the public high schools of Chicago for many years.

The union people interested in education for their members insisted on the distinction between what was usually called Adult Education and Workers' Education, which they felt would concentrate on the needs of workers in our highly industrialized society.

The National Women's Trade Union League, which was still situated in Chicago, would recruit about four working women and bring them to Chicago, at first almost for a year, then for six months, for very carefully planned courses. I remember Agnes Burns, who was the symbol of the exploited, daughter of an Illinois miner, was one of our students. We made arrangments with Professor Millis or Professor Douglas to have these girls in their classes. Of course, it was very hard for them; it was a regular college class in labor problems or trade unionism, but we had a tutor to help them. Our wealthy allies were very generous in providing the necessary funds. One year when I was teaching at Crane College, I said, "Why couldn't they take English in my classes; then I would give them the extra help. The burden would be on me, and it would be easier on them." They were in my class. That was probably against the Illinois tax law to take non-Chicago citizens and put them in a public school, but I never learned that until many years later.

INTERVIEWER: Nobody every told on you?

HERSTEIN: No. The National Women's Trade Union League did that for several years. One of our trainees was Fania Cohn, who subsequently became and was for many years Educational Director of the International Ladies Garment Workers. The local leagues had their own classes as we did. We were the center for any trade union group that wanted a meeting, and were available for any services a union needed. The New York league under the presidency of Rose Schneiderman did a much more stunning job than we did in Chicago. They bought a house, and they used to serve lunches for working people. They had many activities. Mrs. Roosevelt was very much interested in the New York league and she was a great friend of Rose Schneiderman's. Mrs. Roosevelt brought in a great many allies. But the one thing about Rose, she was very active.

INTERVIEWER: Agnes Nestor was not personally active?

HERSTEIN: Not as creative. As a matter of fact, Rose had a harder situation to work with, because at that time the president of the central body of New York was such an old crook or something that the League couldn't have anything to do with it. Here, we had John Fitzpatrick, the most militant, honest labor leader in America, so it would have been easier to carry on activities. Eventually the national League moved its headquarters to New York and Elisabeth Christman, the very able secretary.... She and Agnes had both been glove workers in Chicago. That was the time when the workers paid for their needles if they broke. Elisabeth was a very competent person, very modest. She went to Washington and did very effective work. She would raise the money for the national budget. And you should see the letters she would write, they were marvelous. Neither Agnes Nestor nor Mary Anderson were as eager to learn as Elisabeth was. I remember when she was one of the important people in the country, she'd say to me, "Lillian, sit down and explain to me the use of will and shall." That's how eager she was to learn. I remember one time when I was on the West Coast, there was a woman teaching in the University of Washington, and also her husband. He was in history and she was in economics. They had no children, but they were very much interested in labor. She went to the IWW trial on the West Coast; her chief told her that she'd be fired but she went anyhow. She was very interesting, very stimulating, and very interested in labor and in young people. I visited her once during the war. She and her husband lived on Mercer Island. You know, Seattle is surrounded by islands. She was telling me about a letter she got from Elisabeth Christman recently, about funds or something, and she said to me, "I just wonder, I'm no intellectual snob, but I just wonder if a person who had not had college training could have written a letter like this." "Well," I said, "as a matter of fact, Miss Christman didn't even have high school training. She went to work when she was twelve years old." Oh, she's a wonderful person. She's still living.

INTERVIEWER: Where is she, in New York?

HERSTEIN: No, no, in Washington. The headquarters moved to Washington. During the lean years, she would take a leave of absence from the League so they wouldn't have to pay her salary. She worked in a war industry for a while, and then the big fight with the CIO came. The CIO was organized and the glove workers, of which she was secretary, and of which Agnes Nestor was a member, considered joining the CIO. By that time Agnes had gotten very conservative. They voted on whether they should join the CIO or not. They voted by a big majority to join the CIO, and they became part of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers.

It was some time before that, that there were two attempts started at resident schools, where the workers would actually live and study without working during the day. One was the Bryn Mawr School for Women Workers in Industry, and the other was Brookwood, at Kotonah, New York. Bryn Mawr was the brainchild of M. Carry Thomas. M. Carry Thomas was one of those feminists who wanted to go to college, like Alice Hamilton. M. Carry Thomas and a friend got into some men's college in Baltimore. She was a Quaker. A curtain was put between them and the men. Later she went to Germany and got her doctor's degree. Her field was English Literature. When she came back to America she was one of the original founders of the Bryn Mawr College, one of the finest colleges for women. First she was dean, and then she was president. She was very creative. Bryn Mawr College was limited to about four hundred girls, but among that four hundred they would have at least 75 from European countries. She would bring them over. At the end of her career, after the experience of the war, she decided that the roots of war were economic, although her specialty had been English. She decided that the trade union movement would be an effective instrument against war. She conceived the idea of having a summer school for women workers at Bryn Mawr. She was a strong feminist and wanted to give the opportunity to working women. I'll never forget our first meeting at Hull House. She wrote to us at the local League to gather a group of working women there. They were all trade unionists. Miss Thomas told of the plan. In the question period, Hilda Shapiro, a member of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union, said to her, "Do you think that we working women would fall for a fake like you're talking about? We know all about the welfare plans of employers. The game is to break up the unions. I'm onto your game. That's an old one," she said. Well, Miss Thomas took the attack with dignity and understanding. She said, "I don't blame you for being suspicious. My class certainly has not been fair to you working people and has tried many schemes to subvert trade unionism. So I don't blame you for your suspicion. All I can give you is my own word that this is a sincere effort as I have described it." Well, subsequently, Hilda Shapiro was in the first class. I came to Bryn Mawr as a teacher in the third summer of its existence. There was formed an administrative committee of the project which met once a year which consisted of representatives of Bryn Mawr College and also of the trade union movement. Subsequently I became a member of the administrative committee as a labor representative and later taught the third summer. At first there

HERSTEIN: were enrolled one hundred women from the whole country--from Seattle to New York. They were all working women, and they had to be women who worked with the tools of their trade! Nobody in a supervisory capacity was admitted. And that was good.

INTERVIEWER: How did the women get time off from work?

HERSTEIN: Well, we got scholarships for them, and in some instances we even paid their wages. Those were the days when our allies were very affluent. A scholarship amounted to two hundred dollars. I was on the committee in Chicago and I'll never forget this ally on the North Shore. She was a Bryn Mawr graduate herself; she was very much interested. "How many do you think we should send from Chicago, Miss Herstein?" she said. "Five," I said. "All right, I'll get you five times two hundred dollars," she said. That was before the Depression.

I taught in the third summer and I remember I said that was the best teaching I ever did. I had what were called the "Language Handicaps," the immigrants. I taught that time the way I never have been able to teach since. I had an interview with every girl. I'd get her to talking and I'd say, "Now, that's something you should write about."--their first days at Ellis Island or the first accident that the girl witnessed. They were getting ready to leave, this girl was brushing the lint from her dress and her fingers caught in the machine. I said, "Well, you must write about that." There was no protective machinery. At the end of the summer, when we selected the material, I think we called that magazine, The Script--most of the material came from the "language handicaps" because they wrote so well. At first, a lot of the women from the Women's Trade Union League, I mean the presidents and officials, everybody except Rose Schneiderman, sort of resented the instrusion of the residents classes. Here we've been doing workers education all these years and they came in, both Bryn Mawr and Brookwood. I'll tell you about Brookwood later. But Rose Schneiderman, president of the most successful League, and that was the New York one, said, "Times have changed. If these people can do the job better than we, let them do it." She supported the resident schools and she was on the board. There were some very interesting developments, and of course, the Philadelphia newspapers--Bryn Mawr is near Philadelphia--saw the school as a Communist revolution. We had a time! We would be written up in the newspapers and some of the Bryn Mawr alumni were alarmed. We had some very hard times with publicity. Of course you always found somebody in the papers that were friendly. The head of the Bryn Mawr School for Women Workers was Hilda Worthington Smith. You know the Worthington pump that earned so much money during the war? Those were her relatives. She had been the Dean of Girls or in the English Department or something at the regular Bryn Mawr College. She's very plain looking--her hair was stuck back. When she came to college as a freshman, a lot of the other girls would say, "Well, what do you think of that girl? Who's that Jane? We ought to call her Jane." And they nicknamed her Jane, so it's always very hard.... Jane Smith or Hilda. She

HERSTEIN: could write well, she has written several good poems--she was indefatigable. Then we had students from other colleges, volunteers from Vassar, from Mount Holyoke, those eastern colleges. Those kids were great. They helped us to tutor the girls. They did everything under the sun. Each group was there only for four weeks, and oh, when they'd leave, there'd be the greatest outpouring of tears! The working girls adored them; they were so genuinely democratic, so genuinely helpful! It was a great experience in their lives; it's the thing that kids want nowadays. It was a very full faculty, you see, faculty members, tutors. I remember Hazel Kyrk, who was a professor in the graduate school at the University of Chicago. She was a great authority on the consumer, and she was one of the tutors. When I came, I came as a tutor, but immediately they made me an instructor. Josephine Colby and I were the first union teachers that were engaged. Both of us taught English; different groups. It was a very heartwarming experience.

INTERVIEWER: What finally became of it? Did the Depression kill it?

HERSTEIN: Well, it operated a certain number of years. Then after I had taught there I was elected on the joint administrative board, and we met once a year at Bryn Mawr to determine the policy of the school. It was very interesting. One year the big argument was on admitting waitresses. The working girls felt--many of them--that the waitresses were immoral.

INTERVIEWER: Oh?

HERSTEIN: They made dates with men whom they waited on and so on. You always got the split between the radicals from New York and Chicago, the Jewish girls who worked in the clothing industries, and the more conservative Southern girls. And I remember when they were discussing this thing. We finally discussed it on the board, and when we did, one of the radical working girls from New York said, "If they're immoral, it's because of the conditions under which they work. If they got wages instead of tips and didn't have to smile at every man that they waited on, they wouldn't be tempted. We should not keep them out of this school! What we should do is to change their conditions of work." That was a very good argument. So that was one hot argument.

INTERVIEWER: How did it come out? Did they take the waitresses?

HERSTEIN: Oh, they took them in. But the hot fight was the admission of Negroes.

INTERVIEWER: I can imagine.

HERSTEIN: That was hard. We discussed it. I was teaching then at Bryn Mawr and I remember when we had the discussion at the school, by the whole student body. I remember Katharine with the lovely red hair. She was from the South; she was lovely. There were two things that happened at that session. One was the speech on

HERSTEIN: child labor that was made by a Southern girl. She got up and told about when the child labor law was operative, before it was declared unconstitutional, how she went to work and she came back, and it was still daylight. She was only fourteen years old and there were her dolls, and there was time to play with her dolls. And then one time they were told that the law was unconstitutional, no longer operative. And she said, "After that there was no time to play with my dolls." It was a touching speech. Subsequently I made her make it before the North Carolina legislature.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, really?

HERSTEIN: Yes, she told me she was afraid. Oh, I said, "Darling, you would go back on everything I've taught you if you didn't!" She made it and impressed the legislators greatly. The other girl was a lovely girl, a Southern girl, too. And this was the time when the discussion was on the admission of Negroes. And she said she herself had no prejudice, but when it was announced in her small town that two of their girls were going up to Bryn Mawr to study in a worker's school, they prayed in the churches for them.

INTERVIEWER: Really?

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes. They thought it was terrible. "But we have come, and we've done well, and we've been accepted. But if they learned that the school admits Negroes, no other girl from the community would be sent." And she had a point. And I remember when she got up, she said, "Miss Herstein, I hope you won't be disappointed in your pupil." I said, "Katharine, the only time I'd be disappointed in you would be if you didn't say what you really felt." She made a very convincing speech. And I could see her point. She said, "We've just started this thing." It's like the Inter-Church World Movement and the steel strike that I told you about. The students voted to admit Negroes. And when they came, everybody held their breaths as to what would happen. Well, the strange thing that happened was this: the students were always having buzz sessions in their rooms. Amy Howes, who taught in the first year, was a professor of economics at Mount Holyoke, and she said, "We may not have learned much that year, but, by God, we learned about the world and those working girls established a democratic working procedure."

Oh, I forget to tell you about that first year. I wasn't there that year but the girls said to the maids, "How many hours do you work?" Well, they worked ten hours a day. "We think that's terrible. We've got an eight hour day. You shouldn't work more than that." So they brought in a recommendation that the hours of the maids must be lowered. It was pointed out to them that the budget was made out on their working ten hours, that they couldn't afford to change. They said, "All right, let's go through the work they do. And we'll do the extra two hours work so the maids need work only eight hours."

INTERVIEWER: That's amazing! And that's what they did?

HERSTEIN: That's what they did. And they'd argue to the small hours of the night. And whether they learned anything the next day I don't know, but it was a thriller. Well, to go back to when the Negro girls came, and everybody was holding their breath, the students were having these buzz sessions. Well, it was the Negro girls that proved to be the liason between the radical girls from New York and Chicago, and the Southern girls.

INTERVIEWER: They could talk to both groups?

HERSTEIN: Yes. There was always a conflict. If it was a movement to stop tipping the Northern girls were for it. The Southern girls--well, what could you do? They were more conservative on everything, you see. So these Negro girls would go to one buzz session after another. And they'd go to the white girls from the South and they said, "Look, you must realize the background of these Jewish girls, the things they suffered in Europe. And therefore they have a passion for social justice that we don't have. We've suffered, too, but not as much as they. And then they went to work in America and they worked in sweat shops, and they had terrible conditions, and they had to fight for the things they have." Then these Negroes would go to the radical bunch, and say to them, "Now, you've got to picture a Southern town where the center of the town is the church, where even the YMCA is controlled by the employer, where there are company schools."--I'll never forget when I first heard of company schools, I thought I'd die. They were actual--and they interpreted each group to the other. That was a very interesting development.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. And unexpected, too.

HERSTEIN: Yes, unexpected. They became the liason. The significant thing about these resident schools was that for the first time workers were able to give their whole attention to study. They didn't come after working hours, tired, and taught by tired teachers. In fact I remember when I would read the themes of these girls from New York and Chicago, who year after year had gone to public night schools, I was horrified at the spelling and all that. How did it happen, when they went year after year to night school? Their papers were never read or corrected! You couldn't expect it of the tired teachers. The resident schools gave them the leisure to study the way other people do. But Brookwood was an entirely different setup. That was a very much labor oriented school. At first it started out with the idea of a two year school, and then reduced to a year and then to eight months. It was near New York City. It was at Kotonah, New York.

INTERVIEWER: Did it start after the Bryn Mawr school?

HERSTEIN: About the same time but it was definitely labor oriented, and the board members were labor people.

INTERVIEWER: Did the women's groups have anything to do with this or was this mainly run by men?

HERSTEIN: No, this wasn't run by the women, it was an entirely different setup. We were all interested. A.J. Muste was the head, who later became the great pacifist and just died a few years ago. They did work, they lived there, you see, they did part of the work. And it was very labor oriented. And of course, it was condemned as being Communist. John Fitzpatrick, of the Chicago Federation of Labor, was on the Brookwood board. And one day Matt Wohl, who was vice-president of the American Federation of Labor--he was photo-engravers union and was angling for the presidency if and when Gompers would die--charged that the Brookwood school was Communist. Bill Foster used to describe him as carrying his rubbers for Gompers. He studied law and he was very conservative. Somebody said he was the only Republican in the American labor movement, and he issued a blast saying that the Brookwood School was Communist. It got in all the papers. Fitzpatrick was furious, just furious, and he wrote William Green a letter. Green was president by that time. He said, "Bill, if you were on the board of any institution and that institution was condemned, what would you think of anyone in the labor movement who didn't investigate, who didn't reserve his judgement first?" He scorned Matt Wohl. He wouldn't even talk to Matt Wohl. He got off the board then, and they had a lot of difficulties because, you see, it was in the wake of the Russian Revolution.

INTERVIEWER: I was going to ask you, is that when all of this Communist label became attached to everything?

HERSTEIN: Yes. The Communists had a group in some of the unions. Communist infiltration wrecked the International Ladies Garment Workers because among their members were people who had relatives in Russia. Also the Russian Revolution was hailed by all liberals and by President Woodrow Wilson as the great liberating force in Russia. Nobody knew it would turn out as it has. There would be a union meeting and some guy would try to bring in a resolution approving of Soviet foreign policy. It's the same thing that wrecked the New York locals of teachers. They'd tell what a wonderful thing the Soviet Union was. Another member would get up and say, "It's very wonderful. If I didn't send my sister packages she and her family would starve." And the fight was on. The point was, instead of attending to the problems of the union, they were fighting this out, so the international went way down in members. The same kind of a fight occurred in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, but they had Sidney Hillman as president, who was a statesman, and they all dealt with the Soviet Union, the Amalgamated Bank and so on. But unfortunately for the International Ladies Garment Workers, their distinguished president died. Another president was elected and he died and they had not that continuity until David Dubinsky was elected president. He built the union from scratch then again. It had been a very fine union, but he became very bitterly anti-Communist

HERSTEIN: and drove the Communists out of the union. He took as an advisor that awful J. Lovestone, who had been a Communist and belonged not to the Trotsky faction, but to another. But you know when they turn--he was a very bad advisor. Lovestone has been a very bad influence. Many a fine trade unionist did not get a visa to go abroad, or an important appointment, because of Lovestone's opposition, which is still of some influence in the international union.

Well, Brookwood was in operation for several years and so was Bryn Mawr. Then Hilda Smith, whose family had a home on the Hudson River--I forget the name of the town--started a school there. The Bryn Mawr one was given up. I don't know how much opposition they had from alumni; it went through various stages. Hilda Smith is still working at a job in Washington. It must be remembered that both resident schools were in operation when the Russian Revolution was the great international event and that it was reflected in the schools, where great and bitter conflicts arose among the students.

INTERVIEWER: Hilda Smith is still there?

HERSTEIN: Yes, a government job, everybody always gets Hilda a job. She's written some very good poetry. Then the unions began to develop their own educational programs and many of the unions had very good educational programs, very good. I remember when the educational department of the auto workers union had a convention in Chicago and Walter Reuther was there, of course. It was in our new opera house. That's the meeting at which Bishop Sheil made the charge against McCarthy. Now, McCarthy was shooting his gab off for all he was worth, and the Protestant clergy, many of them, had the guts to condemn him. They were needling the Catholics. You know McCarthy had a following in Boston. One time Joe Keenan told me--he's an official, you know, of the electrical workers union--he had organized a meeting in Boston, and right across Father Coughlin, that crazy extremist who was condemning everybody, was having a meeting. There were more people there than at his meeting.

INTERVIEWER: Of trade unionists?

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes. And they sold Father Coughlin's Social Justice on the steps of the Catholic church in Brooklyn. Now the teachers, when I'd met them from New York at an AFT convention, couldn't believe that. On the steps of no Catholic church in Chicago was Social Justice sold. You see, we had Mundelein. And it was at that educational meeting that Bishop Scheil spoke. He was a wonderful person. He was marvelous. He organized the Catholic Youth Organization. And at that meeting he got up and denounced McCarthy as a phony. He was the first top Catholic clergyman that came out against McCarthy and he paid the price for it. They jumped all over him. Well, the auto workers unions educational program became very big and very good. There was a fellow by the name of Brendon Sexton who was the head of the educational

HERSTEIN: department of the union. The Teamsters in St. Louis had a good educational program. So you see, this movement of workers' education spread from these humble beginnings to where the unions have taken them over and have done them very well. And if you have a liberal president of a union he favors it. If not he lets it go.

INTERVIEWER: Miss Herstein, today you promised you'd give me some of your recollections of the AF of L convention. What about the 1936 convention?

HERSTEIN: That was a very important convention because it was shortly before that that a group of leaders of the AF of L had been urging for some time the organization of industrial unions, especially in the area of rubber workers and automobile workers. It was obvious that the craft organization did not meet the needs of these mass production industries. A committee was organized which was headed by John L. Lewis, who incidentally was head of an industrial union for years, which was the United Mine Workers. Also on the committee were David Dubinsky of the International Ladies Garment Workers, Sidney Hillman of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, and Harvey Brown of the Machinists. They organized the Committee on Industrial Organization, the avowed purpose of which was to help organize unions on industrial lines and bring them into the American Federation of Labor. The avowed purpose was not a separate organization. The American Federation of Labor officialdom got very angry about that, and so it was decided that at the 1936 convention the question would be taken up as to what to do about this committee. John L. Lewis didn't come to that convention, but in the debate proposing the expulsion of that committee the chief speaker was Matthew Wohl, first vice-president of the AF of L.

INTERVIEWER: He was always rather conservative compared to the others, wasn't he?

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes. In fact, when Eisenhower ran for president many years later, the only labor leader he could think of was Matthew Wohl. He was very conservative. He was ambitious to become president. Some of the more liberal labor leaders used to talk about his carrying the overcoat and rubbers for Samuel Gompers.

INTERVIEWER: Did he really do that?

HERSTEIN: Well, that's what they used to say. He was a member of the photo-engravers union whose members were highly skilled. But it was a very small union and it's very hard to become president of the AF of L when your backing is such a small union. He led the debate against the Committee on Industrial Organization and for its expulsion from the AF of L. I'll never forget the chill that went over some of us when he told about what the AF of L had done for these various unions that were now on the Committee of Industrial Organization and then added, "The Jewish unions, for whom we did so much," meaning the International Ladies Garment Workers and

HERSTEIN: the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. Then he went on with the speech. The speech against expulsion was made by Max Zoritsky, head of the capmakers' union, and he made an excellent speech pointing out the merits of industrial organizations for the mass production industries. Towards the end of the speech he said, "And did the executive council have to go out of its way to drag in the Jewish question?" He criticized them with great dignity. Immediately there was flurrying on the platform where all the officers sat, jumping up to disavow any idea of anti-Semitism, that they really meant the needle trades, they meant to say the clothing workers union not the "Jewish" unions. There was a flurry of disavowals. Then the vote came on expulsion.

In the August preceding this AF of L convention in Tampa the national convention of the American Federation of Teachers had been held. It was at that convention that I was a candidate for president, and was defeated, largely through the efforts of the Communists. That was an interesting story. At first they thought they could handle me. Several workshops had been arranged and they had their "lieutenants" in the workshops, and whatever the discussion was, when I took part in it, they sensed that I wouldn't be anybody that they could manipulate. The candidate that was running for re-election was Jerome Davis of the Divinity School of Yale University, who was a very fine man and was not a Communist. But they thought they could use him, so they favored him. The vote was relatively close, and he was re-elected. Everybody thought how game I was because I got up and said, "We've had an election in the best tradition of the American Federation of Teachers, very democratic, and everybody had a chance to vote, and now we have the results. The thing we should do is to unite our efforts in the interests of the teachers." Everybody thought I was awfully game. It was the hour after I had been defeated. I said, "Let's not be like the story of a recent convention in Chicago. I think it was the time that Teddy Roosevelt ran for nomination on the Republican ticket, one of the reporters said that at the beginning of the convention the 'delegates bowed their heads in prayer and sharpened their spikes.'" And I suggested that we should not sharpen our spikes, but work together in the interests of the organization. That was in August just before this convention of the AF of L mentioned before.

I went to the Tampa convention of the AF of L mentioned above. I did not go as a delegate, but because my close friend Molly Levitas was elected a delegate from her union, the office workers, and was going. I decided to attend as an observer. The whole atmosphere was charged with accusations against commies and so on. Molly and I came to the AF of L convention at Tampa. Jerome Davis, who was the recently re-elected president of the AF of T and had never attended an AF of L convention, came over to me and he said, "Lillian, I'll need your help. I have never attended an AF of L convention and you know all these people." I said, "Well, Jerome, I certainly will help you as much as I can."

HERSTEIN: The hot issue was a roll call vote on what to do with the Committee on Industrial Organization. At our convention of the American Federation of Teachers in August, we knew this was going to come up. We had voted that we would vote against the expulsion of the CIO. It would be a roll call vote. I said, "Well, Jerome, all you have to do when the roll call comes, to carry out your mandate from the American Federation of Teachers, is to say, 'No!'" Oh no, he was going to lecture those reactionary labor leaders. I told him strongly, "You only have to vote no on expulsion. That's all you have to do." I went over to Philip Randolph of the Sleeping Car Porters. Industrial organization was the savior of the Negroes. It was in that kind of organization that they could come in to the labor movement. I went over to Randolph, and I said, "Look, Philip,"--I had helped him organize the Sleeping Car Porters--I said, "I wonder if I'm getting yellow." And he said, "Well, I wonder if you are! It would be a great surprise." And I told him what I had advised Jerome Davis, who was persisting in not only voting against the expulsion resolution, but in talking. He said, "Well, he doesn't need to do that. We're going to vote no, that's all we have to do." It was a very hot issue, and it was very hard for a little union like the American Federation of Teachers or the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters to get up there and orate. The other unions that were stronger could do that. Then the roll call vote came--this was after Zoritsky's speech. Of course, Brotherhood comes early in the alphabet, and the secretary of the AF of L read "Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters." Randolph rose and, with his deep voice, voted "No", which took courage. But our man, Jerome Davis, went up there and gave those AF of L leaders a speech. He had never been to an AF of L convention; his speech was resented. He got himself in wrong, and our union. Incidentally, every AF of L convention he attended after that, he'd get up and lecture the labor leaders on what they should do. And my friends who were all for the CIO and were still in the AF of L said, "What's the matter with that president of yours? Why does he feel he has to lecture those AF of L leaders?" Well, now, that was the convention of the AF of L in November 1936, I think it was. I attended because I wanted to go with my friend, Molly Levitas, who was a delegate from the office employees' union, which she and John Fitzpatrick, President of the Chicago Federation of Labor, had organized. That had been infiltrated by Communists and she voted according to what her union had instructed her to do. It was a very interesting convention and she voted against the expulsion resolution. The resolution of expulsion passed! It made the news. When the CIO committee had been organized, they said their avowed purpose was to organize the unorganized, and bring them into the AF of L. But you know John L. Lewis was like a bull in a china closet. I remember that he went up to Madison, Wisconsin. The two officers of the state AF of L of Wisconsin were avowed Socialists, very fine and very liberal people, and would be very favorable to industrial organization. But John L. Lewis barged in there and was wrecking the unions by the way he was organizing, and so when the American Federation of Teachers convention met in Madison in 1937, they were all furious at John L.

HERSTEIN: Lewis and his CIO tactics. Well, that was in the 1936 convention in Tampa, Florida. Now after that the AF of T convention met in Madison, Wisconsin in August 1937.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about that.

HERSTEIN: That was the year that I was appointed a member of the American delegation to the ILO in Geneva, Switzerland.

INTERVIEWER: Go ahead and tell me about it.

HERSTEIN: It was a very interesting convention, and as you talked to labor people from around the world, the French and all, they were very sympathetic to the CIO, because the conservatism of the AF of L had gotten on their nerves all these years.

INTERVIEWER: How many Americans went?

HERSTEIN: In the American delegation there were twenty-two. At that time the League of Nations' headquarters were in Geneva. In fact the ILO was organized by the League of Nations. The ILO was one of the two agencies that survived. Our meetings were in a big hall in Geneva. The items on the agenda were seven; the two very important ones were the forty hour week in the textile industry and raising the age when children could go to work from fourteen to fifteen. The one in the textile industry was very important, because the Premier of France then was Leon Blum and under him they had put in the forty hour week, which shocked the employers of France and Belgium. They were very conservative. That was a big issue. By that time the American textile unions had joined the CIO, which had become the Congress of Industrial Organizations, and if you were going to get a representative from the textile industries it would have to be one from the CIO. The man who was appointed was Frances Gorman of the Textile Workers, and I was appointed on child labor legislation. The ILO was built on a tripartite principle with the government of each country having two representatives, so the weight of power was in the government. The leading employers organization, which at that time I think was the Chamber of Commerce, had one delegate, and the labor movement had one. That's four voting delegates. One representing the government was Grace Abbott, who was head of the Children's Bureau at one time, and the other was the assistant Secretary of Labor, whose name just escapes me. Those were the two government representatives of the United States. The worker delegate was Bob Watt of the Painter's Union of Massachusetts. For each item on the agenda each delegate is permitted two "technical advisors." Obviously, it's the technical advisors that really do the work, because they're the experts in their particular field. The employer delegate at that time was a man by the name of Harriman--not Averell Harriman, but I think he owned the elevated roads, or something in Boston--and he obviously wouldn't know about textiles. Bob Watt was a painter. So they were each allowed two technical advisors for every item on the agenda. I was the technical advisor to Bob Watt on child labor

HERSTEIN: legislation and Frances Gorman was his technical advisor on the forty hour week in the textile industry, really the hottest issue in the conference. The whole conference meets in plenary session and we are seated in the French alphabetical order, so the United States is not under "U" but under "Etats-Unis." There were the four voting delegates and in back of them their technical advisors, but that's only for a few plenary sessions. The technical advisors meet in their own group, and we met every single day. And the employers had their technical advisors, too, and they met every day. We met every day thrashing out what we wanted and what we were supposed to do. Grace Abbott was marvelous. The liaison person between the American delegation and the ILO was a fellow at the University of Illinois, but he was advising Grace Abbott not to push this thing about the age.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

HERSTEIN: Well, he thought we couldn't get it, and Grace Abbott said, "If we can't raise the age in ten years, it's too bad. We're going to stick to our resolution." Of course, there was India, where children work at the age of eight. At that time Great Britain was in the control of a reactionary government. When the voting came on the child labor amendment the delegate from India got up and said, "Our children are working at the age of eight." He said that children in a hot climate like that mature early. We American delegates reminded him that that was the argument given to us in America when we tried to get child labor laws in the Southern states. There was quite a hot argument about it. But the Secretariat of the League of Nations was a group of experts who were in Geneva all the time, about four hundred people, and they would give us all the material we needed. They had prepared mimeographed copies of the child labor laws and conditions in every country and put them at our disposal. They did a very fine job. Every night in our hotel rooms were copies of the agenda of the meeting for the next day, and also the proceedings of the day before. The program was very well organized. We had this hot debate about child labor in our committee, but we won in favor of raising the age when children could go to work from fourteen to fifteen. When it came to the debate before the plenary session, Frances Gorman made the speech in favor of the forty hour week in the textile industry which was on the agenda. But the best speech made for the forty hour week in the textile industry was made by a representative of the textile industry, who pointed out to the delegates that we have learned in America that the way to create a market for your goods was to reduce the hours of work and not reduce the wages. My God! I can see the employer delegates, their eyes popping out! It was a very good speech, even better than Gorman's speech. And Blum was very popular. The employer's conference invited Blum to join them at the ILO, but before the conference was over--it lasted three weeks--Blum was voted out of power. So he didn't come. Then the technical advisors advised the voting delegates, who were only four in number. And when the voting came before the plenary session for the child labor resolutions, Bob Watt came over to me and said, "I want you

HERSTEIN: to cast the vote for the United States." He gave me that honor, and I got up and said, "Aye." At the conference, at every desk there was a dial telephone, and one could dial to whatever translation one wanted. As the speaker from Japan spoke, or from India, there were translators translating the speech. One would translate in English, one in French, one in German, and the delegates could dial to the translation they wanted to hear. The person who gave those dial telephones to the League of Nations was Edward Filene of Boston, a very liberal employer. He was the great advocate of the credit unions, also. He was a very socially minded man. As a gift, to facilitate the discussions of the League of Nations, Mr. Filene gave those dial telephones. They tell of an American tourist peeping into a convention of the ILO and seeing all those people with earphones. "Oh," she said, "That's a convention of the deaf, isn't it?" Well, the forty hour week and also the child labor resolutions carried. There were resolutions on governments turning to public works in times of great unemployment. There were seven items on the agenda.

INTERVIEWER: That one passed, too?

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes, they all passed. That was in 1937, and I came back from Geneva in August. The conference lasted three weeks, the first three weeks in June. Very hard work! By the way, one of the technical advisors on textiles was a man from New York who had crossed the ocean about a hundred times in connection with his business. He could speak French and German and he enjoyed taking us worker delegates on Sundays on trips. He was a textile manufacturer, a technical advisor to the employer delegates.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have time to do any sightseeing at all?

HERSTEIN: We had Sunday off, and Mr. Menke, the textile man I mentioned above was there, William Menke, and he brought his wife and he hired a car every Sunday. He would take us around and we saw Switzerland and it was particularly handy to have Mr. Menke, who could speak French and German fluently.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, that's lucky.

HERSTEIN: He was very proud of the fact that he had established such friendly relations with those of us in the labor movement. He was an employer. In our group was Mary Hulbert, a grand-niece of Jane Addams; she was secretary of the American delegation. Bob Watt, who was the labor delegate, and Marion Hedges of the printing trades, who was a technical advisor to Watt, also went places with us. He'd been to ILO conferences before. He was very well informed, he represented a union. And so Mr. Menke was so proud of playing around with Hedges and me and Mary Hulbert, and he and Mrs. Menke would take us out in the car he rented, and wherever we went it was easy because he spoke French and German very well. Everybody who comes to Geneva wants to see Mont Blanc in Geneva, but sometimes it's covered by clouds, and they don't see it. We were driving one Sunday and pretty soon our driver said, "Stop."

HERSTEIN: And he said, "Mon Dieu, mon Dieu, Mont Blanc!", and we all got out of the car and gazed in wonder and there was Mont Blanc in all her beauty. It was very lovely. Well, the conference was over after three weeks, and I decided that as long as my transportation was paid back and forth it was economy to spend some time in Europe on my own.

INTERVIEWER: That's what I wondered.

HERSTEIN: I had met the teacher delegates of the Teachers' Union in Paris on my way to Geneva. Because it was the year of international conventions, and there was an international convention of teachers in Paris, they were quite determined that I come back after the ILO conference and I agreed. The Czech delegation was there. It was a very sad group because somehow or other they had a sense of impending doom, which pretty soon descended on their nation. And by the way, the British reporter for a liberal paper said that Britain was deserted by all her dominions except India. Britain had voted conservative. It was the reactionary government of Chamberlain. They voted against the child labor amendment. It was a solemn time for the world, more solemn than we realized. I decided, since I'd never been to the Scandinavian countries, I would go. I went to Ireland, too. The American delegation had been in the same hotel as the Scandinavians and when I told them I wanted to go to Denmark they immediately came in and gave me their cards and told me the people that I could meet. In fact, before I went to Geneva--you get short notice, you know--I received a letter from an editor of a labor paper in Oslo. Finn Moe, his name was. He had come to America to study the AFL-CIO fight with the feeling that the lethargic AFL was not moving. When he got to America he was told that if he wanted to get a good idea of that aspect of the labor movement he should get in touch with me, which he did. He called me up and I met him in Chicago, and by that time I knew I was going to go to Geneva. The notice was very short. We had a very fine interview. I told him everything, and he took out his card and said, "When you get to Oslo, be sure and get in touch with me." And he was very helpful when later I did get to Norway. I went to the Scandinavian countries and then came to Paris and attended the International Congress of Teachers and addressed that convention. While we were there the Minister of Foreign Affairs entertained forty of the foreign delegates at the Qui D'Orsay and I was one of the forty. If you ever saw anything beautiful it was that luncheon. There was the table, a long table, but wide, and alternately were low bouquets of flowers and then little statues. Nothing stood between you and the person across. It was exquisite in its beauty. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, or his assistant, addressed us. Our response was given by a man by the name of Mander, from the Teachers' Union in Great Britain. Before he gave his prepared speech he said he had to pause first to pay his tribute to the sense of beauty of the French people as this room indicated. I sat between the Minister of Education of Czechoslovakia and the Minister of Education of Iceland; both of them talked French. We were all going

HERSTEIN: to address the International Congress of Teachers. I'll speak in English. And these two men were wondering what language they should use; they knew both French and German. It was a very beautiful affair. And as I said, I addressed the Congress and then I came back to Paris. And after I was in Paris I made up my mind I wanted to go to Ireland. I had promised I was going to come back in time for the AFT convention in Madison, because we had just formed the one big union under John Fewkes, and this was to be an important convention centering on the CIO issue.

INTERVIEWER: Before you get to Madison I want to ask you a couple of questions about the International Convention. Was this something unusual, or did the teachers regularly have international conventions?

HERSTEIN: I don't know, they may have had, not every year, but quite often. The secretary of the AFT was there that year, but I was the one who addressed the convention.

INTERVIEWER: And what kind of issues did they raise? Did they operate in the same way as the ILO convention?

HERSTEIN: Oh, no, it was purely educational. The discussion centered on educational problems.

INTERVIEWER: A cultural exchange kind of thing?

HERSTEIN: That's right. Just like at a medical convention would concentrate on medicine, we concentrated on educational problems.

INTERVIEWER: Now, back to Madison.

HERSTEIN: I said, just before that, you know, we had been paid in tax anticipation warrants, not scrip. It was that bad time, and the teachers were ready for anything. We had an elementary teachers union, and a lot of the teachers didn't belong to anything. They always said if they had one union, they would join. One union was formed and many of them joined. Jack Fewkes marched around the street and he was very handsome, and these elementary school girls fell for him, and he was elected the president. But they knew nothing much about trade unions. I told them that although I could have stayed abroad till Labor Day I was not going to do it. I was coming back in time for the AFT convention because the Federation of Women High School Teachers that went into the unity movement were a much more liberal group, and they were nervous about the unity, and I was, too.

INTERVIEWER: More liberal than the elementary teachers?

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes, those who had been in Margaret Haley's group were very good but the others had never joined anything and there were many of them, very inexperienced. I got to Madison but I went to Ireland before I left Europe, and I remember I went into the American Express and I said I wanted to go to Ireland. They said, "Lady, you can't. The horse show is on." "Well," I said, "I don't

HERSTEIN: care anything about the horse show." But I had met the Irish delegation in Geneva, and for the first time in the history of the ILO, it had elected a man from a small country as president, and that was Sean Lemass and he gave a wonderful party for the whole ILO group, which the president usually does. I met the whole Irish delegation including a woman who was the inspector of all the factories of Ireland. She said, "Oh, you must come to Ireland." So when this fellow at American Express said, "We can't get you a ticket to Ireland, or a hotel, or anything," I said, "All right, I have a friend in Dublin, I think I'll telephone her." I was in Paris, and the fellow at American Express, of course, was a Frenchman, and said, "Oh, these Americans." I called her, and she said, "I'll work on it." And within 24 hours I got a telegram from her saying that she had gotten a reservation for me in the Drummond Hotel in Dublin. From Paris I went to London, and I had a reservation in a hotel there. In the meantime I had had correspondence with Jennie Lee, whose husband was Aneuren Bevin. And she told me, "Just as soon as you get to London, call us up." It was on a Sunday, and I called her. Here were my bags all around me. "Oh, Lillian," she said, "Get out of London; it'll be a bank holiday, which is dreary. Now you take such-and-such a train and get to this little town"--a resort place, very modest--"and stay with us over the weekend." Here is this dignified clerk in the hotel in London thinking I was slightly crazy. I said, "All right, give me something to eat, and I'll get a ticket and go there. Take care of my baggage while I am gone. I'll be back in three days." So he gave me something to eat and I went by train to visit Jennie and her husband. Aneuren was there, and Jennie, and they had a very humble place. I had entertained Jennie Lee in my home, too, and Jennie was laughing at my having to get accustomed to primitive plumbing. She had a lot of fun with me. She refers to it in the letter she wrote at my retirement--on my pretty hat--that I looked exotic. I had a marvelous weekend with them and then I came back to London and went to Ireland.

I met the Irish delegation that I had met at Geneva. Later I sailed home from what was called Cork. By that time Ireland had gone very Celtic. And in the little hotel that I stayed in in Cork, whom do I run into but Preston Bradley. And let's see, there was something happened in Dublin. Oh, yes, when I was in Dublin, the woman who was the inspector general of factories said, "If you want to see Dublin, travel on a native bus." I was in a group she had arranged that went in a circle tour from Dublin and back. It was a regular tour.

INTERVIEWER: That must have been nice.

HERSTEIN: I remember when we got to Athlone the guide said, "This is the home of John McCormack," the great tenor, you remember? His parents were evicted from there by an absentee landlord. And I said, "Another fact you must put in the book; this also is the birthplace of John Fitzpatrick, the distinguished president of the Chicago Federation of Labor." And we had this whole trip, but I

HERSTEIN: couldn't go back with them to Dublin as I had to sail from Cork. The tour lasted about five or six days. And we all got very well acquainted, and we had parties. When we got to the place where I had to get off they all got off. And they had confetti, and they all kissed me. And I get back on the native bus to get back to Cork, and there was a priest on the bus and he said, "That was lovely; are you a bride?" And I said, "No." So the next morning, we had to get up at five o'clock to be sure to make the boat for the U.S.A.

INTERVIEWER: That's primitive, too.

HERSTEIN: Yes, but that Irish landlady certainly got us a wonderful breakfast. There was a porter; there was no vehicle to take your baggage to the boat, and he carried it all the way to the boat. We were standing in line on the boat, and we had to show our passports, particularly the vaccination statement. That's required of all people entering the United States. As we were standing in line on the boat the man in back of me said, "That was a warm farewell you got in Cathier." And I thought to myself, "Heavens! He saw all those people kissing me!" I got back in time for the convention in Madison. When I got there one of the hot resolutions was urging the American Federation of Teachers to join the CIO.

INTERVIEWER: Oh.

HERSTEIN: Oh my, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Were you expecting this, or was this a surprise?

HERSTEIN: No, we were expecting it, it was in the air. But we were a big union by that time. I was on the resolutions committee, and Jerome Davis, who was the president, who defeated me for president, presided. We had a very long and hot debate on it. I led the AFT part of the debate which was the minority report of the Committee; the majority had voted for the AF of T to join the CIO. This was all written up in a magazine. I presented a minority report against making any gestures going into the CIO, and I had very good reasons. I remember they all said that Lillian was a better parliamentarian than the chairman. When the question was up, I said, "Mr. Chairman, according to parliamentary procedure, the minority report precedes the majority report," and I gave the minority report and we lost.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me a little bit about the debate.

HERSTEIN: You have that magazine article which discusses why we should not join the CIO. One of the most important considerations was that education in America was still largely a local matter, and the teachers' union got its support from the local federation of labor, not the national, as we did in Illinois. We had the unqualified support of the Illinois State Federation of Labor and the Chicago Federation of Labor. In fact, there was no local CIO

HERSTEIN: in Chicago. And even Sidney Hillman, one of the men who helped to form the CIO, was hoping against hope that some unions would stay in the AF of L.

INTERVIEWER: To liberalize the AF of L?

HERSTEIN: Yes, and so I pointed out that wherever we had a strong chapter of the American Federation of Teachers, it was in a community where there was a strong local AF of L union, which supported us, and there was no CIO union.

INTERVIEWER: So they would be the only CIO group there?

HERSTEIN: Well, you'd get no support. There'd be no one to support you. If you don't have a state CIO, how can they lobby in the legislature for you? And then, we published that in the magazine; one of these magazines has that--I gave you a copy.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. I think I have that magazine.

HERSTEIN: Yes, that has it, and I showed it to William Green. Now, there had been a rumor--it was in the air, everybody talking about the American Federation of Teachers joining the CIO. And somebody had asked William Green what he would do with the American Federation of Teachers if they split on this issue. He said he'd take those that stayed in the AF of L and give the County and Municipal Workers Union jurisdiction over them, which, of course, was a lot of nerve to decide our fate without consulting us. I don't know if he ever said it or not, but at any rate, after the convention, I was in Washington, and he saw the article I had written. He said to me, "Well, Lillian, it's a very good article, but I'm surprised, with all you know of the busting habits of John L. Lewis, that you didn't mention him." "Well," I said, "I'll tell you, Mr. Green, John L. Lewis was never a favorite of mine, because he comes from Illinois and I knew what the Illinois miners thought of him." But I said, "I feel that I would never condemn any person who was leading a significant group of the American workers. That would be fodder for the employers." And the article never mentions Lewis. It was a very hot convention in Madison. By that time, the Chicago Teachers' Union had employed Kermit Eby as their executive secretary, and John Fewkes was the president. We had a caucus of the Chicago group after the convention. During the convention an event occurred. Whenever the AF of T had a convention they never stayed in a hotel which wouldn't admit Negroes. The meeting of the council of the AF of T often took place in Chicago. And they'd go to some crummy hotel because they would not go to one that didn't admit Negroes. Their record was very clear. Well, in Madison, we were at the Lorraine Hotel. Our Negro delegates were there and then, as usual, when a convention takes place, people don't take all their meals in the hotel, they wander around. Well, a group had gone in for supper or lunch in a drug store right near the Lorraine Hotel where we were all staying. I never heard of this happening before, but it did. They had lunch, and there were Negroes and whites sitting together

HERSTEIN: at the same table. And the waiter that waited on them, a white waiter, took the plates that they had been eating from, and threw them on the floor and broke them, in protest against these white teachers eating with Negroes. Well, that was just hunky-dory for our New York commies. Oh, that was meat! Later we had a meeting of the whole convention, the AF of T, and there were resolutions submitted condemning the owner of the lunchroom, who wasn't even there--Phillip LaFollette was the governor, and to think all of this took place in front of a statue of Abraham Lincoln--I just can't tell you all the bla-bla-bla they said. That's the time I was called a Nazi; that was very good. And I got up, and I opposed the resolution. I said, "I am very much surprised, but perhaps I shouldn't be, for some of you have had very little experience in how a union operates. No union would condemn an employer unheard." And I proposed that we form a committee to call on the owner of the drugstore. Oh, my! I was called a Nazi! I was defending the principle of trade union negotiation. Well, we won out and a committee was appointed to interview the employer. He told us he didn't know a thing about what had happened. He immediately fired the waiter that had committed the deed and sent an apology to the AF of T. So what more do you want? That didn't make our commies very happy.

INTERVIEWER: How did the Negro delegates respond?

HERSTEIN: Well, this is interesting. Then, as I said before, we had this caucus of our whole group after the convention in the hotel in Madison. And there was a Negro delegate, a very nice girl, and I remember that when I used to urge her to join the union, she was very conservative. She used to say, "Oh, well, I wouldn't think of going on strike." Well, there was really a no-strike clause in the constitution of the AF of T. And then picketing--she thought that was terrible. She was very conservative. But when we caucused, she got up and said how heartening it was to see those delegates of New York stand by them. To them it was a Negro issue. And if you were against the resolution then you were anti-Negro. And the guy from the Chicago Teachers' Union on the floor that made the speech with the New York crowd said he was surprised at Miss Herstein: "She talks like a Nazi!"

INTERVIEWER: Who was that? Do you remember?

HERSTEIN: Yes, he's dead now, so we better leave him.

INTERVIEWER: Let him rest in peace?

HERSTEIN: Yes, he was much more conservative than I, but they got swept aside. Well, now, that was the AF of T convention in 1937 in Madison.

INTERVIEWER: Now do you want to tell me about the next big convention? Would this be the 1940 AF of L convention?

HERSTEIN: At the next convention of the American Federation of Labor, I was a delegate from the Chicago Federation of Labor. According to the constitution of the American Federation of Labor the central bodies were called "one lungers" because they could have only one delegate. And, of course, it was an assignment much sought. I had been nominated several times before to be the Chicago Federation of Labor delegate to the American Federation of Labor, but always there would be some older man who, if he didn't go that year, would never get to go; so I would withdraw for him. This time delegates came to me and said, "We don't want you to withdraw; now you go." I was the delegate to the AF of L.

Before the convention every delegate got a letter from a group of Negro workers who would be eligible to the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks but the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks had a clause in their constitution forbidding membership to Negroes. When you think that that's only 1940, and you tell Negroes to be patient! The Brotherhood of Railway Clerks wouldn't have them; so these Negro workers organized federal unions and were directly chartered by the American Federation of Labor. They had 130 locals chartered directly by the AF of L at the time of this convention. Several resolutions had been sent calling upon these locals to return their federal charters. "And we present this matter to your attention in the hope that as an organization that has no color clause in its constitution, and which has among its membership many loyal members, that we might get your support in our effort to prevent this great AF of L from committing what we consider to be one of the most undemocratic and un-American acts, by allowing this matter of auxiliary locals to be imposed upon thousands of colored." The proposal was for these 130 locals to go into the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks as auxiliary members without the right to vote. Did you ever hear of anything so outrageous? They wrote to various delegates to support them in this fight against the resolution. I got this letter, and immediately I went over to Philip Randolph, President of the Sleeping Car Porters; Webster, who was first vice-president of the Sleeping Car Porters. As I said several times I helped to organize them, and I said, "What about this? I got this letter and of course I'm willing to support them." They said, "This is what we're trying to do. We are meeting with Mr. Green, the president of AF of L, and with Harrison, the head of the Railway Clerks, and we're trying to work something out. We'll let you know just what's worked out, and what we want you to do." And day after day we didn't hear anything.

INTERVIEWER: No resolutions were offered to the convention?

HERSTEIN: No, and we wondered what happened. In those days, the AF of L convention lasted two weeks, and this covered Thanksgiving. By that time a lot of people had left, and the head of the central body of Milwaukee--I know him very well; he was a member of the machinists' union--and on the last day of the convention, when most people were gone, he got up and said, "Mr. Green, Mr. President,

HERSTEIN: I want to inquire about this resolution about the locals in the Railway Clerks. Just what disposition was made of that?" Green jumped all over him. He said, "You should know!" "Well," he said, "I don't know; if I did know, I wouldn't ask you." The agreement had been that the matter would be referred to the Executive Council of the AF of L for future disposition.

INTERVIEWER: So they really had no agreement.

HERSTEIN: No, just to refer it to them. I can remember talking to Webster about it when he came back to Chicago, and he said he and Philip Randolph, all the way back to Chicago, in every town, Negro delegates would meet them, and they would discuss it. Incidentally, Randolph and Webster didn't stay in the hotels where we stayed in New Orleans.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, it was segregated?

HERSTEIN: Sure! They stayed with friends, the same old procedure at all conventions. So that was the big issue.

INTERVIEWER: But it really never came up on the floor?

HERSTEIN: Never came up on the floor. But this man brought it up. He was a machinist.

INTERVIEWER: Was he white or Negro?

HERSTEIN: He was white, very liberal, and he was the head of the central body of Milwaukee. And he got jumped all over by Green. Now, that was the convention where we had the resolution about the B'nai B'rith. That was settled. And then I was instructed by the Chicago Federation of Labor to bring in a resolution to change the representation of central bodies in the AF of L. I knew we'd be defeated, but I got up and made my little speech.

INTERVIEWER: In what way did you want to change it?

HERSTEIN: Oh, it wasn't very practical. The Chicago Federation of Labor always wanted it, and they didn't feel bad that I didn't get it.

INTERVIEWER: Your heart wasn't in it.

HERSTEIN: No, it wasn't, and I think some of them weren't either.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about the B'nai B'rith.

HERSTEIN: A resolution was brought in to condemn the B'nai B'rith because they had their program printed in a non-union shop. The president of the national B'nai B'rith at that time was a very fine man from Omaha, Nebraska, which wasn't a strong union town. If it had come on the floor at the convention I would have had to vote to condemn the B'nai B'rith for this non-union activity. Before it got to the floor the matter was referred to Matt Wohl,

HERSTEIN: who was the first vice-president of the AF of L and always was persona grata to employers. He worked out an agreement with the head of B'nai B'rith. Now we've finished with the 1940 convention.

INTERVIEWER: You said you had something else to tell me; I hope I didn't shake it out of your mind.

HERSTEIN: Oh, I meant to tell you in the 1936 convention, when the CIO issue came up, Molly had gone to her union before, and they had instructed her to vote for throwing out the CIO, and she voted according to instructions. By the time she got back to Chicago her local was in control of a bunch of commies, and they introduced a resolution condemning her for that. And John Fitzpatrick--she and John Fitzpatrick really organized that office workers' union. Many of the union offices had stenographers who were not members of the union. She and Fitz had a lot of fun about this resolution condemning her. So, at the next meeting, Fitz said to her, "What's the matter with you, Molly? You going over to your union again?" She said, "Sure." He said, "You're a glutton." So, she went again. So that was that. But I don't know of anything else.

INTERVIEWER: You said that you helped to organized the Sleeping Car Porters, and I don't know if we talked about that on tape.

HERSTEIN: Oh, that was long ago, in my early days. The Sleeping Car Porters had a hard time organizing. Every time they had a meeting, there were spies in the meeting, and the next day they were fired. And they held out, Philip Randolph held out for a union, not to be an auxiliary to any other union. There were several unions that wanted them, railway unions, but would put them in non-voting auxiliary capacity. Randolph held out and finally they won. There was to be an election of the National Labor Relations Board, and on the ballot were the two choices: to belong to the Sleeping Car Porters or to belong to no union. Well, the Sleeping Car Porters by that time were pretty well organized, and the vote was coming on one hot day in July. Webster, the vice-president called me up. He said, "I know we've got the votes, but the company, particularly the Northwestern Railroad, has some Negro stooges going around urging people to vote against the Sleeping Car Porters." He said, "I don't think they'll succeed. I'm sure they won't, but to make assurance double sure, we're going to hold a big meeting on Canal and Harrison. Will you come and speak?" I said, "Sure." I go out there surrounded by a whole group of Negroes, and the only two speakers were Frank McCulloch and I, both white. Subsequently Frank McCulloch became administrative assistant to Senator Paul H. Douglas of Illinois, and later chairman of the National Labor Relations Board. The white men passing made all kinds of remarks about me--miscegenation--so I said to the Negroes, "Don't pay any attention to that. I don't care anything about that. Just hold out in our meeting." And then for some reason, we had to go to see the president of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. We went into his office, and

HERSTEIN: when he saw Frank and me he could have killed us. His whole idea was these Negroes are nice and law-abiding, they don't want unions. It's just these white agitators. He got so insulting that one of the Negro delegates standing next to me was getting mad. I said, "Don't get mad. Let's go look at the post office." That was at Dearborn and Adams. I said, "That's where they're counting the votes. Let's look at that and not pay any attention to him." The Sleeping Car Porters won. It was the first Negro union directly affiliated with the AF of L. Many meetings were held celebrating the event. At the one held in Chicago the porters asked their three best white friends to sit on the platform and be honored: Mary McDowell, head of University of Chicago Settlement, Paul H. Douglas, and I.

INTERVIEWER: Today you said you would tell me about some of the work that you did during World War II, for the government.

HERSTEIN: Yes, that's right. When the war broke out, among the agencies there was the War Production Board. I've forgotten who was the chairman. There were nine vice-presidents and, at first, none from labor, the excuse being that the AF of L and the CIO were fighting each other so bitterly that they didn't know whom they could appoint. Well, as a matter of fact, they could appoint two, one from each labor group, which they did. They appointed Joseph Keenan, who was on leave as Secretary of the Chicago Federation of Labor, and Clint Golden of the CIO. They were the labor vice-presidents of the War Production Board. All the other seven were from industry. One of the problems in the war industries was absenteeism of the women workers. Many of the men were in the army, and the women were needed in industry. There was all sorts of propaganda and romanticising of "Rosie the Welder"--urging women to go into defense industries. But the women had children and the problem was care for the children and various needs. Mr. Keenan appointed me as Woman Consultant for the War Production Board with a very fancy title that I can't even remember now. My job was to gear community facilities to the needs of women working in war industries so that they could stick to the job. There was a lot of absenteeism because they had to take care of their children. Keenan appointed me in about August of 1942, and I came to Washington to be briefed. I hadn't been there a week when he sent me to the West Coast, to California, where I had never been and really didn't know much about the industries. It had been suggested to him to have me go to Glen Martin's aircraft plant, which was in Maryland, so I'd get oriented, but the absenteeism on the West Coast bothered him very much. I went first to Los Angeles. There were several large plants in the area. They're always situated on the outskirts of the town and going to and from the plants on those long Los Angeles roads was quite a problem. There were Lockheed and Vega, which had two different names belonging to the same people and which were at Burbank, on the outskirts. And then there was Douglas at Long Beach, and North American, and they all had women workers. There was also the shipyards, a big shipyard right out of Los Angeles, which, by the way, is a man-made harbor. There was a campaign put on urging

HERSTEIN: women to go into the defense industries. And then the problem was gearing community facilities to the women who were already working in the industries. There was the problem of housing, of child care, of getting to and from the plants. The employers did a good job in organizing automobile pools. They were working eight hours a day in three different shifts and the plants were very far from the city where they lived. I also worked with the Federal Public Housing Authority to see if we could facilitate things and request Washington to do something. I'd come along and try to push the getting of housing, et al. Another problem was in-plant feeding. During the war the government passed the Lanham Act, which provided for grants to communities whose population had greatly increased because of war industries that were placed there; for example, Vancouver, Washington--not British Columbia--which is across the river from Portland, Oregon. It had a normal population of 18,000 inhabitants. Because of an increase in workers in shipyards in the area--Kaiser had four shipyards--25,000 were added to the population. You couldn't expect the cities to provide schools and other facilities needed for that enlarged population, and enlarged absolutely because of the placing of war industries there. The Lanham Act was passed by Congress to make grants to those communities. A grant just had to be asked for by some regular agency of the town. When I first started the work the churches had come to the rescue, and they used the basement of the churches for child care facilities. They were awful. I remember writing a report with a noted authority on child care facilities who came out from the East--not a person necessarily connected with the war industry, but it had always been her work. And we reported that these nurseries were dark, damp, and dreary. Then, if you got a church and it had been recently decorated, the ladies of the church didn't want their quarters to be spoiled by a nursery school.

INTERVIEWER: Did the mothers pay for this care?

HERSTEIN: Oh yes. We would apply--we would get some regular activity in the town, a regular one, to apply to Washington for the funds under the Lanham Act. That's all they had to do. Sometimes I'd get in touch with Joe Keenan, and he'd push harder for the request. Most communities did apply for federal funds, but there were intransigent officials in Oregon. Henry Kaiser had four shipyards in that area. He had women working in the shipyards, and he wanted and needed child care facilities, but Portland, Oregon wouldn't apply for Lanham funds.

INTERVIEWER: Why not?

HERSTEIN: Oh, a conservative Republican area. And when I would say to them, "Are you against the war?" "Oh, no!" I'd say, "I can understand that, because I come from the Middle West where we don't have the Atlantic Ocean on one side and the Pacific on the other. And we feel so safe that we are isolationists." "Oh, no," they'd say, "My boy is in the Army," and so on. Finally,

HERSTEIN: for that area, Kaiser, despairing of the community applying for Lanham funds, applied to the Maritime Commission, as he was building ships for the Maritime Commission. We didn't get to the point, like in England, where the government out-and-out built the ships, but we gave a contract to a private company, and it was given through a different agency. It was the Maritime Commission that built the ships for Kaiser in that area. Kaiser applied for a fund, an additional fund to build nursery schools, and he got $500,000. And they built the most marvelous nursery school! It had everything! In fact he brought experts from the East, who were experts in the field of child care, not military experts. And that's where I met these people. My experience in teaching had been on the high school and college level; I never knew about these things. I met these very distinguished people, and they advised us. This place in Portland was a marvelous nursery. They even had bathtubs high so that the attendants who bathed the children didn't have to bend over. But you must remember that these children were there for eight hours and no nursery school of any professional standard keeps children that long. But it had to be done, as the mothers worked eight hours a day. I think those mothers paid seventy-five cents. In the other places I got the fee reduced to fifty cents, much to the annoyance of General Fleming in Washington, who was in general charge. They then provided meals. Now that was another problem. Wherever there were war industries there were military installations, and although the soldiers were very well fed they came in town and took up the seats in the restaurants. I can remember one time in San Diego where the soldiers from the camp, who had good food at the camp, came into San Diego and occupied seventy percent of the restaurants. The women who worked could pay for a meal in a restaurant, but there was no place. Another problem was, by the time the pool with women workers arrived from the plant in the town, all the food in the markets was gone. It was quite a problem. So in this lovely nursery that was established by the Maritime Commission under Kaiser, the nursery school teachers said, "We will prepare a dinner for you, and a dessert, a whole complete dinner." The mother brought the child before eight o'clock in the morning if that was her shift and ordered her meals, which she picked up when she picked up her child. There were three shifts: the morning, the evening and what was called the "graveyard shift" from eleven o'clock at night until the next morning.

INTERVIEWER: Did they keep the nursery school operating around the clock?

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes. The mother would come early in the morning, and deposit her child. She would order a dinner, and when she picked up her child in the evening, she picked up the dinner. That was a very great convenience and real help to the war effort. Now Vancouver, Washington, which was in this area where Kaiser had his shipyards, had a marvelous nursery school--not from the point of view of the beautiful surroundings that Kaiser had in the other. In fact these teachers didn't want it, but they were devoted to service. There wasn't a thing that a mother would need that they wouldn't

HERSTEIN: attend to. Oh, they were wonderful women. A mother would come one day and tell them she'd have to take a child to the dentist the next day and they'd say, "Never mind, you go to work, we'll take him." They even did mending and darning of stockings to relieve these mother-workers.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, for heaven's sake!

HERSTEIN: They would say, "Bring your darning; we'll do that for you." They were very resourceful. I made the mistake, when I was going up and down the coast looking at these nurseries, to give great praise to the one in Vancouver, and of course, that was published, much to the distress of the other nurseries. When the nursery at Kaiser's was established, this beautiful one, the people around Portland said, "The Japanese will come over and bomb the nursery!" I got so irritated with them. I said, "So what? Then all your problems will be solved. The father will be killed in the war, and the children will be killed in the nursery, then you won't have any problems." That was a very Republican state. And, incidentally, a lot of these people who had been out of work there and got jobs in these war agencies were hard-nosed Republicans and anti-Roosevelt. I was there when Roosevelt ran the last time, and I was voting by absentee ballot. One of the workers, who wasn't Republican like they were, took me into the office of one of these people. He had been out of a job. He wouldn't have a job if it wasn't for the government, and you would think they were going to declare a day of mourning because Roosevelt had been re-elected. They were quite backward. Of course, there were many other kinds of people too--kind and generous. Another problem was the race problem. Vancouver, Washington, before the war, had had three Negroes in the whole town. Then a great many Negroes came in during the war, and of course, the number was always exaggerated. I'd meet some people in restaurants and I would talk to them. One woman I met in a restaurant said, "Oh, did you hear about it? There are 9,000 Negroes in one of the shipyards of Kaiser." And I said, "Well, I'll tell you, I have just written my report to the United States government on the yards, so I know exactly how many Negroes there are in that yard. There are two thousand; two thousand out of eighteen thousand workers." Then there was the taunt that these workers were only Okies and Arkies--Okies and Arkies. One California resident said, "You know, Miss Herstein,"--he was born in California--"there are very few native Californians, and the next time somebody says that, you ask him, 'Now, what town in Iowa did you come from?'" I pointed this out to people, and they were reasonable when you took the time to explain the situation. I remember one woman--this must have been up in Seattle. She was shopping in Frederick and Nelson, which is the Marshall Field store of Seattle. It's been there many years, elegant store, just like Marshall Field's of Chicago. And here was a woman, right in from the shipyard, with dirty slacks, standing next to her in line. This shocked the well-dressed woman. I put the isolationist argument to her. I said, "Are you against this war?" And I explained that I could understand that point of view, coming from

HERSTEIN: the Middle West. "Oh, no," she had sons in the war. I said, "Now, look. I'm sure that people like you and me, American women, if the time came where the danger was as great as it is in London, we, too, would be working in these plants while a guard watched and notified workers of approaching Nazis. And we'd be working there while a guy stood on the top, warning us that a Nazi plane with bombs was coming. But it hasn't come to that yet in America, so you and I do knitting and things like that. But the ships have to be made and these women are making the ships to take your boy safely across. Now, who are these women? Sure, they're Okies and Arkies. Who emigrates? The biggest plant in Seattle--Boeing Aircraft--at one time had eighty recruiters in the South. And who came? The people in the lowest economic level. They were poor. But many of them have been in America before the American Revolution. But they were poor, that's the kind that migrates." We have a new word: "in-migrant", we call them. And I said, "People in your class and mine, we're not working in the factories yet, in the aircraft plants, or the shipyards. I'm quite sure if it was necessary, you and I would work, but it isn't yet. But it is necessary to have the workers make the planes and the ships. In fact, in some things, like in the electrical part of the work, the women are more skillful than the men. So, of course, they're poor. And if they changed their clothes before they came to town they'd miss their ride in the pool." The woman was very reasonable and listened attentively. She understood it. In fact, at one time, when I was in Seattle, we got some money. I think I got some from Dave Beck, who subsequently went to prison, the big Teamster boss. He was in Seattle. We got some money and we rented a place, and it had a washroom where the women could come and wash, and dress up if they wanted to stay in town to buy something, or whatever they wanted to do. The problems were very complex. They were a microcosm of a bigger problem of all America. You had the conservatives, who didn't want to apply for government help; you had the people with prejudices; and then you had, in every place, a group of liberals who would help. And then there was a great difference in who the officials were, who the mayor of the place was. Now we had much more trouble in some cities in Oregon than we had in San Francisco, for example, or Seattle.

INTERVIEWER: Because of the officials?

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes.

INTERVIEWER: What would they do?

HERSTEIN: They were much more helpful. I remember, during the war, this incident happened to my friend, Tom Tippett, the coal miner. In the area where I worked, Tom Tippett was in the rent control part of OPA. And if there was anything that people objected to, it was rent control. Every congressman would write, their constituents would write, furious, and so there was a lot of opposition to that. We didn't realize that, but each local community had its own problems. Tom would come to a town and he would organize a committee.

HERSTEIN: He'd get the head of the Chamber of Commerce, the head of the labor movement, the YMCA, and they'd organize to help out in this problem of housing, really rent control. He was on his way to California when somebody blasted him as a Communist. Headlines: "Field Representative for OPA a Communist!" The charge was in all the big newspapers all over the country. He was on his way to California. He was on his way to Vallejo, which is right near San Francisco, where there was a big shipyard. By the time he got near there he decided there was no use going because of the Communist charge. But nevertheless he thought he'd go through with it and see what happened. He comes to Vallejo, and a man who'd been a yard worker was the mayor of Vallejo, and he met him. He invited him and asked him how he worked. And Tom told him that he'd get socially minded members of the community to cooperate, and they were all there. Tom just couldn't get over it. He introduced Tom to the audience and everything went wonderfully. He couldn't understand what had happened. When he was leaving the town, waiting for the train or the plane, a young man came to him and said, "You know, I'm just new in journalism. Maybe when I get older I'll be more cynical, but I can't get over what happened at your meeting. Did you know what happened, how it happened?" Tom said, "No, and to tell you the truth, I'm still very much surprised. In fact, just before I got to Vallejo, I considered seriously not going. But I went, and I'm still wondering." "Well, this is what happened," said the young man. "The mayor of Vallejo sent for the newspapermen, and he said, 'Now, I want to tell you bastards something. I want you to know that this government has assumed responsibility for housing the workers who are working in these shipyards. And they chose this young man, among all the experienced in the labor movement, a coal miner, to help. And all this baloney about being a Communist is pure baloney. And I want you to know I don't want you to dare disrupt this meeting, any of you reporters. I'm going to have a meeting of the leading people of this community, and we're going to put into effect that program.'" And it went over. What a wonderful mayor! You see what a difference it made. But you get some town where the mayor would go in with the reactionaries.

My territory was the whole West Coast, which was absurd. For doing the same work that I was doing the East Coast had about five women. Well, you know how big Connecticut is, and Rhode Island. Here is California, alone, a thousand miles, and I was doing three states on the West Coast.

INTERVIEWER: You must have traveled a lot.

HERSTEIN: It was very hard. I had California, which is almost a thousand miles, then Oregon, which is big, and Washington. Great big states! And it was only towards the end of the war that I was given an assistant. I assigned her to California, and I took the Pacific Northwest--Washington and Oregon--with headquarters in Seattle. Well, I told you this incident about this man. There was this question of war housing, urging women to take jobs in a war industry. I remember Archbishop McIntyre of San Francisco, who has since retired; he was the Archbishop of San Francisco.

INTERVIEWER: You look annoyed.

HERSTEIN: He was saying he would not urge the women of San Francisco to go into war industries and leave their children, when there were these huge profits, and there was hoarding of labor. I'll have to tell you about hoarding of labor. But I learned for the first time the structure of the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. It's not the Archbishop that's the big gun, but the Bishop, and the Bishop lived in San Diego and was very cooperative. McIntyre wasn't. Well, then there was a lot of talk about hoarding of labor.

INTERVIEWER: What does that mean?

HERSTEIN: Hoarding: having people standing around having jobs and not doing anything most of the time. There was a lot of talk and I learned about that, too. One time, when I was in the San Francisco area, I went out to an aircraft plant. It was Lockheed, and I went to the union meeting. Hoarding labor was said to be feather-bedding by labor. I always went to the union meetings. This was the shift that stopped at eleven o'clock at night, which means I got back to Los Angeles long after midnight. Safer traveling in those days. I was at the union meeting and these girls got up and testified, these workers, young girls. They said they were in high school and the recruiters came to recruit them for work in the defense industries and told them it was their patriotic duty to work. They were only eighteen years old, something like that. They applied for jobs in ships or aircraft there. One girl got up and said, "Sure, I came to work here. My brother is overseas. And I came to work here but what am I doing? I'm standing around doing nothing. There's no work for me. A lot of us were getting paid and not doing much work." And the reason was not that the workers were shirking but that the employers wanted to build up a pool of labor that they could use when the war was over and they would keep the aircraft plants, which were normally in the Middle West in places like Detroit. In the beginning, when the aircraft plants developed on the West Coast, the feeling of the big guys was that they'll be there just for the war. But the plants stayed and there are all these aircraft plants there now and those employers saw that, so they were the ones who were hoarding the labor for future use. When I sent that report to Joe Keenan, that was quite a shock, as it was to me. So that was a problem. Then I told you I'd talk about in-plant feeding.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

HERSTEIN: The women, and men too, went to the plant, left at about seven o'clock in the morning and went to the plant. There was no cafeteria, no feeding facilities. There was an urn for coffee and they brought their lunch, and I learned that a shipyard is cold, even in Los Angeles. And then, when they got home, they had difficulty marketing. The butchers were gone, the soldiers were taking the places in restaurants. It was quite a problem. And

HERSTEIN: we thought if they could have a good cafeteria then they'd have one good, big meal, and that's what we called "in-plant feeding." Douglas Aircraft and another air plant at Long Beach, California.... There was a big plant there and they put in in-plant feeding. I went with one of the local labor leaders down there to see it. I guess we started early, so when we got to the plant we could smell the food. Our mouths watered. I went in; there was very good food, very well cooked and plentiful. But I remember one of the workers there. They had a field office there of the CIO, and the man with me was a CIO official, and this gal was shooting her gab off about just everything; finding fault. My associate said, "I don't like that gal." I said, "I don't either; I'm suspicious of her." I learned a way to find out. I just would mention Walter Reuther, and she would go up the ceiling. She was a Communist and Reuther had thrown them out of the Detroit unions. That was one of the things he had to do. I casually mentioned Walter, and then Roy Reuther had come out to help me. "Well, how many of those fellows are there?" "Well," I said, "I think four." She was looking for an issue to call a strike or something; raise a good deal of trouble. But it was a wonderful cafeteria.

INTERVIEWER: Was she complaining about the cafeteria?

HERSTEIN: She was complaining about everything. Yeah, sure, she was the field officer outside, you know. The company I was talking about in Seattle is Boeing--Boeing Aircraft. They put in a wonderful in-plant feeding. That just happened at the end of the war.

INTERVIEWER: None of these big companies had this until World War II? That was a war development?

HERSTEIN: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: I didn't realize that.

HERSTEIN: They didn't have it, and I could tell many a story about that. No shipyard had in-plant feeding. The only shipyard that had in-plant feeding was the shipyard at Bremerton, Washington right out of Seattle. That was government owned, of course, and the union was not recognized there, but most of the workers were all union members. They belonged to the union. But that had a marvelous cafeteria. And when I talked to Edgar Kaiser I think it was.... He was in charge of the yards around the West Coast there. "Oh, it wouldn't be possible to have in-plant feeding in a shipyard." So I said, "Well, Mr. Kaiser, it's not far. Go up to Seattle, to Bremerton, you'll see it. What a marvelous cafeteria there in the shipyard." We had a War Housing Authority, and the military wanted our government to forbid the wives of the soldiers to get on the plane, which they could, to come and see their husbands, where as soldiers they were stationed. But you know, in our country the government doesn't tell people what to do. Every time I was traveling on a plane, we had to have priorities. I had priority three, I think. First went to the military or soldiers that were being sent because somebody died in the family

HERSTEIN: or something. So you had these differences in local communities, too. Now, in Seattle, they had a wonderful mayor. They never had the race problems in Seattle that they had in Portland. Of course, Portland's started with that awful case that happened. There was a trainload of soldiers that were coming to Portland and some of their wives went along in the regular trains, sleepers, and so on. And as they approached Portland, the cook on that train went beserk and stabbed to death the wife of one of the soldiers.

INTERVIEWER: There were big repercussions, I expect.

HERSTEIN: Oh, my. That's the start. Well, you had various reactions. You had a very liberal mayor in Seattle. And one time a group of liberals--I don't know what they called themselves, Civil Liberties or something--had a meeting in Seattle. I was invited to come, and Marshall Field was invited. It was the Marshall Field who really established the Sun-Times, the great-grandfather of this boy, the Marshall Field. We were having this meeting, and a banker, a genuine liberal--I think his name was McNaughton--was in the group. He went over to the Olympic Hotel, the best hotel in Seattle, to engage a room for our meeting. McNaughton said to the clerk very casually, "We will have some Negroes at our meeting." And the clerk, who'd already found a room, quickly pushed it back and said, "Now wait a minute while I talk to the manager." Then he came back and said the room had already been reserved by another group. Mr. McNaughton said, "One of our guests is going to be Mr. Marshall Field, who, you remember, gave fifty thousand dollars to a school for retarded children in Seattle." We got the room. And I went and Mr. Field was there and that was very interesting. But in the main Seattle was much more liberal than Oregon. You must always remember Oregon was settled by New Englanders, and when it came to deciding what the name of the important city should be, they tossed up a coin as to whether it would be Portland, after Portland, Maine or Boston, and Portland won. That's why it was called Portland, Oregon. Washington was settled by a great many Scandanavians. And you see a lot of them there right now. That made a difference.

Now the strange kind of local opposition you had.... One man wrote from the West Coast to Joe Keenan that I was doing union propaganda, and his proof was that I always went to union meetings. So Joe said, "I have to answer the guy." So, he wrote to me and I said, "Joe, of course I go to union meetings. I've got to meet the workers. Anyway, you ask this man how many representatives of the Chamber of Commerce are coming to union meetings or are they going to business meetings." Anyway, any inconvenience they had from the war, they would write about to their congressman. And the congressman would write to the President, and the President would hand it over to the War Production Board. Well I remember there was just a little while that I was working in the East, in Baltimore, before I went to the West Coast. Goucher College is in Baltimore. They had a very good school of education. I still have the letter of that woman; she was in

HERSTEIN: charge of nursery school education. You see nursery school education was a new development. As a matter of fact the first nursery schools were for poor working women who had to work, like they had in Hull House. Then it was for the very rich, very fancy. Well this woman was a professional in that field, and she was very eager to have a nursery school established for the children of these working women. Glen Martin had a big aircraft plant there, 40,000 workers, and a lot of women workers. She was trying and trying to get a nursery school for these children when I came along. I saw the superintendent of the county. There's something peculiar about Baltimore. It's not in any county; it was a county by itself. And I meet this fellow. First, I talked to the official who was supposed to apply for Lanham funds, and he wouldn't apply! That's why they couldn't have a nursery; he wouldn't apply. I discussed the problem with him. He said, "We don't have the money." I said, "But you can apply to the Lanham Fund for these funds." And we argued and argued, and he always came back, "We don't have any money." And I said, "But you can get government money." And finally he said, "Yeah, and we'll build one of those things, and that guy in the White House will get the credit for it." And I lit into him. I said, "Nobody asked the boys who have to go over in ships, and have to have ships that are made right, what their politics are!" Oh, I handed it to him. And I said, "And the big lack was in the electrical work, and the women were the best in that." And they weren't working because they had no place to leave their children. He wouldn't apply for funds from the Lanham Fund. Then I go out to a place.... Talk about having the black children and the white children together, that's out! We didn't even discuss that. We wanted it adequate for the Negro children whose mothers were working in Glen Martin and in shipyards in the area. Get something for them! So I go to this community near Baltimore and in the area of Glen Martin, and here's a beautiful schoolhouse, just been built, with beautiful murals that had been painted by a Negro artist in New York. I went to the superintendent and I said, "How come, when there's a shortage of schools, this place is empty?" Of course, it would be for Negroes, because it was in the Negro district. What galled him was to think that this beautiful school was for Negroes. Well, it was beautifully made, not because it was made for Negroes, but because it was the last school to be built. And I said to him, "You're not very far from New York or Washington. What do you think would happen if one of the New York papers sent an enterprising reporter here to take a picture of this school, and report that in the shortage of schools this school was left empty?" And that did the trick. He told somebody that he understood from that Miss Herstein that what she really meant was that she'd get the reporter there. Well, I'm glad he caught that, because that's just exactly what I would have done. And they did get a nursery school, and they got that school opened. Oh, yes, one of the reasons was the school was near a river and the children would fall in the river. I said, "But the old school was near the river, too." And I've got a letter from the educator of Goucher College telling me, "You're the kind that gets things done." There

HERSTEIN: were different conditions in different communities. Yes, it was different in different places. Now, you get out to the West Coast, and you have War Housing. That's an agency, and they're supposed to get housing for the workers. A lot of women, when they knew their husbands were in camp on the West Coast, went out there, and they got jobs. I said it was a good thing; the best beauty parlor girl I found came from New Jersey because her husband was stationed in Seattle in the army. They got teachers that came out there and wanted to be near their husbands. Very often the husbands were there several months. A soldier comes to the War Housing Authority, and his wife had come, you know. She was a teacher, or she'd just come. He wanted an apartment; they said, "No, you can't have an apartment." He said, "What do you call this? It's called War Housing, and I'm in uniform." "Well, it isn't for soldiers." And it wasn't! It wasn't for soldiers.

INTERVIEWER: Wasn't his wife a worker?

HERSTEIN: Then he got the idea. He said, "Suppose my wife gets a job in a defense industry. Could she get an apartment?" "Oh," they said, "That's different." That's exactly what she did. She got a job in a defense industry, went in and applied, and got a place to live. Many soldiers got mad and said, "This is called War Housing, but it's not for warriors." That was one of the ironies of the situation. Well I want to get back to Baltimore. In that area I was in the shipyard and it was very cold. I got there before noon deliberately, so I'd see what they had to eat. The only thing they had was one of the big coffee urns, and they didn't even have brains enough to place it inside. There was a little building with toilets in it, but a big room. At least it was warm. They could have put the coffee urn in there. I went in to the building and I rummaged around, and I found the women workers had brought sandwiches from home. And they were sitting on the toilets eating their sandwiches because that was the only warm place. I write this in my report, and the head of the shipyards was furious. He wrote to President Roosevelt complaining about my report! I think the President called in Joe Keenan. Of course, this tickled Roosevelt. He used to nearly die laughing at these reports. He could hardly keep his face straight. In fact Mrs. Roosevelt's sister-in-law, Dorothy Douglas, who was married to Mrs. Roosevelt's brother, did the same work in Detroit, the work that I was doing. She was hip to a lot of stuff, you know. And, oh, this man was furious. Roosevelt, you know, wrote the letter, and he got the reply. Sure they were there. As long as I was in the Baltimore area I went there. And I said to the labor official--you know, we had to push them, too--I said, "Come on now, get your car, we're going out there. Come on, I want to get there before twelve o'clock." Sometimes I'd get there around eleven o'clock and oh they'd look at me. They'd like to kill me, because they knew I had written the report. That was at the Martin shipyard. The war was over before we got any in-plant feeding in shipyards, but we did get it in several of the aircraft plants, which was a different story.

INTERVIEWER: What became of those nursery schools after the war?

HERSTEIN: Yes, I've wondered. Now there was one thing that happened that was strange. It was a surprise to me when I got to Portland that there was only one big city in Oregon and that was Portland. They had just built a city called Van-Port to meet the needs of workers. Portland had, I don't know, a couple of hundred thousand. Van-Port was the second largest city; a place created for the workers. It had about 40,000 people. They were all workers in the shipyards. And you remember, after the war the Columbia River overflowed its banks and Van-Port actually disappeared. Nobody was drowned or anything because the people had begun to go home. I remember poor old Senator Robert Taft, you know, of Ohio, the great Republican, just two days before had made a speech. They were having some big discussion about flood control, and he said, "Well, the Columbia River isn't likely to overflow it's banks." Two days later it happened. The Columbia River overflowed it's banks and literally wiped out Van-Port. You know, it starts way up in the north and goes down. Well, now, let's see, what else. Oh, one of the discoveries we made was published in a medical-industrial magazine. I gave that report and it came from others. The women welders stood on a platform that shook. The women used to menstruate almost continuously. They'd stop for a few days. And there was an investigation of that, but it had something to do with that work.

INTERVIEWER: The constant jerking?

HERSTEIN: Yes, it must have been the constant jerking. There were a lot of things: the way women hustled things, and lifted things.

INTERVIEWER: A number of problems developed then?

HERSTEIN: Oh, sure, you'll always have that. And you know, I remember being in the Union Station to go for a train, and the people that handled the baggage were women. They had to load heavy things. Of course, "Rosie the Riveter" was canonized during the war. Right after that: go back to your kitchens!

INTERVIEWER: You indicated that there were quite a few physical problems that occurred from women doing heavy work. In the case of the riveting, it seemed to affect all the women?

HERSTEIN: It was the welders.

INTERVIEWER: Well did it affect most women who were welders, or just some of them?

HERSTEIN: Well I found that it was quite general, and it must have been found in other plants, because David Saposs, my chief in Washington, told me he got this report from several plants. He was one of the finest labor professors in the country. He died just a few years ago. He was my supervisor and I wrote him this story. It was published in some industrial-medical magazine.

INTERVIEWER: Did they ever decide if it was harmful, or how harmful?

HERSTEIN: They didn't know, but it was certainly damned uncomfortable.

INTERVIEWER: It may have led to anemia or something.

HERSTEIN: Sure.

INTERVIEWER: What about the problems of lifting?

HERSTEIN: Well, I don't know. We don't know.

INTERVIEWER: I was just wondering, in light of your experience of World War II, how you felt about removing protective legislation for women?

HERSTEIN: Oh, none of us wanted that, you know. One thing the women in shipyards resented, they always had to wear their hair all covered. I remember once when we were asking for a beauty parlor near the plant. "No," they said. "But you've got a barber shop for the men." Poor things, they earned money but the wages were very much exaggerated. Remember that fellow--he's died since; he went out in a boat; he was quite a hero--always telling about the high wages of workers in war industries? But we would talk to the officials in the lower echelons, and they would tell you the truth.

INTERVIEWER: You mean they weren't that high?

HERSTEIN: They weren't so high when you took out for this and you took out for that. And you go among these poor shacks where they lived and you would see this woman who was working in a war industry, and you'd see on the window a flag with two stars which meant she had two boys in the war. It would irritate them when they were told, "Why don't you be patriotic?" My God, they gave everything, they had their sons in it. These were problems.

INTERVIEWER: What about pregnancy? Did you run into problems with women who became pregnant? What kind of provisions were made?

HERSTEIN: Well, they just went off.

INTERVIEWER: They didn't come back to the job?

HERSTEIN: No, I don't remember any of that. That was automatic.

INTERVIEWER: You just assumed that was the end of it.

HERSTEIN: I know at one time there was a General Fleming--our friend Franklin D. Roosevelt certainly had a penchant for generals--and he was the head of the WPA in Washington. We had to write to him, you know, or the War Production Board, for the rules and so on. But he thought the mothers ought to pay more for the child care facilities.

INTERVIEWER: He thought the women should pay more?

HERSTEIN: Sure, the working women. So I said no indeed! I put up a fight for fifty cents a day, and I won out, so he didn't love me very much. Then, just before the war came to an end, right after the Japanese surrender, I was in Seattle. I was on the train going to Portland when we heard that Fleming had the bright idea that we should close all the child care facilities. Well, their fathers were still overseas. Just because the war ended didn't mean that the fathers were back, and what were we going to say to these mothers--"Can't have any more child care facilities"--when their fathers were still over there? I talked to Joe Keenan long distance and suggested to him that I make a trip around my territory and find out how many mothers were working, or how many mothers still had husbands in the war and would need the child care facilities. I went all over and I found a great many. Helen Gahagan Douglas was congresswoman at that time from California. I came back to Washington and I got hold of her and she just hit that thing in the head. She got a resolution in Congress that they should not be closed, and I furnished her, from my district, with the number of women whose husbands were still overseas. So that didn't endear me to Mr. Fleming very much. I think he was very glad that I left when the war was over, which was October first.

INTERVIEWER: You don't know how long the nursery schools lasted?

HERSTEIN: Oh, I don't remember. They kept them on for quite a while. I mean, it took a long time for all the soldiers to get back, and some of them were injured when they got back and their wives still had to work. It was a different war than this one.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think the unions came out of World War II stronger, or as strong? They had a lot of government protection during World War II, didn't they?

HERSTEIN: Yes. You know, they agreed on the problem of the prevailing wage. The unions agreed that they wouldn't ask for any raises more than about 15 percent beyond the prevailing wage of the area, whatever the wage was. And this was a problem we had. Oh, and then the FEPC hearing in Portland, I think either in Portland or Los Angeles. I'll check on that. It was an interesting story. Now, I began to tell you about something else. What?

INTERVIEWER: Oh, we were talking about the unions, and you said that they . . .

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes, the prevailing wage. Now, the labor movement, when I was there, was highly organized on the whole West Coast. Maybe 75 percent of the workers were organized. They were conservative, but they were organized. And the two unions that operated in the aircraft plants were the machinists and the auto workers. The auto workers were CIO and the machinists were AF of L. When they had an election, it would be, "Do you want to belong to no union, or to the AF of L, or the CIO?" There was conflict there,

HERSTEIN: but we settled it in the usual way, you know, with an election. The prevailing wage in Los Angeles was very low compared to what it was in San Francisco or Portland or Seattle. And this was the reason. You remember the famous bombing that happened in Los Angeles, where the McNamaras had bombed the place, the Los Angeles Times? It's very interesting how that paper has changed. There was a big dispute between the union--this was long before the war--and the Los Angeles Times, owned by the famous Chandler family. And the place was bombed and many people killed. The union fellows that planned this bombing, planned it at a time when there'd be no workers in it, just bomb the place, but the bomb went off at the wrong time. The leaders of the union were the McNamara brothers, and they went to prison, you know.

INTERVIEWER: I suppose the whole union movement was in worse shape in Los Angeles after that.

HERSTEIN: Oh, it was wrecked! The movement was wrecked in Los Angeles for many years. And as a result, for doing exactly the same work in an aircraft plant in Los Angeles, the wage was much lower than in doing exactly the same work in Boeing.

INTERVIEWER: Were the living expenses the same?

HERSTEIN: Sure. It was a matter of the prevailing wage. And because the prevailing wage had been low for years in Los Angeles it was frozen at that during the war, and some great disputes went on. I remember it came to the War Labor Board and there was a professor from one of the Southern universities on the board, and I remember the union men cursing him, but he couldn't help it.

INTERVIEWER: There was no mechanism for equalizing things?

HERSTEIN: You had the rule--whatever the prevailing wage was. And this prevailing wage differed all over the country. You know, there are some communities where the wages had always been low.

INTERVIEWER: Were women getting equal pay with men?

HERSTEIN: Yes, but you always had a fight, had to show it was equal, you know. When you'd ask the foreman, "Well, isn't this work equal?" "Well, approximately, almost." I said to one man, "Listen, I used to teach English, and I taught that equal was equal, not approximate!" They'd always try. And the men unionists were the same. At first both the union and industry in Seattle said they wouldn't have women. Didn't want them at all. Well, of course, as the war went on, they had to have them, and the law on the War Production Board and the War Labor Board was equal pay. Then you'd have to go in and show that this woman was doing the same work as this man. I remember one man said, "Well, now, you know, here's this barrel, and the man who'd work in here would have to move that, and that would be too heavy for a woman." So they couldn't have it equal. I said, "How many times have you had to move that barrel?" They'd always be able to figure out some extra thing that a woman wouldn't be able to do. We had to fight that all the time.

INTERVIEWER: And this was both the union and the company?

HERSTEIN: Well, the union subsided on that. When they first started they were that way, you know. There was a girl up in Seattle. She was a commie, and the commie thing was very weak, you know. Hanson, her name was. Oh, and there was this smart one in Los Angeles. Oh, she was smart! Mary--I remember--Mary. Oh, but she was smart. I think I first learned the expression "deficit financing" from Mary. Mary's husband was a member of the CIO union that worked in the plants there. When I first went to Los Angeles, the chairman of the central body was a commie, and he was also the head of the state federation of labor. I wrote this in; they were always a problem. Then the steel workers sent out Thimmes from Chicago, a CIO official. Oh, he was fine--tall, handsome. And he came there and he settled that whole thing, threw out the commie leaders. I was sorry that a few years after that he died; he was such a fine person. But this girl up in Seattle.... Well, Mary--Mary was in Los Angeles. And they had a big citizens committee on the war problems, you know--housing, and child care facilities, with representatives from the YMCA and the YW; and little Mary, she was representing the CIO union. I went to this meeting; I see no one of the AF of L. I went to the AF of L head and I said, "What's the matter with you guys? Everybody's represented except you! You talk about the commies. Sure they've got a representative, and a very smart one!" He said, "All right, Lillian, while you're here, you represent us." They're so backward and dumb. Oh, Mary led me a chase; she was very bright, you know. They had a scheme to try to get legislation that would make the child care facilities a permanent part of our government. Well, it's a good thing twenty years afterwards. But when we asked for child care facilities for war workers, it was distinctly understood that it was a war measure, and you wouldn't be playing square with the legislature, but she was always pushing me that way. And I said, "Well, we'll come to that bridge when we come to it." But this one up in Seattle, she got the orders; she knew what the line was but she wasn't very bright. So she was always pushing for some kind of thing to make these things permanent, but I beat her easily. Apparently, the lumber workers up in Seattle--they were connected with the lumber workers union in Canada--and they had a bitter fight with the Communists. One of the men who worked in the Seattle office had been a lumber worker in Canada. I was second in command, and third was this lumber worker who had been in the fight in the union before the war started, and a bitter fight.

INTERVIEWER: What was it over?

HERSTEIN: The fight was about Communist control of the union. They defeated the Communists. He used to tell me about that. All these things were complicated with internal fights.

INTERVIEWER: Well, it sounds like you had an interesting time during the war, at any rate.

HERSTEIN: Yes, very interesting, an interim in my career.

INTERVIEWER: Anything else you want to add today?

HERSTEIN: I don't think so, at the moment.

INTERVIEWER: Today, would you tell me a little bit about your activities with the Jewish Labor Committee?

HERSTEIN: In 1951, which was my last semester of teaching before I would retire in the following June, representatives of the Jewish Labor Committee came and offered me a position in their organization, to begin after my retirement in June 1951. But they were eager to get me started, so I worked for them part-time in the second sememster of 1951, which would be from about February to June, as part-time, and then after that as full-time.

INTERVIEWER: What was this committee, exactly? What did they do?

HERSTEIN: The Jewish Labor Committee was really, in a way, an ad hoc committee, which is always understood as a committee that's organized for a certain purpose. Then when that purpose is achieved it goes out of business. Well, many ad hoc committees continue, as the Jewish Labor Committee has. Its original purpose was the rescuing of labor leaders in Europe who were the particular targets of Hitler. He feared, of course, any democratic organizations like the really democratic unions of Europe. The labor leaders of Europe used to meet, during the war even, with labor leaders from America and tell them what was happening. Finally, they got a list of one thousand labor leaders that Hitler was determined to have executed in some way. That list was brought to David Dubinsky, who at that time was the head of the International Ladies Garment Workers, and he took it to Mr. Green, who was at that time president of the American Federation of Labor. He took it to the state department and he was very firm. He said, "These are the liberty loving people of Europe and they are marked for destruction. I want visas to bring them to America, and I don't want you to put me off by anything about the quota from Romania or Czechoslovakia or what have you, because they have had to escape from their country to whatever country they could get to. So don't talk national quotas to me; I want these visas." And he got them, he got a thousand. And incidentally, on the list was Blum.

INTERVIEWER: Leon Blum?

HERSTEIN: Leon Blum; but he elected not to come. Many of them came, and among them was the man who was in charge of the Jewish Labor Committee in Chicago. His name was Jersey Glicksman and he belonged to a very distinguished, cultivated Jewish family in Warsaw. His half brother, an older brother by the name of Adler, was a noted engineer, but as in many European countries, many of the intellectuals were Socialists. He was a member of the Socialist Party, very active in the labor movement. And their home was like a

HERSTEIN: rendezvous, like a salon, for distinguished people to come to. He was very well known. When Stalin made the pact with the Nazis, much to the shock of everybody in the world.... In spite of this pact, they didn't trust each other. The Nazis invaded Poland from the west, and the Russians came in from the east. That was a very sad period for everybody. During that period, this Mr. Adler and another prominent trade unionist by the name of Ehrlich disappeared, and everybody wondered where they were. They were much too prominent to disappear unnoticed. They had been at many international meetings of trade unions and they were very well known. The trade union world became very disturbed and kept sending cables to Stalin demanding to know where they were. Stalin never answered. Then Russia was invaded. The double-crossers double-crossed each other. Russia needed the support of the West and a telegram was sent to Stalin signed by Mrs. Roosevelt, Albert Einstein, and someone else who was prominent, demanding that Stalin tell where these men were. And he answered by saying that he had had them executed as traitors, that when the Nazi army invaded Poland, they were urging the Poles to join the Nazi Army, which was manifestly absurd, because both of them were Jews. That sent a shock through the world, and every trade union center in America and Europe were holding memorial services for these men. Now, as I said, the half brother was in charge of the Chicago office--his wife had been killed by the Nazis--and also taught part-time at Roosevelt University.

INTERVIEWER: What did he teach?

HERSTEIN: I don't remember, but he taught part-time.

INTERVIEWER: This is Glicksman?

HERSTEIN: That's right, Glicksman.

INTERVIEWER: I should be able to find some record from Roosevelt.

HERSTEIN: That's right. He taught there part-time. In the meantime, he'd married again. He was not very well; he had a heart condition from all the things he'd gone through. The Jewish Labor Committee continued its work of trying to help out the widows and orphans of labor leaders who'd been executed and destroyed in Europe, and they were in every country. There were French orphans, there were Italian, Polish. I was trying to think of a famous woman who was in charge of a group, a famous European woman. I don't remember if that was Litvinov's widow. Litvinov was the Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union and was the man who got the United States to recognize the Soviet Union at last. She herself was a member of a distinguished British family. I think she was doing some work in this area. Incidentally, her son, the grandson of Litvinov, who had been Commissar of Foreign Affairs and who had come to America and got the Soviet Union recognized, that grandson has now been banished to Siberia

HERSTEIN: because he was one of the young people who protested the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet army. That's very interesting. But at any rate they would find out the needs of these people. It was a lot of work. I remember we'd go to a meeting of a local of the International Ladies Garment Workers, and the business agent, a man by the name of Glassman, would tell the women about the plight of these children; just like you see now: "Do you want to adopt a child?" Well, they'd adopt an Italian child and they'd adopt a Jewish child, and that was their child. They would send them money and food and even dresses, because they could sew. That was one of the things, one of the activities.

Now at that time the Jewish Labor Committee became very much interested in race relations in this country. There was a lot of movement. The B'nai B'rith, which is part of the Anti-Defamation League, the Catholic Interracial Council, many organizations got interested in the problem of race relations. And one of the projects they worked on was to try to get an FEPC law in the state of Illinois. The FEPC law that we had, had been a federal law, which endured only for the duration of the war and went out when the war was over. New York, however, under the governorship of Dewey, then established a state FEPC. Dewey forgot to mention that when he was running, he was so sure he'd be elected. That was a very good point in his favor. Well, we had a big Fair Employment Practices committee. Somewhere I have the organizations on the committee: various social settlements, the Catholic Interracial Council, particularly under the leadership of Father Cantwell, a saintly person. Various organizations formed a big committee to try to get an FEPC law passed in Illinois, and we worked very hard on it.

INTERVIEWER: Were there any other groups working on it, too?

HERSTEIN: Well, this was a big group, you see, and the labor people were working on it.

INTERVIEWER: Were they working on it through this?

HERSTEIN: Independently. Everybody was sort of in the picture, not as strong as they are now, of course. And we had a very tough time. One time there was a particularly important meeting called, and as I worked for the Jewish Labor Committee at that time, I went to that meeting. We were all geared for a big fight on it. And then, there was a lull. Nothing seemed to happen. So I called some of the representatives of different organizations that were on the committee. "What has happened?" Well, here was the strange thing that happened; prejudice on top of prejudice. It had to do with the McCarren Act. We worked on the McCarren Act to get more immigrants into the country. McCarren was that awful creature from Nevada, I think. He was a Democrat, but as often happens in American politics he did not follow the program of his own party. He had that awful immigration law, which took away from immigrants the right they'd always had to become full-fledged American citizens and also greatly limited the immigration

HERSTEIN: quotas to this country. It was very bad. We had been pointing out all along that the country could absorb more immigrants. We didn't ask them to increase the number but to use the unused portions of Great Britain and Germany. All they'd have to do, they wouldn't increase the number of immigrants, they would simply use the unused quotas of those countries, and we couldn't get that through. Well, we had this big meeting, and we were all stirred up, and then for a while, nothing happened. So I began calling these organizations to find out what happened, and privately they said to me that a certain group had come to the conclusion that if this immigration act was changed, as we wanted it, most of the immigrants would come from southern Europe, and they'd mostly be Catholics. That was some Protestant prejudice within the group.

INTERVIEWER: The group that was working for it? They talked themselves out of it?

HERSTEIN: Just one element, you know. Through the Jewish Labor Committee, I became involved in many movements to fight race prejudice. And at that time, we had what we now have, the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, which was an outgrowth of what was called the Mayor's Committee, which was organized immediately after the awful race riots in 1919.

INTERVIEWER: In 1919?

HERSTEIN: Yes. Maybe it was organized later, but that was the impetus of it. Now, I was a member of the advisory committee of the Commission, of the education committee, Chicago Commission. And every year, they would give awards; one to a firm which had done a significant job in the area of improving race relations, and one to an individual who had made a significant contribution to improving race relations. They always kept the names of the awardees secret until the awards luncheon was held, which was very unfortunate for me, because when I got it, I didn't know I was going to get it, and none of my friends knew and therefore were not there. This awards luncheon is held every year, but now the awardees are announced before the luncheon. Now in 1953, the Commonwealth Edison Company got an award for some particular work they did in the area of race relations and I got the award given to an individual. You can read what it says. Get that in the record.

INTERVIEWER: Let me read it right now. It says, "The Thomas H. Wright Memorial 1953 Achievement Citation to Lillian Herstein, for outstanding professional leadership in bettering human relations within organized labor in Chicago, the Commission on Human Relations, the City of Chicago." That's a beautiful award.

HERSTEIN: Is the date on it?

INTERVIEWER: Just 1953, the year.

HERSTEIN: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: That's really beautiful. Do they all look the same?

HERSTEIN: No, they have different ones. Now, I nearly didn't go to the meeting! I didn't know I was to have it. Why, Bill Lee, of the Chicago Federation of Labor wasn't there. It was a stupid thing to do; they don't do it that way anymore.

INTERVIEWER: They learned better.

HERSTEIN: Oh, no, it's in the papers; it's a very big affair.

INTERVIEWER: I've read about it.

HERSTEIN: The awards luncheon--given every year. So I was given the award, and a couple of years afterwards when I was there, a very lovely Negro boy whom I had taught at Wilson Junior College--he was a Catholic--got the award. And, of course, they always asked the people present to rise. Mary Herrick got it one year. This young man, Floyd Davis, received it another time.

INTERVIEWER: What did he do?

HERSTEIN: He was working in the Catholic Interracial Council doing a lot of work. And when he got the award, he said, "My work in this area was greatly influenced by two of my teachers, one a Father So-and-so from Loyola, and one, Lillian Herstein, who herself received the award." And there was a lot of applause.

INTERVIEWER: That's very gratifying when your students do you honor.

HERSTEIN: Oh yes. Every year now the awards luncheon gets bigger and bigger. Thomas Wright had been the head of the Commission and he died, and this was the memorial in his honor. His wife was still living; she's died also since then. So, through the work of the Commission, I became involved in all sorts of movements to remove prejudice. The settlements worked with us, the social settlements, the Catholic Interracial Council, and various groups. I think the Jewish Federation contributed to the work of the Jewish Labor Committee $100,000 a year. The head of the Jewish Committee in Chicago--not the paid head--he was with the Socialist paper. The Yiddish Socialist paper is the Daily Forward. The Freiheit is the Yiddish Communist paper. But the Forward is the famous paper that was headed by the writer. The immigrant who wrote The Rise of David Levinsky was the head of the Daily Forward, which was a very fine paper for many years.

INTERVIEWER: Was it a kind of center for the Jewish Labor Committee?

HERSTEIN: Well, the Jewish Labor Committee was under it, formed it, but the Daily Forward had been established years ago by the Jewish people who were Socialists. It was stronger in New York than in Chicago. We had many foreign language papers. We had the

HERSTEIN: Daily Zvornhost, which was the Czech paper, and we had the Abendpost, the famous German paper. Now these foreign language papers rendered a real service because they had columns giving information to their readers about political affairs, the important events happening in the country. But as these immigrants got children, and the children could read and write, the necessity for the foreign language papers grew less and less until finally they only had an English column in them. Of course, I think the Abendpost is still going. That was the famous German paper. In Chicago the biggest foreign group were the Germans. That's why we had so many schools named for them. In fact some of the leading German Jews, who established Sinai Temple, were very prominent in the German movement. One of them was on the school board. One of these German Jews was the one who advocated the teaching of German in the elementary schools of Chicago. It's very interesting. That's a study by itself. I came in contact with a lot of these groups. Another thing is, Mr. Siegel, who was the editor.... The Forward was published in New York and then it came to Chicago. It was a daily paper. Siegel and his staff added the Chicago news. And Siegel was very anxious to stand in with labor, so one of the things he'd do would be to have a banquet in honor of some great labor leader, and I used to run the banquet. It cost a lot of money.

INTERVIEWER: Did the newspaper pay for it all?

HERSTEIN: Well, no. This Jewish Labor Committee Fund, which was a hundred thousand dollars. In fact, we used to send part of that money to New York. Well, as time went on, I got the feeling that the Jewish Labor Committee, which had been an ad hoc committee, had performed its function and ought to go out of business. So I resigned; I gave up a good job.

INTERVIEWER: What did they do after that? I suppose it took maybe ten or twelve years for the survivors of those people that they were supporting to reach maturity. What did they do after that?

HERSTEIN: Well, they would participate in any local movement. It was under them that I worked on the FEPC.

INTERVIEWER: So they really lost their European focus after a while.

HERSTEIN: It lingered on, and it still lingers on. Somebody once said that any ad hoc committee persists as long as there's a paid secretary.

INTERVIEWER: That's probably true. Bureaucracies never commit suicide.

HERSTEIN: 127 South Dearborn, that's where our office used to be. And now, the Jewish Labor Committee has a Civil Rights Conference every year.

INTERVIEWER: I've heard of that.

HERSTEIN: And they give awards. By the way, this year one of the awardees was Frank McCallister. His award was granted posthumously to his wife. The Jewish Labor Committee is still operating with a full-time stenographer and a man who works part-time. One of the important things he does is this Civil Rights Awards luncheon every year. Awards are given to organizations for their fight in the area of Civil Rights and also to individuals. They're very much involved in fighting discrimination. One time one of the men that got the award was Charles Hayes, a Negro gentleman, a vice-president of the Amalgamated Butcher Workmen, which now includes the Packinghouse Workers. He'd become a vice-president of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen, who are now together, and that's why I thought his speech at the recent Stockyards Dinner was sort of sad. He was the one that spoke about the displaced workers.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. I suppose he was seeing the end of his life's work, in a certain sense.

HERSTEIN: Well, no. He'll stay.

INTERVIEWER: But his people aren't staying.

HERSTEIN: They were making various arrangements. A lot of them had retired anyhow. They saw this coming, of course. This has been coming for several years. It was a pathetic affair. There was a dinner at the stockyards commemorating the closing of this great industry. Each guest was given a beautiful brochure, telling the history of the union. That made me think, when it was dedicated to Upton Sinclair, that right after the first of October, 1945--the Japanese surrender was August 6, 1945--my work on the West Coast was ended and I came back to my job. At that time, the education committee of the auto workers was having a series of lectures at the YMCA, 19 South LaSalle. They were having a series of lectures on books of social protest, or novels of social protest. The meetings were at the YMCA. The first lecture was given by Walter Johnson.

INTERVIEWER: From the University of Chicago?

HERSTEIN: History department. He gave a lecture on Demarest Lloyd. Demarest Lloyd was one of the famous early Socialists. The second one was a review that I gave of The Jungle, by Upton Sinclair. I just happened to remember that. Well, I severed my connection with the Jewish Labor Committee because I felt that they'd accomplished their purpose.

INTERVIEWER: One question I wanted to ask you, and I thought I'd wait until you came to a breaking point. In the period when they were really very actively involved in trying to rescue Jewish trade unionists . . .

HERSTEIN: And others, too.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I see, just trade unionists. This is one of the things I wanted to get clear. The whole trade union movement was threatened. Now here is a Jewish group trying to rescue European trade unionists. How much support, aside from the top--you mentioned that Green gave them whole-hearted support--how much support did they get from non-Jewish workers in the unions, or from unions that were predominantly non-Jewish?

HERSTEIN: It was more the socially-minded ones that would help. They'd come to our banquets and buy a whole table.

INTERVIEWER: If you compared the response of labor, say, to the general community, would you say that they showed more concern, or less, or just about the same?

HERSTEIN: Well, not quite as much as the Jewish people did. They felt it very deeply.

INTERVIEWER: I'm sure that they would be way ahead of everybody else.

HERSTEIN: Yes, they were. And year after year that appropriation of the Jewish Federation was lowered and lowered. After all, that was a lot of money to be given when maybe the work was over, and you were doing local things that other organizations could do. So that was an interesting period. That lasted for a few years, for me, at any rate. I told you, they still have this skeleton office.

INTERVIEWER: When you talked about the things that they did once they left the European focus and concentrated mainly on domestic problems, they were very concerned about the racial situation, and ethnic prejudice in general?

HERSTEIN: Well, they were fine trade unionists. You take Dubinsky, who came from Poland. Sidney Hillman came from Lithuania, and his wife, Bessie. Bessie just died, by the way. I meant to save the clipping. She was 82; she just died. She started the famous Hart, Schaffner and Marx strike.

INTERVIEWER: I remember.

HERSTEIN: When she jumped on the table.

INTERVIEWER: I think that's in your first interview.

HERSTEIN: And she was the one woman on their national board.

INTERVIEWER: The only one?

HERSTEIN: The only one--Bessie Hillman. Her name was Abramowitz. She and Sidney Hillman met during the strike and were married. They had two daughters. Sidney died very young--he was about 57 or something like that--of a heart attack. And she was very active and very loyal to women. She kept a constant correspondence with Rose Levin. Rose Levin and her husband, Sam Levin, were in that original group out of which the Amalgamated grew.

INTERVIEWER: How do you account for the fact that there weren't more women in leadership in a union that had so many women workers?

HERSTEIN: Well, that's the way it is in every organization. Women.... They didn't even want leadership. All the reasons that operate for discrimination against women in universities and professions operated among unions. Union men used to say, "Well, they're only temporary in industry." They often didn't even try to organize an industry which was predominantly women. We used to say in those days that the two weak points in the American Federation of Labor movement were the two pools of labor that they left untouched, which was organizing women and organizing Negroes. They created two groups which were natural scabs.

INTERVIEWER: In order to survive, almost.

HERSTEIN: Yes. They thought they were temporary in industry and in the International Ladies Garment Workers, which made a lot of people think that the workers were ladies; well, they weren't, they worked on ladies garments--coats and suits and all. In the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, which made men's suits, the membership was largely women.

INTERVIEWER: I know. I've got that straightened out. In both the leaders were almost all men, weren't they?

HERSTEIN: All men, sure, like the office is here, right now. Of course, those unions went down in membership. I'll tell you about that. Now, Bessie.... They always had one woman on the National Board of the Amalgamated. Before that, it was a very lovely Italian, Angelica Bianca, who was a very intelligent woman; she died of cancer. Then, Bessie went on. In the International Ladies Garment Workers the one woman they had on the National Board was Jenny Matyas Charters, who subsequently was organizing for them in San Francisco. She's still there, and she married a union man, not a Jew, John Charters, of the typographical union. He died and Jenny is still living there, but she is retired now.

INTERVIEWER: Did they want one woman for window dressing?

HERSTEIN: Oh, sure, sure.

INTERVIEWER: Did you feel like you were token representation?

HERSTEIN: That's right, token representation. Bessie Hillman, whenever she went to Washington.... One time there was some big meeting, I forgot. Walter Reuther was still living; they were all there. Some committee was being organized, and Bessie got right up there. She said, "What's the matter with you, Walter, and the rest of you! You have no women on that committee!" This was rather recent, you know. But she always went to visit Elisabeth Christman, who was the very capable and wonderful secretary of the National Women's Trade Union League. She is still living. Five weeks before Bessie Hillman died, she visited Elisabeth Christman in Washington.

INTERVIEWER: It would have been nice to have a record of their reminiscences.

HERSTEIN: Elisabeth talked to me on the phone after Bessie died. Bessie said something then about not feeling well. And it was right after that she must have gone to the hospital. It may have been cancer. She was a very fine woman. The whole Levin family went to the funeral. They all went. Elisabeth is still living. Elisabeth is 87, and she's blind from diabetes. I never knew until I knew about her case that one can get blind from diabetes. Once in a while she calls me. She called me one day and she said, "You know, Lillian, I tell my friends that I travel by telephone, and today my travel is to Chicago." She talked at great length to me, and she talked about this last visit of Bessie's. Of course, Elisabeth's friends in Washington always worry. I guess they got through worrying about her living alone. She insists on living alone. She's blind but she can see light, you know. She was the most wonderful manager. You know, she could raise money for the League and use it so wisely. And herself! She never had a big salary; she always looked exquisite. She loved pretty clothes, and every time I came she said, "Oh, Lillian, I love to look at you, you're so lovely." The last few times she'd say, "Lillian, I can't see your face." She's one of the pioneers.

INTERVIEWER: Did she ever tell you in recent phone conversations how she felt about the current women's movement?

HERSTEIN: Well, they were against them. That was a big fight.

INTERVIEWER: What did she say?

HERSTEIN: Oh, they were fighting--this happened when women got the suffrage--that was 1920.

INTERVIEWER: That's when the equal rights amendment was first proposed.

HERSTEIN: That's when the fight started. This National Women's Party, they got the suffrage. We all worked for it. They wanted to do something, so they introduced the equal rights amendment. The Women's Trade Union League, Mrs. Kelley, all of them were opposed to the amendment, because these were the women that they had to have because they were not protected by their unions. They didn't belong to many unions and the most bitter fight developed! Every now and then some friend of the trade union movement innocently.... Henry Wallace once came out for the equal rights amendment. Frances Perkins said, "Henry, what in the world are you doing?" He said, "Frances, I thought that was wonderful, equal rights for them." She said, "Don't you see what it does? It takes all the protective legislation of women away." It was defeated and it's still defeated, and it's going to be defeated again. It's one of the mistakes that these lib women make, and I like them. I think that things have changed since that time; a lot of the protective legislations for women we don't need anymore. But they don't address themselves to workers. Did you notice that

HERSTEIN: working women are opposed to it? And the Negro women are also opposed to it.

INTERVIEWER: A number of union women have come out in opposition.

HERSTEIN: You know who came out, lobbied against it, the National Council of Jewish Women. You see, those are the women that fought for these working girls to have to work twelve hours a day, and to have chairs behind the counter so they could sit down once in a while. My sister, my oldest sister who's dead now, I'm sure she got arthritis from standing behind the counter as a saleswoman. They couldn't sit down! And even when they finally got the chairs, they were told, "Don't sit, you can't sell to people when you are sitting down." Well, you see having fought and bled for these things, they don't want to endanger them. And that's the reason. I think there's a lot of good people in the lib movement. I was very much interested in talking to Len Dupres about it. He said there is terrible discrimination still against women.

INTERVIEWER: I was wondering if they couldn't have produced some kind of amendment which wasn't quite so vague, which would end discrimination without also ending protection.

HERSTEIN: It's hard to do that.

INTERVIEWER: I know it is. And the assumption was that if there were no discrimination, then somehow things would be all right, and yet, a great many women felt otherwise.

HERSTEIN: Psychologically, too. You have to work on women themselves, their attitudes. I've had women say to me, "Oh, I wouldn't think of going to a woman doctor." And their own psychology needs work.

INTERVIEWER: They put themselves down.

HERSTEIN: They're brought up to believe in the superiority of the male. Why, it was just last week or two weeks ago that the women in Switzerland got the right to vote. Two weeks ago! It needs the education of the women themselves. And I think you need a whole discussion of children in the home.

INTERVIEWER: I think this is something that's been more or less left out or belittled in the current women's movement.

HERSTEIN: And they shouldn't! I say that from all the youngsters that I've taught, and I always have them write their autobiography, and very often it was the best thing that they'd write. Always with working mothers there would come a time when the little boy had some happy thing happened to him in school, and all the way home he was rushing to tell his mother, and when he got there she wasn't there. I maintain that there ought to be some adult in the home that cares a lot about children. Let it be the man! Let

HERSTEIN: the father stay home instead of the mother.

INTERVIEWER: It is a priority. The child has to come first, and can't be way down low on the list of things to be considered.

HERSTEIN: No. It has to be a priority, and we have to work that out. With all they learn about psychology and a child that feels rejected.... Now Bettleheim thinks the best approach is in the Kibbutzim of Israel.

INTERVIEWER: Some of the women's groups use this as a kind of justification for their relying on child care centers solely, or very heavily.

HERSTEIN: That's right. The first child care centers were not established for sound educational principles but for women who had to work away from the home of an economic necessity. If the husbands had gotten decent wages, the mothers could stay at home. I think that's an area that has to have a great deal of exploration--what we are going to do with the home. Of course, I'm very strong for the smaller unit in everything. I've got some of the speeches of Brandeis. He thought that the American curse was its worship of bigness. And I don't think that big institutions can ever do the job, not big schools.

INTERVIEWER: This is one of the questions that many women raise. If you have problems in public schools with too many children in a class room, and not enough adult supervision, and the tendency is somehow for things to keep outgrowing themselves, wouldn't you face the same problem if you tried to put everybody's kid in a nursery school? Very likely to have too many children and not enough supervision. It would be a tremendous switchover, something not to be entered into casually.

HERSTEIN: Well, even so, even if you had these smaller nurseries, it's a question of a whole re-organization of the family and children relationships--the relationships between adults and children. It needs a lot of exploring, I think. We may switch back to the smaller units. I don't see why a woman who enjoys living at home with her children and being active in some of the community organizations shouldn't feel free to do it, and not feel as though she's betraying her sex. There was an article in the New Republic. It's called "Albertism," in deference to Prince Albert, the husband of Queen Victoria. This article tells about a man that worked for this woman who was a writer. And he was so competent--he loved housework! And he could do it so well, but he had to go out and do something else to justify being a male. It was a good article. What is a woman's work and what is a man's work--that is the question.

INTERVIEWER: Where the lines should be drawn.

HERSTEIN: That's right, psychologically as well as economically, and the priority, it seems to me, should be the children.

INTERVIEWER: One other thing--to get back to the Jewish Labor Committee. Did they find cases of anti-Semitism within industry which troubled them in this period? You didn't mention that.

HERSTEIN: They didn't lend themselves to that. They left the larger labor movement to fight that.

INTERVIEWER: I see.

HERSTEIN: They had a concentration of Jews in certain industries--the textiles.

INTERVIEWER: I was thinking about industries where they weren't concentrated. Did they ever feel that they were discriminated against in the same way that blacks did?

HERSTEIN: Well, not to that extent, I don't think. You see, their skills were different. They never were steel workers.

INTERVIEWER: There were some steelworkers; only a few.

HERSTEIN: Very few. Even in the industry, it was largely a WASP industry. I don't know any big steel company except Inland Steel in which the ownership is Jewish. And Catholics also--not many Catholics are in the steel industry in the higher echelons.

INTERVIEWER: The Catholics seem to be omitted from a great many things.

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes. This was the WASP--White Anglo-Saxon Protestants--and steel was a WASP industry. It had neither Jews and, of course, no Negroes and no Catholics. The big Jewish money was not there. That's why when they were afraid the Jews would get control of the country.... They're not in control of any basic industry. You can't get a revolution by wrecking the pants factories.

INTERVIEWER: Before you left the Jewish Labor Committee, had the Illinois FEPC law been passed?

HERSTEIN: No, no. It was quite a while after that. I can remember the time when Caples, who was with Inland Steel, and I were on a committee about FEPC, and he was rabidly against it.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, really?

HERSTEIN: And then, a couple of years afterwards, he came out for it.

INTERVIEWER: What changed his mind?

HERSTEIN: Well, the different things people do. I can remember, we had a big conference once, and I was so mad at him because he implied that I was a red. And instead of blustering apologies I lit right into him about it. But you see, things change. People think things that they used to think were terrible are not bad. I think some American heads of corporations have changed. They

HERSTEIN: think more and more.... The workers will be added to stockholders. We're drifting, I think, in this country, toward a welfare state. Now this writer that I told you about is from Yale. It's in one of these reviews. This man is reviewing Greening of America. This man's a Yale man, and he says you'll get more workers involved in an industry, more of them stockholders, and you have to lay aside a certain amount of capital. I remember an economics teacher explaining the difference between capital and capitalism. Capital is what you save; that is, you produce so much and you sell so much, but you have this left over to use for future development of the industry, and you could do that in a socialist state. Capitalism is the owners owning the means of production. He was saying if these things become more cooperative, and more workers are on the boards, he said they would be inclined to use the capital that's saved to improve the wages and conditions of the workers. So he said you might get less productivity--not so much affluence. Maybe, he said, that's good.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that worker participation at the stockholder level would ever equal that of management?

HERSTEIN: I think this would be interesting.

INTERVIEWER: Well, Miss Herstein, we have talked before about workers education, but I know you have a lot more experience in the field of educating workers than you've had time to tell me about, so could you begin today by giving me a little more information on this?

HERSTEIN: Workers have always had a yearning for education. Their working hours, however, were so long, that it was almost impossible for them to do any studying, or attend classes. As a matter of fact the night school classes offered to adults in most public school systems of big cities were very inadequate. It was a case of tired workers being taught by tired teachers who were doing the job partly to eke out an inadequate salary. This was brought forcibly to my attention when I taught working girls at the Bryn Mawr School for Women Workers in Industry. There were assigned to me what was called the "language handicaps," which meant the working girls who were immigrants and therefore had a language handicap.

In the cigar maker's union there was a tradition that the cigar makers appointed one of their number to read to them while they did their work. And then they made up to the reader what he had missed in his earnings in the piece work. One of these readers was Samuel Gompers, who eventually became the president of the American Federation of Labor. Many socially-minded groups were sensitive to the needs of workers for education, and more particularly their yearning for it. In the days of Jane Addams, workers came to Hull House for classes in English. One of them was Sidney Hillman, who subsequently became the head of one of the finest unions in America, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America.

HERSTEIN: Then, the national Womens Trade Union League made something of an approach to workers education. They would recruit working women and have them come to Chicago. They enrolled them in classes in the area of trade unionism with Professor Millis or Professor Paul Douglas of the University of Chicago. Both of these men were very willing to admit these students who had none of the prerequisites and who created something of a problem for them.

INTERVIEWER: Those were college classes?

HERSTEIN: They were regular college classes, and the League would engage somebody to tutor the working women after the classes. Mrs. Raymond Robins, who at that time was the president of the national League, was a very wealthy woman and very devoted. If she believed in a project she always supplied the money. She financed the payment for the tutors. Then they also took courses in English. I suggested to the League that they be enrolled in my classes at Crane Junior College.

I had some very interesting experiences with these women, and I always recall one young woman who came from the coal fields of southern Illinois. Her name was Agnes Burns. She symbolized the exploitation of the miners. Her people were miners way back and she went through the experience, as a child of a miner's family, with all the work and the lack of opportunity. I remember in those days one of the problems of the miner's family was a matter of washing, bathing. When a miner came out of a mine, he was compeltely covered with coal dust and dirt. When he came home it was a project to fill a bathtub for him to get a bath, so one of their early fights was for washhouses. In fact, they picketed.

INTERVIEWER: The union did this?

HERSTEIN: That's right. The miner's union picketed for washhouses. As a result washhouses were established at the top of the mine and when the miner came home he took his bath there. That meant a great deal to the miner's family. I think that's why I now get so impatient with these young radicals that go along not only with long hair but dirty. And I think here they think that they're putting themselves close to the proletariat, when as a matter of fact, they are violating a deep desire of the working person to be clean. In fact in my early days in social work when we would move people from the ghettos out to Lawndale, which was a very nice community then, we would be scoffed at and told, "These people don't want bathrooms. They put coal in the bathtubs." And that myth persisted for many years. Agnes was one of these miner's daughters, and was very bright.

I recall at that time, and maybe it's still true, because it was true until quite recently, that the law of Illinois allowed boys sixteen years old to work in the coal mines. Agnes had a sister who was married to a coal miner and he was killed. Her oldest child was a boy about fifteen years old, and they didn't have

HERSTEIN: anything to live on, so the mother swore that he was sixteen and he worked in the mines. Subsequently he was killed, and the anguish of that family and of that mother was something that Agnes used to talk about a great deal. Agnes was one of our best students. She married a man from the area by the name of Weeks and subsequently returned to the mining community. Her husband was very eager for education.

INTERVIEWER: Was he a miner?

HERSTEIN: I thing he was. He had been, but he was always improving himself and studying, they both were. They were a very fine pair. They got thrust in the midst of the fight between the Progressive Miners and John L. Lewis at the time. They both wrote and some of their things were published in the New Republic and The Nation. I think an article by her husband called "Bloody Williamson County" was published in The Nation, the lead article. There had been a very violent affair there about 1921. Well, Agnes and her husband settled in this community and lived the life of the people of the country.

INTERVIEWER: How did they stand on that struggle between the Progressive Miners and N.M.U?

HERSTEIN: I don't remember. I think they were inclined, at least Edward was inclined, to be sympathetic with John L. Lewis, and there was quite a dispute between him and me on the subject. I always kept in correspondence with Agnes and one day she wrote me a letter. She said, "You know, Lillian, people are always writing to me and using your name as an introduction. They are writers. They want to come down to this area to do research work in the mining industry." One day she said a man by the name of Robert Morse Lovett said he wanted to come. Robert Morse Lovett was at that time professor of English at the University of Chicago, but spent half the year in New York as one of the editors of the New Republic. He was typical New England stock, had become very much interested in labor. She wrote me that he was coming and what should she do. And I wrote back, "Once upon a time, Agnes, a high school teacher of mine said to us that hospitality consists in giving your guest the best you have, but not borrowing the neighbors silver. So you don't have to be bothering borrowing anything. Mr. Lovett is a very fine person, and genuinely interested in the plight of the miner." She wrote to me after a while how he had adjusted himself to their family life. They had no inside plumbing; you know what that meant. And she said he used to pick up the towel after supper and help her with the dishes. Another person that asked to come was Evelyn Preston. Have I told you about her?

INTERVIEWER: No.

HERSTEIN: I had met Evelyn Preston in about 1922 or 1923 when, for the first time, I visited the Bryn Mawr School for Women Workers in Industry. Evelyn Preston was one of the tutors. The girls from the eastern

HERSTEIN: colleges were most eager to be tutors for the working girls. They would do everything, carry their baggage and everything. And Evelyn was one of these girls. She was very tall, very striking looking. If you were a judge of women's clothes, you knew that they were elegant, but it was elegant simplicity. And she was very much interested in worker's problems. At that time, there had occurred that awful riot in 1921 in the coal fields, and the only labor reporter that came there was Tom Tippett, a former miner. He gave an account of the whole affair. Then I told the girls at Bryn Mawr, the students, at a tea in the afternoon. Miss Preston came to me and said, "I was very much interested in what you said. I'm interested in the problem of miners." She said, "I'm planning to go to the University of Wisconsin and I will be passing through Chicago. Would you mind if I looked you up and would you be helpful to me in meeting labor people?" And I said, "Oh, yes. Be sure and tell me when you come." I had no idea who she was. I didn't know even at that time she had given fifteen thousand dollars to the other experiment in education at Brookwood. When she came to Chicago I met her. I brought her to the Chicago Federation of Labor offices and introduced her to John Fitzpatrick, president of the Chicago Federation of Labor. Then I took her to my home. We had a four room apartment with one bedroom and a big sun parlor where my sister, who was a widow, and her little girl and I lived. I brought her there and we decided that we had a bedroom, a sun parlor where one of us slept, and an in-a-door bed. The in-a-door bed was the most comfortable, so we let Evelyn sleep in the in-a-door. The next morning we had bacon and eggs for breakfast. My little niece explained to her that we're not supposed to have it, so we call them "strips."

Miss Preston went to Madison, and said, "Be sure and look me up when you come." I used to come to Madison very frequently. My very dear friend there, Jenny McMillan Turner, was one of the live spirits of the legislative library of Wisconsin, one of the first created in the country. We were very great friends, I couldn't tell you the number of times I've been to Madison. I got a letter from Miss Preston and she told me that she was hoping I'd come soon, that she was negotiating with some real estate men and she'd be settled pretty soon. And I assumed she was trying to get an apartment, which even then was rather unusual for students to have their own apartment. Then I came to Madison and I called her up. And she said, "Oh, I'm so glad. Come to dinner." And she told me her address.

When I got there it was a house; it was not an apartment. The door was opened by a Japanese servant. We had dinner, and the other guest was a man from the labor movement, a liberal from England. And I thought what in the world does all this mean? When I got back I got in touch with Tom Tippett, and Tom said, "Didn't you know who she was?" I said, "No, they called her Evelyn Preston." Well, Evelyn Preston was the daughter of a president of Standard Oil. She was very tall; almost six feet tall. She told Tom about her coming out party as a debutante.

HERSTEIN: And she said she heard her father and his friends in one part of their home drinking to the social success that they planned for her. She felt that she had not been educated properly, although her father had engaged one of the leading actresses of the French stage to teach her French. But she said that education didn't fit her for life, she was going to do other things. She became interested in the labor movement. That was Evelyn Preston. And so Agnes Burns writes me that Evelyn Preston wants to come. And I said to her the same thing that I said about Robert Morse Lovett. By then I knew who she was, but I didn't try to frighten Agnes nor underestimate the situation. And of course, being a well-bred person and very devoted, she adjusted herself very well to the situation. Her master's thesis was some aspect of the miner's union.

Subsequently Evelyn Preston retained her interest in labor and was very generous in contributing to workers' schools. She married Stephen Rauschenbusch. Stephen Rauschenbusch was the son of the minister, Walter Rauschenbausch, one of the first of that group, like John Haynes Holmes of New York, Rabbi Weiss of New York, who stood up to their congregations and insisted on applying their religious principles to the social problems of the day.

INTERVIEWER: The social gospel group.

HERSTEIN: That's right, the social gospel group. That's the man she married, Stephen Rauschenbausch. They had two children, and subsequently they were divorced, and she married Roger Baldwin, who has always been the head of the Civil Liberties Union.

INTERVIEWER: That's quite a story.

HERSTEIN: Yes. She died not so many years ago. I was in the offices of the American Civil Liberties Union when I saw a copy of a New York paper that said, "Evelyn Preston Baldwin Dies." And I said, "Oh, I wonder how that happened, that's terrible!" And the rest of the office group, these young things that don't know any history, looked at me and they said, "What's the matter?" I said, "Don't you know who she is? She's the wife of the founder of the ACLU!" I think it was cancer, but she was not very old when she died.

INTERVIEWER: What were her relations with her parents? Did she stay on good terms with them or was there a break?

HERSTEIN: I don't know. I visited her once in New York. She had a very beautiful apartment. Another time I met her was at Martha's Vineyard. She had a home there. By that time she was married to Roger Baldwin, she had a home, and she had guest cottages for her friends. But her interest in labor and civil rights was always very prominent and she contributed both money and energy to the movement.

Well, to get back to Agnes Burns, Agnes Burns had to entertain

HERSTEIN: her. The National Women's Trade Union League, as I said in the beginning, pioneered in this area of worker's education. Every year for several years they recruited working girls, they brought them to Chicago, they supported them, you know, and even paid what wages they might have earned to their parents. That was another thing that people never understood when we were recruiting for workers schools--what provided for the worker-student. People would say, "Oh, aren't they lucky, you give them everything." They didn't realize how many couldn't even accept them, because their wages were needed to help the family at home. Well, this went on for several years and then the resident schools began to be established: Bryn Mawr, Wisconsin, and the one at Brookwood. The one at Brookwood was at Kotonah, New York. The Brookwood plan was very ambitious. They were going to keep people there for two years.

INTERVIEWER: How long did you keep them when the Women's Trade Union League brought them to Chicago?

HERSTEIN: Oh, several months. They were here for several months. After several years the above mentioned resident schools were organized. Many of us interested in workers education helped to recruit workers for the resident schools. Then we all began recruiting for these other schools. Various unions established their own programs of education--the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, the International Ladies Garment Workers, many of them. And they would send their students to the Wisconsin school, the Bryn Mawr school, and the one at Brookwood.

INTERVIEWER: The Wisconsin and the Bryn Mawr schools were summer schools?

HERSTEIN: They were. Wisconsin was the first summer school for workers--six weeks. Bryn Mawr was eight weeks. But Brookwood was all year around. Immediately the schools were charged with being Communist.

INTERVIEWER: Was there any truth to that?

HERSTEIN: Not at all! The word "Communist" was not the important word. One of the things we have to realize is that when any social activity is attacked the attackers use the word that's offensive at the time. During World War II, the offensive word was "pro-German." I recall that I myself was accused of being pro-German.

INTERVIEWER: During World War II?

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes. I don't know whether I've told you this incident. I was conducting a class for the YWCA, and incidentally, the YWCA was always more progressive than the YMCA.

INTERVIEWER: How do you account for that?

HERSTEIN: Well, I don't know. I know that, for instance, when we established a workers school in the South, the employers would try to take

HERSTEIN: charge of it. I'll never forget how shocked I was when I went down there and found that the mill owners controlled the public schools. If you wanted to give workers classes, you had to give it on their property. They could use their property rights to keep from admitting workers that were what my friend Elizabeth Brandeis said the boss called "troublemakers." The YWCA never would establish classes on the property of the millowners. They were very courageous in that. Here in Chicago I was teaching a class for the YWCA. They got a letter which they sent on to me, from a man by the name of Harry Jung, who was a manufacturer of bricks and had an office in the Tribune building. There had been a strike of brick workers in which I helped. He wrote to the officers of the YW reminding them of his contributions to the YWCA but insisting that he had no desire to dictate their policies, but nevertheless, he was very much surprised that they would allow Miss Lillian Herstein to teach their classes--Miss Lillian Herstein who was born in Germany and educated in the universities of Europe.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, my word! He gave you a fictitious background.

HERSTEIN: Well, that's the usual procedure of those who are opposed to progress in any area. At that same time, a youngster made a charge against a teacher in the Harrison High School that she was pro-German. You see, that would be the name; that was the offensive name: pro-German. After that when Russia fell out of the war and Communist revolution occurred, then the dirty word was Communist. So, they'd call you Communist. There were people who objected to these worker's schools. I remember at Bryn Mawr, which is very close to Philadelphia, they had a charge in one of the Philadelphia papers that Bryn Mawr, this exclusive women's college, was having a revolutionary Communist group on the campus. Did I tell you about the time when M. Carey Thomas established the Bryn Mawr school?

INTERVIEWER: Just a little. Tell me more about it.

HERSTEIN: That's a very interesting story. M. Carey Thomas belongs to a distinguished Quaker family, and she wanted to go to college as a young girl, but girls were not admitted to colleges. She and a friend of hers attended some college in Baltimore, but a curtain was put between them and the men students. Subsequently M. Carey Thomas went to Germany, got her doctor's degree in English, and then came back and was one of the original group that established Bryn Mawr College. She was the head for many years. She had an international point of view and also a pacifist point of view, because she was a Quaker. Bryn Mawr became one of the very fine women's colleges, and subsequently she retired. She had this passion for peace and the rights of women. She was quite a feminist. She had a sister who married, and she warned her sister not to let marriage interfere with her community activities. As a matter of fact this sister had six children and one of those girls became my tutor at the Bryn Mawr school. But M. Carey Thomas was a pacifist and a feminist, so when she retired, I think the

HERSTEIN: other girl that went to college with her had a great deal of money, and had left almost a million dollars to M. Carey Thomas to be used in the "causes in which we believed." M. Carey Thomas had retired and there was a war. She was very much interested in peace and in women. And she decided, although she had majored in literature and not in the social sciences, that the causes of war were economic, and we've got to educate people to see that. And the people we ought to educate are the working people. Because she was a feminist she thought she'd begin with working women, and she conceived this idea of a summer school for workers at Bryn Mawr. She enlisted the aid of Rose Schneiderman, president of the New York Trade Union League, and then she came to Chicago. We arranged a meeting at Hull House. She had written to us that she was coming, so we got a good group of working girls there--the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the International Ladies Garment Workers. They were always passionate for education, but we got women from other unions, too. They all came there.

Paul Douglas was one of the lecturers that first summer. Everybody said that if you missed that first summer at Bryn Mawr, you missed a lot. That was 1921, and I didn't come until 1924. These girls arrived, and they met all hours of the night in bull sessions in their dormitories. They may not have learned too much, but they established certain principles. The first thing they did was to offer to do part of the housework so the maids could have an eight hour day.

Paul Douglas often tells this story: He was giving a lecture in economics and discussing the risks of industry. He began with the risks of the employers, and after he'd been going for a little while, up stands Hilda Shapiro and says, "What do you mean, the risks of industry? What about the risks of the workers?" And Douglas said, "Why yes, of course, they are very great and I'm going to discuss that next." As it often happens, when you lecture and plan that you'll give twenty minutes to this and twenty minutes to that, he ran overtime and had just gotten to the risks of the workers when the bell rang and the class was over. Hilda Shapiro met him on the campus and said, "Professor Douglas, you are intellectually dishonest!" He often told the story on himself. As you know he was a most liberal person. And in later years Hilda herself laughed at it. I don't know anybody who was more instrumental in getting me appointed as a teacher at Bryn Mawr than Hilda Shapiro. They had a wonderful time that year. They would meet till all hours of the night. Well, when I came to teach at Bryn Mawr in 1924, Polly Colby and I were the two union teachers that came and that was a shock.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

HERSTEIN: To have union teachers teach! That was a shock! Everything was done to make the teaching fruitful and creative. As I said, we had these tutors who were most eager participants in the project. Every day we got applications from students in the Women's Colleges.

HERSTEIN: Work in labor was the movement that attracted students just as the peace movement is the great attraction for the young people now. And I can remember that one of the teachers that year was a Miss Lockwood, who was a professor of English at Vassar and very liberal. She would recommend some of the tutors who should come. My tutor was Millicent Carey, who was the niece of M. Carey Thomas. These tutors helped the students; they just would do anything. Well, as I said before, I was given the language handicaps, and I would say I never did such creative work in my life. I realized what it means if you can give individual attention. I suppose I had about forty-five pupils. In my work in Chicago High Schools I had 150: five classes, thirty in each class. I would meet each one of them individually, and I'd get them to talking about their lives. This girl would tell about her first day at Ellis Island. Then another girl about a strike when some of the girls didn't go out on the picket line and she rebuked them. Very interesting experiences! There was a girl in the group who worked in New Bedford, Massachusetts. They had many shoe factories there and she worked in one of those. At that time they didn't have protective machinery as they should have had. As it was closing time, the workers were getting ready to leave and she brushed the lint from her apron and her finger-tips were caught in the machinery and were on her lap, bleeding. The girl behind her saw it, and the foreman came right over and held her for fear she'd scream and that might cause a panic. That, to her, was a "risk of industry." I remember that she said that when the foreman was bringing her home, she said, "I have such a guilty feeling. I feel so guilty. Here's my poor widowed mother, working hard for us children. And now I bring her this sorrow." How different from the irresponsibility of kids today.

INTERVIEWER: Did you say that you still have the themes that they wrote?

HERSTEIN: Yes, I've got them. At the end when the committee of the faculty sat around to decide what should go in the school paper--the Script it was called--most of them came from my "handicaps." Yes, I have them. We also published a paper in Wisconsin.

The affairs at the Bryn Mawr Summer School for Workers were administered by what was called the Joint Administrative Committee, which had on it representatives of the college, representatives of industry, and representatives of labor. I was a labor representative on the Joint Administrative Committee. And the Joint Administrative Committee met once a year at Bryn Mawr. One of the women on the committee was Mrs. Learned Hand, who was a Bryn Mawr alumna and whose husband was the celebrated Learned Hand, the great jurist. We would take up all the problems of the school at the Joint Administrative Committee. This is where we had all the big hassles first about admitting the waitresses and then Negroes. Then with World War II came the WPA program.

INTERVIEWER: Before you start on the WPA, can you tell me any more about Brookwood?

HERSTEIN: Well, Brookwood was condemned much more than the other schools. I told you how angry John Fitzpatrick got when Matt Wohl denounced Brookwood.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

HERSTEIN: Brookwood had a very tumultuous history. The trouble was the Russian Revolution had just occurred, and people were split on it as were the workers. This would enter every meeting. Take the Russian Jews, who had longed for the destruction of the Czar and Czarism; they looked to the Revolution with great hope. And then came the disillusionment. It took them long to be disillusioned, but some of them were. Some of them were very fine Socialists who had looked to the Russian Revolution as the great emancipation of the working people of the world, and then it turns out that it was a dictatorship. You see, questions about Russia would come up at every meeting, and I know some of the workers used to get worn out with the wrangling--the long discussions.

INTERVIEWER: Going over that issue?

HERSTEIN: Yes, over that issue. And those discussions were more prevalent at Brookwood. They lived there on the campus and Polly Colby, who had been one of the two teachers that came to Bryn Mawr, was living there then. She was a teacher. It tore the faculty apart; it tore the students. The head of it was A.J. Muste, who became the great pacifist.

INTERVIEWER: There really is a strong connection between pacifism and the labor movement, isn't there?

HERSTEIN: There was! Then with the Depression came the effort to give work to all kinds of people. The writer's project, and all the projects of the WPA, were attacked. There was a section on what they called adult education. We were asked that all the time. And we said, "Well, we place emphasis on the needs of workers."

INTERVIEWER: Adult education could just cover all kinds of things.

HERSTEIN: Sure. Also, about that time, the bitterness between the AF of L and the CIO was simply terrible.

INTERVIEWER: Oh yes, this was in the early period of the CIO.

HERSTEIN: Then Mrs. Roosevelt, who was very much interested in the workers' education movement said, "Couldn't we get them together? Not top guys, but in every one of these unions there are liberal AF of L people and liberal CIO people that we could talk to." Somebody said, "The only person that I know that both sides trust is Lillian Herstein." She said, "All right. Organize a meeting for me." Her secretary, Lavina Thompson, called me and told me about it. A young man--and I forgot his name; he was married to a former pupil of mine--we were to organize the meeting. Mrs. Roosevelt requested that we have no publicity at first. As

HERSTEIN: soon as you have publicity, you create opposition. Miss Thompson said, "You could have the meeting in your apartment." I lived then on Cornell Avenue. Charlotte Carr had just come to Hull House. After the death of Jane Addams, there were one or two others, and then came Charlotte Carr.

So we came up, and Mrs. Roosevelt sat in a big seat, and she said, "Sit close to me, because I want you to tip me off." I sat on a hassock next to her, and these people were there, and she spoke about the plan.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me who the people were?

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes. I introduced each person, what union they were from, and she trusted me. She discussed the plan of how to have worker's education under the WPA. She knew the dangers: federal money to teach revolution or something. Very good discussion. About 12:30 Miss Carr said, "Oh, Mrs. Roosevelt, we have a restaurant downstairs, and I can send some lunch up." Well, she said, "Don't bother with the lunch, I'd rather talk." And she, who thought she was going to give us one hour, was there three hours, and we went through quite an interesting discussion. So we began having worker's education under the WPA. We had two sessions, two summers, in Chicago. We were at the Burton Court at the University of Chicago. These people were on relief.

INTERVIEWER: The people who were to teach?

HERSTEIN: Yes, the people who were teaching were workers on relief. They were given a certain amount of money from the relief, and they paid from that money the University at Burton Court for their board and room. And I stayed there, too. We had the girls on one floor and the men on the other. Now, one of those people, Hal Gibbons of the Missouri Teamsters, a vice-president of the Teamsters, who developed the most wonderful worker's education in St. Louis . . .

INTERVIEWER: He was one of your students?

HERSTEIN: Yes, he was one of my boys. He was Local 688 of the Teamster's Union of St. Louis. This is 1935. And in the group you had a variety of people. People that were out of jobs and broke. None of them cared about worker's education, they just wanted to get in on the program.

INTERVIEWER: It was really very different, then, from the way you had selected people before.

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes. And the rest of the people at Burton Court looked askance at us, you know. I remember there was one fellow that was a Persian and had taught history at some small college. He was down and out. It's hard to recreate.

INTERVIEWER: It sounds like a very odd mixture of people.

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes. As I said, we were looked at askance. And then I had that little thing when the Tribune came out and said we were Communist.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, tell that, will you? What was the charge made against you?

HERSTEIN: Oh, that we were a red school.

INTERVIEWER: Who was making the charge this time against you?

HERSTEIN: The one who complained was.... Here, I'll read the article: "The Chicago Training Center for Teachers in Worker's Education, which was supported by the government, constituted in reality a school of radicalism according to a description vouched for yesterday by one of the students, who was a businessman and former educator." He wasn't much of a businessman nor a former educator.

INTERVIEWER: How was he as a student in your school?

HERSTEIN: Oh, nothing much. "The school recently completed a six week course. It was attended by teachers and ex-teachers who drew federal pay for studying. One of them was Charles Smith, 550 Lincoln Avenue, Calumet City. He was 43 years old and a former principal of the Calumet City High School. For the past ten years he has been in the real estate and insurance business." And so on. You see, he was out of a job.

INTERVIEWER: So he was being paid . . .

HERSTEIN: He was down and out, like a whole lot of other people. And so you got kind of an odd group. They weren't all that way. That was the time about the real estate letter and the girl.... Did I tell you about that?

INTERVIEWER: No.

HERSTEIN: When we opened the school we thought that the students ought to have access to the papers. We chose a paper from the Middle West. We didn't choose the Chicago Tribune, we chose the Kansas City Star, or something like that, a regular paper, you know. And every day at the end of the day, before we knew it, somebody put a copy of the commie paper--I forgot what it was called--out too.

INTERVIEWER: Was it the Daily Worker?

HERSTEIN: The Daily Worker. We didn't subscribe for it. We subscribed for some labor papers, and regular papers, and some of them even had friends that brought in the New York Times. But it was a pretty strenuous thing, and we ate there. I remember one time I had enlisted the aid of Robert Morse Lovett to speak to the group.

We always visited a typical industry in Chicago, the whole group,

HERSTEIN: and one time we visited the packing industry and they took us all the way through. That was the time they really slaughtered the cattle. If you couldn't stand it you looked away. After a while, we were brought in the assembly hall at Swift's or whatever it was and this foreman was telling us this is the place where the workers meet. So Harold Gibbons spoke up, he said, "The workers. We don't have any union here except a Teamster's union." And of course, at that time Harold wasn't a Teamster or anything else, you know. "We were under some obligation to them so we've kept them." Well, the obligation was that they scabbed when people tried to organize the workers. But it was just like Hal to ask that. And we went to the industry. Then we had tried to get into typical steel industry, which is difficult here, and on our faculty was a man who taught in the economics department at Northwestern University. He said, "You know, we've tried and tried to get into a steel industry, but it's very difficult." So I talked to Paul Douglas and he said, "You get hold of Joseph Block, of Inland Steel, and he'll let you in." So, I got hold of Joseph Block, and I really got hold of him. I told him about this group of working people who were interested in the industries of the area, and that we'd gone to the packing industry, and since the steel industry was typical of the community they would want to come. He said, "That's just fine." And I said, "We're only here for six weeks." He said, "I'll tell you, the furnaces are not running now." For some reason they were banked. "But we're going to unbank them in a few days, and you call me and we'll make a date when the steel mill is really working." So in a few days I called. Oh, how they got Joe Block insulated. I didn't know till years afterwards, he never knew about this.

INTERVIEWER: He never got your call?

HERSTEIN: Whenever I'd call, see, they'd tip everybody off, every stenographer, everybody else. He was not available. He wasn't even told.

INTERVIEWER: Who do you think did this?

HERSTEIN: Oh, the people around him, his foreman and the rest of them. I explained that in each industry we weren't discussing organizations, we were discussing the industry, how it operates. But years afterwards, I met Joe Block, and his brother is Leigh Block, who's president of the Art Institute now. So we didn't get to visit that industry.

Well, at the same time there was meeting at Burton Court a group of real estate men. Even the university was hard up and renting places to people. One of my teachers was a Miss Moulton from California and she had taught in worker's education before. She was a regular professor at Rutgers College. Her father died when she was very young, so she always traveled with her mother. Her mother went with her, and her mother was wonderful, a very bright woman. She had some position, too. So Miss Moulton of Rutgers was one of my faculty, and her mother was with her. One day, the

HERSTEIN: mother said to me--see, I was not at all versed in sex things, I just wasn't. I was like a tomboy. I didn't know what they were talking about; they didn't talk about it so much then--she said to me, "Listen, Miss Herstein, you know that little girl from South Chicago." She was Swedish, and she was very unhappy. Her mother had died, nobody in the family was working, she was very upset. She said, "She'll bear a lot of watching and care on your part." So one day she got sick. We had an infirmary there and she was up in her room. Miss Moulton had tipped me off and I went up to see her, and who do I see there but a great big man. I looked at him and he said to me, "I came to see Miss Ericson. She's sick and I wanted to see what I could do for her." And I said, "That's not at all necessary. We have the facilities of the university and we'll take care of her. You are not needed at all." He looked at me and I looked at him and stared until he walked out. Subsequently that real estate crowd wrote a letter.

INTERVIEWER: Was he from that real estate group?

HERSTEIN: Yes, he was one of them. I don't blame the whole group, he was just one of them, but because I miffed him, and she was a very attractive girl, he wrote this letter to President Roosevelt, and President Roosevelt got hold of Hilda Smith, who was head of the whole project. I answered him at great length. Well, that was one incident.

INTERVIEWER: What did he say to President Roosevelt?

HERSTEIN: Oh, it was a long letter; I've got it here somewhere--that they were revolutionists and all that stuff. So I wrote to Hilda, and I wrote to the President. He just wanted a girl, that's what's the matter. I hope I didn't burn it, I don't know whether you'd want it or not.

INTERVIEWER: I would. I hope you can find it.

HERSTEIN: Oh, I was just furious. And then about that time, our group was very sensitive to other people. See, after all we weren't the only ones in Burton Court. It's Burton Judson Court. With all these groups in there, a lot of them, it was a big dormitory. We felt kind of ostracized by the others.

INTERVIEWER: Even before this incident?

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes, we were kind of sensitive. Well, then this incident occurred, and I forgot there was something about another group coming in and they needed the room, so we agreed to eat in the basement. That hurt some of the feelings. I said, "Now, don't worry, it's all right." And that's the time I invited Robert Morse Lovett. That just gave the lift. Here was the distinguished professor of English who came to our group. That meant a lot to us, that night. It was a very interesting group.

I've got the list of people who taught. But you see every project

HERSTEIN: of the government was attacked during the Depression. There was a writer's project, some very good writers. They did a lot of good things, but it was always condemned, "Federal money wasted." Everything was attacked, everything that the government did, because people were, after all, conservative and reactionary.

INTERVIEWER: I think you have some more information to give me about your experiences in education for the labor movement.

HERSTEIN: Well, I think I'll tell you about the political philosophy of labor. The American Federation of Labor has always accepted capitalism. It was one of the few labor movements of the world that didn't have a party of its own, or was not in any way, except in the case of some individual members, connected with the Socialist Party. Mr. Samuel Gompers, who had been president of the AF of L for some forty years, enunciated the political philosophy of labor as follows: We do not need a separate party. We should watch the records of the men in office both in the United States Congress and the state legislatures and keep track of their records as far as labor or labor interests are concerned. Our strategy should be to elect our friends and defeat our enemies in the old parties.

INTERVIEWER: Now, you have some lectures.

HERSTEIN: Wait, I want to tell you about that later. Personally, I myself was interested in political activity. In the 1930's I came under the influence of Senator Paul Douglas and Robert Morse Lovett, who was a distinguished liberal. Paul Douglas, at that time a professor of economics at the University of Chicago, decided that there was no hope in the two old parties. the Republican and the Democratic, and he wrote a book called The Need for a Third Party, in which he asserted that the Republican and the Democratic parties were both "wings of the same bird of prey." He influenced me to run for Congress from the second congressional district on the newly formed Farmer Labor Party. My campaign was launched in the studio of Laredo Taft, who was at that time father-in-law of Paul Douglas. It was a very interesting experience. My mouth had always watered to be in politics, but apparently my timing was wrong. We had an interesting campaign. Mr. James Mullenback, who was the arbitrator of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and a distinguished member of the Chicago Board of Education, endorsed me and spoke at several of my meetings. Several of my meetings were almost broken up by Communists who came in just to cause trouble. They knew they couldn't do anything, but they thought it would hurt me politically if the newspapers would say, "Meeting for Lillian Herstein running for Congress was broken up in a riot." One of the men who came to speak in my behalf was Dan Hoan, who for 25 years had been elected mayor of Milwaukee on the Socialist ticket. Mr. Hoan always said he did not bring Socialism to Milwaukee, but he did bring better government. Subsequently an article appeared in either the Atlantic or Harper's written by Elmer Davis, who was a great liberal, commenting on the cleanness of politics in the

HERSTEIN: state of Wisconsin, which he attributed to the influence of Dan Hoan and his Socialist Party in Milwaukee and the LaFollettes. To come back to my campaign, we put on a lively campaign. As I said, Dan Hoan came down from Milwaukee and campaigned for me, and he was particularly good at the meetings where the Communists came to heckle. It always revealed their ignorance of American history, particularly political history, their ignorance of economic history, and he would demolish them with his answers. He was very good.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of issues were raised?

HERSTEIN: Well, I'll give you my campaign card.

INTERVIEWER: That has your program on it?

HERSTEIN: You wouldn't say I knew very much about farms, but that was our campaign platform.

INTERVIEWER: How much support did you get from the labor movement in Chicago?

HERSTEIN: Well, not much.

INTERVIEWER: Not much?

HERSTEIN: They were still voting according to the Gomper's formula to elect their friends and defeat their enemies in the Republican and Democratic parties. John Fitzpatrick, however, president of the Chicago Federation of Labor, and Victor Olander, who was secretary of the State Federation of Labor, and Soderstrom, who was president of the State Federation of Labor, although elected on the Republican ticket to the state legislature, all wrote letters recommending my election. Before that, in 1924, progressive groups in America organized behind the candidacy for President of the United States the elder Robert M. LaFollette. I was very active in that campaign.

At the first big meeting in Chicago for LaFollette--the vice-presidential candidate was Burton Wheeler of Montana--the unions in the main were not for this campaign. The unions that supported it were the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the International Ladies Garment Workers, the Railroad Brotherhoods, and the Streetcarmen's Union.

The agreement was that no matter how the campaign went, after the election we would meet in Chicago and form a third party. As a matter of fact, it was the Socialist Party that got our Progressive Party on the ballot in several states, because many of them had laws that a new party couldn't get on the ballot unless in the preceding election year they had polled a certain number of votes. Well, we didn't have them but the Socialist Party did. And they got off for our sake. They were instrumental in getting us on the ballot. At that time, the Railroad Brotherhoods were very much annoyed at some governmental regulation made against

HERSTEIN: them, and that's why they were hot for our third party, called the Progressive Party. I had one embarrassing experience in that campaign. It proved the old adage in reverse: there is nothing like giving a dog a bad name. I learned that there is nothing like giving a dog a good name.

At the first fund raising meeting of the campaign, I was asked to make the appeal for funds. Burton Wheeler, who was the Progressive candidate for vice-president and who was chairman of the meeting, lifted me to stand on a table so I could be seen. Now, as a matter of fact, anybody could have raised the money at that meeting because it was packed with people there ready to give. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers were there with a check for $500 and the International Ladies Garment Workers and so on. I made the appeal and I got a lot of money, but it wasn't due to my skill. It was due to the fact that it was a meeting packed with people determined to contribute. Well, I couldn't live my reputation as an effective fund raiser down. And every meeting for LaFollette and Wheeler in or around Chicago, even in Wisconsin, insisted on my coming and making the appeal for funds. It took me a long time to live down that reputation.

After the election, the delegates did meet in Chicago, as had been agreed to before, but their enthusiasm for a third party had evaporated. I can remember that at that meeting we discussed our agreement to form a third party. Morris Hillquit, the famous Socialist and famous labor lawyer, made the most moving speech for a third party. But it fell on deaf ears. The enthusiasm of some of the labor people, as I said above, had evaporated. It so happened that the Socialists had their misgivings and had arranged also for their Socialist meeting that night, the regular Socialist meeting, and Eugene Debs was there. I was asked to speak. I was never a member of the Socialist Party. It just happened I never had joined the Socialists but they all liked me. As a matter of fact, right after the Communist revolution in Russia, the American Socialist Party was split because one part supported the Russian Revolution and the others opposed it as a betrayal of a real working man's party. Therefore, the Socialist Party at that time wasn't very militant. People like John Fitzpatrick and the rest of us who were militants in the labor movement were more militant than the Socialists. But the Socialists liked me and they invited me to this meeting. It was the birthday of Debs, and the International Ladies Garment Workers, who were largely Socialist, brought him a bouquet of red roses, one for every year. I think he was seventy years old. Then I was asked to speak and I made a very short speech, about five or eight minutes. After I got through, Debs came over to me and put his arms around me and kissed me and said, "My dear girl, you have great powers; you must use them in the cause of humanity." I was so thrilled for being kissed by Eugene Debs that I didn't want to wash my face.

In 1932 I was not elected. Some of my students went to polling places to be watchers and they were in one precinct where the

HERSTEIN: Republicans and Democrats were watching each other and counting the votes very carefully, and finally they came upon ten or twelve that were not easily classified and they were arguing about their allocation and finally one of them said, "Oh, all right, let's give those to the skirt." My students heard that and I got those votes.

In 1932 I did not support Roosevelt. I supported Norman Thomas for President, and he supported me for Congress. I can recall that at that time we were in the depths of the Depression. And there was a convention of the Democratic National Party at the stadium on 1800 West Madison. I went over to the convention, and as I was coming out a man with a very fine face but in very dilapidated clothes said to me--we could hear the cheering of the convention--"What are they cheering about?" "Why, for the resolution to recall the Volstead Act, to put an end to prohibition." He said, "So, they're cheering for whisky. Do you suppose they'll ever come to bread?" That incident made a very deep impression on me.

I couldn't see in Franklin D. Roosevelt, although he had been quite a good governor of the state of New York, any promise for fundamental changes in the economic system that had thrown us into that Depression. And so I wholeheartedly supported Norman Thomas, as he did me. But when Roosevelt went in, he introduced a great deal of his welfare program, and all the third party people were converted to Roosevelt, even Paul Douglas. In fact, many years later when Paul Douglas ran for the Senate on the Democratic ticket, the Republicans used to face him with the book that he wrote on the need for a third party and his declaration that the Democratic and Republican Parties were both "wings of the same bird of prey." In 1936 labor formed Labor's Non-Partisan League for Roosevelt. Now, that sounds inconsistent but it isn't with their philosophy. Their philosophy was to support in the old parties anyone who was favorable to labor, and they were for Franklin D. Roosevelt, not as a Democrat, but because of his good labor record. In fact they didn't endorse many other Democrats who ran for office. We formed Labor's Non-Partisan League for Roosevelt and the people that contributed, as I said, were the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the International Ladies Garment Workers.

We opened an office on Dearborn Street where Inland Steel is now. It was an old building then. I was asked to be director of the speaker's bureau for Labor's Non-Partisan League. It so happened at that time that I was director of lecturers at the junior colleges so that I had no classroom responsibilities. I came to the office after school hours every day. My school was at 6800 Stuart, and I'd take a taxi, which I paid for myself, and come to the headquarters. Mr. Marimpietri, an official of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, who was very enthusiastic about this campaign, was very annoyed at me for not accepting a salary. I said, "Well, I'm getting a salary as a teacher." The other people who worked in the office were all paid. But I didn't accept payment and they

HERSTEIN: said to me finally, "Lillian, won't you please accept money for your taxis and for your dinners?" From 2:30 in the afternoon when I got there till ten o'clock at night, I was working at this job. I was supposed to be the director of the Speakers Bureau for Labor's Non-Partisan League for Roosevelt for the State of Illinois. But labor people from Indiana called me. All sorts of people called and wanted me to send them speakers, and at that time I must have done as much work in the state of Indiana as I did in Illinois.

INTERVIEWER: They're really so close, the northern parts are so close it almost should be one state.

HERSTEIN: I learned some valuable lessons in that campaign. The unions would call and tell me whom they wanted and one of the big demands was for William Rodriguez. William Rodriguez was a Socialist, incidentally, a very handsome man and a very fine speaker. He had been elected to the City Council of Chicago once on the Socialist ticket, and he was very pro-labor and very articulate. There was a demand for him everywhere. He filled these demands as much as he could on a volunteer basis, accepted no pay.

INTERVIEWER: What was his national background?

HERSTEIN: He was probably of Portugese descent. Rodriguez was his name.

INTERVIEWER: I was wondering.

HERSTEIN: He was very fine, very handsome, very articulate. And then, as the campaign went on and it became obvious to people that know their political onions that Roosevelt was going to make it, there was pressure brought upon me to send certain people as speakers for whom nobody made a demand. These people wanted to be speakers, and even Mr. Olander called me up one day and said that a friend of his, a distinguished man who was offering his services to me to speak for Roosevelt, had been rejected by me. And I said, "But Mr. Olander, nobody's asked for him." It never occurred to me that they saw that Roosevelt was a winner and they wanted to get in on the bandwagon so that when he was elected they'd have some claims. Innocent me!

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me who the people were?

HERSTEIN: No, I don't remember that.

INTERVIEWER: You weren't really anticipating what they were doing anyway, were you?

HERSTEIN: It didn't seem clear to me. A job like that subjected me to a lot of people that made requests. They were unions that would request certain speakers; they were speakers that wanted to speak. Our office was a beehive of activity. I was not aware of the fact that Roosevelt was winning. One time we organized a

HERSTEIN: march because Roosevelt was to come to Chicago to speak at the stadium on West Madison Street. We actually marched from Michigan and Congress all the way down Michigan to Madison, all the way to the stadium, 1800 Madison Street. John Fitzpatrick led the parade. It was quite a strenuous march. Roosevelt was to speak, and everybody tried to get into the stadium. We got in, we sat on the platform. That was the first time I had ever seen Roosevelt. And I was impressed by his technique. How did this crippled man manage? Well, when he came on the platform, everybody rose. And he stood at the podium. He never sat down, so that the audience never had the spectacle of his having to rise with those braces on his legs and leaning on some person. He stood there and he looked at the audience, and his first remark was, "I seem to have been here before." That was a reference to his nomination in the stadium in 1932. And let it be remembered that many of the local Illinois Democratic politicians were opposed to his nomination in 1932.

INTERVIEWER: They were?

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes. That was the Kelley-Nash machine, who were for anyone but Roosevelt. They were proposing Ray Stannard Baker. Roosevelt knew about their tactics. He was a consummate politician in the best sense of the word. He stood there and laughingly said to them, "I seem to have been here before." That's when he was nominated there in the Democratic Convention of 1932. He made his speech. He stood in front of the podium, and of course, the podium has a board in front so that the audience couldn't see his legs. He had one hand on the podium, that's all. And there was the manuscript of his speech, apparently typed in very large letters. He would turn the pages and there would be wild applause for quite a while. He looked at his wristwatch to see how much time the applause had taken and then planned his speech accordingly. It was marvelous. Of course, at the end, there was this thunderous applause. Then he left the podium with his son James. But you know, never once in that evening did he sit down or rise, so the only picture that the audience had had was this tall, handsome, strong-looking man, and never were they reminded of his infirmity. Well, that was 1936, and that was part of my labor political activity. I remember that I was so busy at the job, I didn't realize how the tide was turning. We didn't have many pollsters then. The Literary Digest, which prophesied a great victory for Landon,went out of business as a result of their silly prediction. There weren't many polls then, but there must have been some.

INTERVIEWER: I know of some polls from the middle thirties; very amateurish, I suppose, compared to what we have now.

HERSTEIN: During the campaign, Sidney Hillman, who was one of the leaders in the fight for Roosevelt, had come down to our Chicago office and said to us, "Now, remember, we have to work hard here in Illinois. Illinois is a doubtful state." And that was always in my mind. As the campaign went on, my associates in the office

HERSTEIN: would say, "We've got it in the bag." "Well," I said, "I don't think we've got it in the bag. I was walking down LaSalle Street on an errand, and everybody there was wearing a sunflower." That was Landon's symbol. My associates in the League would say, "You know where you're going? You're going down LaSalle Street, and all those lower echelon fellows are forced to wear the sunflower." And that was true. I was just walking on Sunflower Avenue. When the polls came in and Roosevelt won in all but two states it was a great surprise to me. Another difficulty for me was that although I was engaged to be the director of the speakers bureau to send out speakers, many of the unions wanted me to speak. Sometimes I did double duty.

INTERVIEWER: I was going to ask you if you weren't one of the more popular speakers requested.

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes. That was quite a difficulty. And I remember there was a little local of the International Ladies Garment Workers, a little factory in Batavia, Illinois, a solid Republican area. I had promised them that I would come to their meeting, which turned out to be the night before the election. They had a meeting and they were pretty much surrounded by Republicans. Then we went over to a place where there was a radio, and we heard Roosevelt's fireside speech on that night before the election. The next morning, when the returns were in, no one was more surprised than I. I did expect him to win, but not with so great a majority. I think Alf Landon is still living in Topeka, Kansas. He really is the liberal in the Republican Party of Kansas these days.

INTERVIEWER: Now you said you wanted to tell me a little bit about the Federated Press.

HERSTEIN: That's right. In the thirties there was all this feeling among liberals and progressives that the labor movement was not getting the recognition that it should by way of the press. And so, some of these people conceived the idea--this was before World War II--of organizing a news agency on the basis that the Associated Press was organized. The Associated Press, as you know, does not publish newspapers; it collects news and sells it to its member newspapers. They can use it as they see fit. The Federated Press announced as its purpose the gathering of labor news in particular which they would sell to their member newspapers, chiefly labor papers or others. Of course, its activity was on a very small scale compared to the Associated Press. Among the people that they attracted was Louis Lochner of Wisconsin, who was opposed to World War I and ended up in prison for it, and Frederick Kuh, who belonged to a distinguished German Jewish family. His father was a distinguished ear doctor. There was also Maude McCreary, who was a very eloquent agitator for labor, and a great many people like that. The thing you had to do was, number one, get the endorsement of the Federated Press of various labor unions and get appropriations from them. Now by and large the labor movement was sold on the value of the Federated Press. The labor movement was about as conservative then as it ever has been. Most of the

HERSTEIN: newspapers treated them with indifference. A few condemned them and said they were red. Now, my function for the Federated Press was to go to various unions to urge them to endorse the Federated Press and, if possible, get an appropriation of money. Well, by that time, I had spoken in many of the mining towns in Illinois, so I was very well known to them and very popular and they would ask me to come. I remember one of the speeches that I made that was a difficult one and sort of a triumph, but not wholly due to my ability. There are always complicated conditions. There was a meeting of the Illinois State Convention of the Miner's Union. The president of the Miner's Union of Illinois at that time was a man by the name of Frank Farrington, who was at the time at sword's points with John L. Lewis. John L. Lewis was never popular in Illinois. He came from Illinois, and at one time the miners had an injunction forbidding him to come there. There was this feud between Farrington and Lewis. Farrington was fighting for his political life in the miner's union. There was at that time a considerable rumbling among miners against their national union. There was one very fine fellow by the name of Alexander Howatt who came from Kansas, where they passed the Kansas Industrial Law which forced compulsory arbitration in labor disputes, and that was a big issue. So there were these murmurs and this political fighting, particularly between Farrington and John L. Lewis. John L. Lewis was out for getting Farrington, which he finally did. That's another interesting story. There was at that time in Springfield the annual meeting of the miners of Illinois. Through Tom Tippett and other people that I knew, they got President Farrington to agree to let me speak. He wasn't strong for anybody like Tom Tippett or other dissenters. He was politically involved in his own union; he had to get that support. And so he let me speak at that convention. That was when I was at the height of my "dedicated oratory." And I got the miner's union to endorse the Federated Press and even to contribute a thousand dollars. Well, that was a sensation.

And I recall when I left the hall and I was at the hotel, a man asked to see me. He said, "What do you do for a living?" Well, whatever you get, I can offer you a job that will pay twice what you're getting." I said, "Is that so? What's the job?" Well, it turned out that the job was to sell insurance. I said to him, "Listen, I'm nothing of a salesman. I couldn't sell a drink in the Sahara Desert." "Oh," he said, "you're being over modest. The whole town is speaking how you captured that convention! Nobody thought that you would succeed; everybody's talking about it." But I said, "Brother, I believed in that, and if I took a job selling insurance, and I was selling for, say, New York Life, and the person I was talking to said, 'I've heard about Metropolitan Life,' I would say, 'Oh, yes, that's a good company, too. It's all right as long as you buy some insurance.'" I convinced that man that I wasn't the person to sell anything.

The Federated Press then sent Louis Lochner to Germany; we were getting international. Frederick Kuh was sent to Berlin. Frederick Kuh had a very fine command of languages. He belonged to one

HERSTEIN: of the best educated German Jewish families. His father had his children learning French and German when they were quite young. I was trying to think; there were two times that I had to talk to him. This must have been 1933. At any rate, I was in Europe for some reason, and I interviewed Frederick Kuh in Berlin. I remember how he'd offer me some cigarettes, and I wasn't a smoker, but I'd take one and take two puffs and put it out. He said, "Don't you like them?" He was longingly looking at these American cigarettes so I took the hint. And while we were talking there came a message from Vienna; there was a big revolt there. The workers had stormed the Palace of Justice in Vienna, which was big news and he was handling it.

Subsequently he was representing the Federated Press in England, and Louis Lochner was representing the Federated Press in Germany. Louis Lochner was there throughout the Hitler period, and that was the time that the wonderful correspondents of the Chicago Daily News were exposing Hitler. That's the time when Edgar Mowrer wrote the famous book, Germany Turns the Clock Back, and the Daily News wanted to recall him. They thought it would be dangerous for him to stay in Berlin. Hitler would make remarks, of course. He'd always say that Mowrer was a Jew, which wasn't true. And he'd say, "These lies that he tells; I can't be responsible if some of our loyal Germans would attack him." Not that he was suggesting it, oh no, but finally, Mowrer had to leave Germany as the Daily News feared for his life. Lochner was there throughout the Hitler regime and the other correspondents were suspicious of him, of his relationship, not so much being treasonable, but compromising. "How could you stay there, if you published the truth, like Edgar Mowrer and some of the other correspondents?", the other correspondents would ask.

I recall that the first time I saw Lochner was long before that, on my first trip to Russia. That was in 1927. He met me and arranged where I was to stay. By that time he had been divorced from his American wife and was married to a German one. Then the next time was 1937 and Hitler went into power in January. I didn't want to go to Germany, I wanted to go to Sweden. That was the ILO time, that was 1937, and I couldn't get to Sweden without going through Berlin for one day. I went through and made a contact with Louis Lochner. We'd been old agitators together, comrades in arms out to establish the Federated Press. Nearly all the foreign correspondents at that time in Berlin looked askance at me. The ILO had gone on for three weeks. There were employer delegates, worker delegates and government delegates. Hitler had sent no delegates to the ILO, but he arranged for a great big party after the ILO conference was over. He arranged a great big banquet at Wahnse and invited the businessmen who had been at the ILO conference from many different countries. Louis Lochner was invited to that conference and the other foreign newspaper correspondents said to me, "You don't get invited to that conference just for nothing."

HERSTEIN: Then came the invasion of Poland. That started World War II. That was 1939, wasn't it? That's right. The Nazi army was in Munich, then it went smashing through Denmark and France, meeting no resistance. Louis Lochner was a war correspondent in that area, and all his dispatches told of how the Germans smashed into Denmark and how there wasn't an Allied plane in the skies. They smashed through France and not a French plane resisted them. Well, you remember all that.

Subsequently, Louis Lochner came back to America. I remember he spoke at a meeting at Mandel Hall and I went to hear him. In the audience were distinguished men who had been persecuted by Hitler and had come to this country. I'll never forget the look of skepticism on their faces when he spoke. He was quite on the defensive. He said, "I wasn't for the Nazis. I was simply reporting what happened. The Nazi army did smash into Denmark and there was no resistance. They did this and I simply reported it." He was very much on the defensive.

Many years afterwards I discovered that he established a radio program somewhere in southern California, and I knew people thought he was very good. Of course, I often thought about Lochner and his position in World War II. A lot of us who were opposed to the war made the mistake about others who opposed the war. These people were not opposed to war, they were pro-German, like George Sylvester Vierek the great writer. You see, when Hitler came along they were pro-German. The reason they were resisting the world war apparently as pacifists, was really that they were pro-German. And they were allied with a lot of us who weren't pro-German--if anything were pro-British. Well, the Federated Press limped along for a few years but finally went out of business.

INTERVIEWER: How long did it take?

HERSTEIN: Well, not many years.

INTERVIEWER: Was it union newspapers who printed their material?

HERSTEIN: Yes. If you could get them to do it.

INTERVIEWER: But not many of them?

HERSTEIN: Not many of them. They were still conservative. Not till you got the CIO did you get labor papers that were militant. It was a very boring time in the American labor movement. Samuel Gompers played a big role in World War I. And it was he that really got the ILO established as a reward for what he had done in persuading American working men to support the war. Eventually the Federated Press petered out. Tom Tippett became educational director for the machinists' union; he did a very good job. And Tom Tippett, the coal miner who had worked hard for the Federated Press, subsequently became field representative for rent during the war when we had rent control. Of course, he was always

HERSTEIN: attacked, a fine character. For a while, Carl Hessler, who was also on the Federated Press, lived on the North Shore.

INTERVIEWER: Was Carl Hessler part of the Federated Press, too?

HERSTEIN: Oh, yes. He was. Carl Hessler was a student at the University of Wisconsin. His father was a wealthy hardware merchant in Milwaukee. Carl got his doctor's degree in philosophy under Max Otto of Wisconsin, who was quite a remarkable man, quite a liberal in religion. He always said he rose from being a bartender to a YWCA secretary. He was quite a liberal. He gave a famous course in religion which was quite liberal and I took it. And every year the Catholic clergy of Madison sent a petition to the trustees of the University of Wisconsin to have Max Otto fired, but they never did. He was a very remarkable man. He had a great influence on Carl Hessler. In the meantime, Carl Hessler received a doctor's degree in philosophy. He opposed the war. In World War I, President Wilson appointed Judge Mack, who was the great liberal judge of the juvenile court, to go to the various camps where there were conscientious objectors, to persuade them to join the army. He came to the camp where Carl Hessler was, and he said, "Now, Mr. Hessler, all we want you to do is put on a uniform." It's very shocking, it's hard to tell these young people that all these conscientious objectors are a bunch of sub-normal nuts, when here is a Phi Beta Kappa, Ph.D. who is opposing the war. And Hessler looked at him. He said, "Put on a uniform? Why, I'm against this war! I am not a pacifist. I'll fight in the war when the working people of the world combine against their masters." His own brother was in the American Expeditionary Force. His father thought he was silly to do this, and he was arrested and put in prison. I remember a beautiful letter that Max Otto wrote to him. It was very lovely. He was at Camp Leavenworth and his wife Muriel stuck by him through all this. They had two children. She was a teacher and when he was arrested and sent to prison, school system after school system refused to give her a job because she was the wife of a man who was a prisoner for resisting the war. Everybody was for this war. And Mrs. Hessler--that's Carl's mother--was very devoted to Muriel and appreciated her sticking by her son. So did Mrs. Hessler. And then one time the story came out, there was a fellow by the name of Clark Getts who was also in prison. The prison authorities had to give him a job. They knew they were all educated men, so they gave him the job of teaching English to the other prisoners. Of course, you know what they did while they were teaching English!

INTERVIEWER: They were teaching their ideas, too, I bet.

HERSTEIN: Sure! And then the story came out that Carl Hessler had pushed some cigarettes under the door where a prisoner was in solitary confinement. He was punished for that and was sent to Alcatraz. His mother was heartbroken and she talked to his wife, "Muriel, I think we should talk to Carl, and write to him. Isn't he going too far? He shouldn't do that." And she said, "I wouldn't think

HERSTEIN: of breaking his spirit." And he was in Alcatraz. Then it was after he came out that he got involved in the Federated Press. Although he was a distinguished scholar the academic world was closed to him. I remember about that time there was some women's organization in Milwaukee arranging a charitable meeting. Carl's mother applied for admission, and when she did, the secretary said, "you have a son, haven't you, Mrs. Hessler?" "Yes," she said, "I have a son who fought in the American Expeditionary Forces." She said, "You had another son." She said, "Yes, I had another son." She admitted that he was in prison, but she embarrassed this secretary very much.

INTERVIEWER: Did they accept her into the club?

HERSTEIN: I think they did--oh, no, they told her to come back.

INTERVIEWER: So they didn't.

HERSTEIN: You see, there was Victor Berger, who was quite a Socialist, from Milwaukee, and Adolph Germer, a very handsome Socialist. They went to prison. I never heard of Carl and his family again until about 1951 or 1952, when I was working for the Jewish Labor Committee. Two men came in and they said that they represented the United States Immigration and Naturalization Organization, part of the government. One of them was very belligerent, terrible--sounded like McCarthy. He came to question me. I was in the office of the Jewish Labor Committee. I learned from Len Dupres afterwards that I didn't have to answer them at all because I wasn't working for the government. I was working for a private group. And this belligerent man came to interrogate me about Carl Hessler after all these years. I said, "Yes, I knew him years ago." "We know you knew him," he said to me. "We can look in the files of the Federated Press and there are many references to you." And I said, "Yes, there would be. I spoke at many meetings for them." And this fellow got more and more belligerent and critical of me. It was a bad time.

INTERVIEWER: You had a worse time in the fifties for having done it than you did at the time?

HERSTEIN: Yes, sure. And this belligerent investigator said there were a lot of Negroes being evicted from their homes at that time. It was a terrible time then. And when something came up about these evictions, I said, "Well, they're poor and they can't pay rent." "No," he said, "It's a bunch of Communists." "Oh," I said, "I don't think they know anything about Communism. They're very fine people. I used to teach in that part of the city and they're just poor." Then he flamed up. Everybody was a Communist. And then, of all things, he launched in on David Dubinsky of the International Ladies Garment Workers. "Well," I said, "If you knew anything about Communism, you would know that he put up the biggest fight against the Communists in his union and threw them out." He blustered some more, and I said, "You know, I'm a taxpayer, and my taxes pay your salary, and I object to my money being used to pay the salary of a man like you, who knows nothing

HERSTEIN: about Communism!" Oh, we had a hot time! The other fellow who was with him had more of a sense of humor. But after all those years, they were trying to find out about the Federated Press.

INTERVIEWER: Which had been dead all those years.

HERSTEIN: Yes. After it dissolved, one of the things that Carl Hessler did for a living was to work for a mortician, an undertaker.

INTERVIEWER: I wonder if the mortician got into trouble.

HERSTEIN: The last I heard was his being in Seattle, Washington visiting a son of his who had become a lawyer. You know we're now on the third and fourth generation of that era. So that was the Federated Press.

Oh, I was going to tell you this. There was this bitter fight among the Illinois miners, between Frank Farrington and John L. Lewis. The story broke that the Peabody Coal Company brought the news to John L. Lewis that they had given a bribe of $75,000 to Frank Farrington. That ended Frank Farrington's career in the labor movement, but I've often wondered about the tender solicitude of the Peabody Coal Company for the miners. They were anti-labor. Now, why were they so eager to get into this fight to help John L. Lewis?

INTERVIEWER: Why do you think?

HERSTEIN: I don't know. It's been one of the mysteries, one of the sad things. You know, as time went on and the Progressive Miners were organized, that was the fight against Lewis's crowd.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever have any contact with the Progressive Miners?

HERSTEIN: Well, I must have talked to some of their various leaders. You know, Kaiser, an instructor in one of the Illinois state universities, wrote that book about John L. Lewis. His Ph.D. thesis is the biography of John Fitzpatrick. His father had been a member of the Progressive Miners, the protest group against John L. Lewis. Did I tell you about this article on the United Mine Workers? Do you want to take that?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, I'd like to.

HERSTEIN: That corroborates what I used to hear from Tom Tippett absolutely. Oh, you must take that. Here it is. It's a recent article in the May 1971 issue of The Progressive called "The UMW's Last Chance." It describes the tactics of the leadership of the United Mine Workers which John L. Lewis practiced. At that time Tom Tippett had no use for Lewis, and neither did Powers Hapgood. Powers Hapgood's father owned the Consumers Conserve Company. He was a millionaire. He was a cousin of Norman Hapgood, the man who finally convinced the old man, Henry Ford, that he was silly in his attack on the Jews. After Ford had spent four million dollars

HERSTEIN: attacking the Jews, he got him to retract it. Well, Powers Hapgood was a graduate of Harvard. He became quite a radical and he went to dig coal almost all over the world. He was a great friend of Tom Tippett's and all of us; we knew him well. Tom Tippett used to describe a meeting of the United Mine Workers Union. A delegate, who was known to be a dissident, would get up and ask for the floor. Lewis would roar at him, "For what purpose does the delegate rise?" And if that didn't frighten him his thugs came in and beat him up. They beat Powers Hapgood at one of those meetings. Another practice of Lewis's, which is described in this article, was and still is the most dangerous to the interest of the miners. If there was a sub-district that had dissidents, he would take their charter away from them and appoint an administrator. There was a time when many of the sub-districts of the miners union had no power at all. They were under the control of these administrators that Lewis had appointed. This man Boyle, who succeeded John L. Lewis, used the same tactics. It's very interesting to read that article, "UMW's Last Chance," 1971. Here's a union that has an enormous pension fund. Incidentally, some of the liberals in this country were so in despair of the conservatism of the AF of L, that they grasped at any person or leader who seemed more active than some of the AF of L leaders. They made quite a hero of John L. Lewis when the CIO was organized. In Labor's Non-Partisan League in 1932 the miners were active. Then, you know, Lewis broke with Roosevelt. One of the reasons somebody said was that Lewis thought he could treat the White House as a sub-district of the miner's union. There was some dispute, a labor dispute. I don't know if Roosevelt said, "A plague on both their houses", and that made Lewis furious. He got up on the radio and repudiated Roosevelt, and roared about "He who sups at labor's table." The miner's union under him in 1936 had contributed 50,000 dollars to the campaign, and he urged that none of the miners vote for Roosevelt. Oh, he roared! Well, the miners then liked him.

INTERVIEWER: Lewis?

HERSTEIN: That's right. They thought he had gotten a lot for them. But when it came to Roosevelt there was a great split. But to get back to the article in the Progressive mentioned above, describes just exactly what I used to hear years ago from Tom Tippett and Powers Hapgood. Lewis bought an elegant big house in Georgetown which has great prestige and lived there until his death, which occurred recently. Friends would come in and so on. Once Tom Tippett wrote an article about him in the Nation. You might like to look that up. He pointed out how Lewis just mouthed big words. He said that if there was a labor dispute, he wouldn't talk about the labor dispute, but the "embroglio." It was a very good article. There were the dissidents all the time. When it was said that at last in 1936 Lewis organized the steel workers, Tom Tippett says, "Oh, no, he didn't! Franklin D. Roosevelt organized the steel workers!" Tom Tippett used to tell me that both he and Norman Thomas used to say to Lewis, "Why don't you go down to West Virginia and Kentucky and organize those miners?" Especially

HERSTEIN: West Virginia, it's a big bituminous field. As a matter of fact, their wages were so low that they could sell coal very cheap, and that coal was sent to Illinois. A movement was started in Illinois, "Don't buy any of this coal, because it's non-union." Well, it didn't work. People bought the cheaper coal. Tom Tippett and Norman Thomas had ventured down in West Virginia and Kentucky. As soon as they'd get off the train these vigilantes would come with a gun and say, "Get the hell out of here." But Lewis never went down there until the Roosevelt's National Labor Relations Act made it safe for him to go. And so Tom Tippett always said, "Don't tell me Lewis organized the steel industry after it resisted all these years. Franklin D. Roosevelt did." That was his story.

Another good book to read in that connection, but I think I've told you that, is Union of their Own Choosing, by a man by the name of R.R. Brooks. He was a professor. There were a lot of professors that got interested in labor in those days. He tells this story--or is it called As Steel Goes? It's based on the organization of the steel industry. There was a man, I think his name was Schwab. He was an operator, a steel owner, and he said, "As steel goes, so goes the country." Brooks describes the three attempts to organize the steel industry, one in 1892 with Carnegie, which was marked by bitter violence. Bitter violence! The other one was 1918, that Fitzpatrick and I were in. Now, we lost that strike but we dramatized for America the conditions in the steel industry. And the third was 1936, when Lewis--that's the CIO--did it. But we had paved the way. More important than what we did was the legislation of the Roosevelt administration.

INTERVIEWER: They never would have cracked steel without that change in the law.

HERSTEIN: Never.

INTERVIEWER: I interviewed some miners in southern Illinois, and they claimed that he never really worried as much as he should have about safety in the mines, that he [Lewis] would come in after an accident and make much of it, but that they had appealed to him many times before the accidents to do something and he never did.

HERSTEIN: That's all in this article. This is all about Boyle, who succeeded Lewis and then the murder of Yablonsky, his wife and daughter. The Labor Department was remiss.

INTERVIEWER: This is something else that these miners said, that the government always backed Lewis up in legal battles they had with him. This was during the Progressive Miners fight.

HERSTEIN: Yes, sure!

INTERVIEWER: But they insisted that the government always stood up for Lewis.

HERSTEIN: Yes, that's the time we lost Walker as the president of the Illinois State Federation of Labor.

INTERVIEWER: Is that right?

HERSTEIN: Yes, he was the president, and the Progressive Miners fight came. The Progressive Miners were kicked out of the AF of L, and so Walker said to Mr. Olander, "I cannot accept the presidency of the Illinois State Federation of Labor; I have joined the Progressives, which have been loyal to the miners," and he gave up a well-paying job as president of the Illinois State Federation of Labor. He resigned then and that's when we elected Soderstrom. Soderstrom had been elected for years on the Republican ticket as legislator, and his son, Carl, is still elected on the Republican ticket. Of course, they kept Soderstrom until the last breath left his body, which was just last fall.

INTERVIEWER: Anything else you want to add today?

HERSTEIN: I think that, although it may mean some repetition of what I have said above, it is worthwhile to review some of the statements made in the article, "The UMW's Last Chance," as it shows how a powerful union like the UMW has degenerated as far as services to its members are concerned and discusses also the relation of the American labor movement with our government. Also it may be indicative of a trend that might develop in other large national unions.

Coal is a most important product in American industry, which depends largely on coal for many of its activities. A stoppage of the production of coal would paralyze American industry. The wages and working conditions of the miners should therefore be very good. But are they? The UMWA operates on the procedures worked out by John Lewis.

The present president, Tony Boyle, was elected by Lewis, and he carries out Lewis' instructions! "Lewis told Boyle when he called him to Washington in 1948 to be his special assistant, to be anonymous. And Boyle is inaccessible to the press; he rarely ventures out of Washington to meet with UMW members." Ward Sinclair, the author of the above mentioned article, points out that "Tony stood at the head of Lewis' handpicked $50,000 a year successors. Boyle indulges in the same self-righteousness and roll of the tongue, imitates Lewis' rococo language, rejects outsiders and thunders at any criticism."

The worst feature carried over from Lewis, however, is the establishment of a procedure which has destroyed all democracy in the union and denies a voice to the individual miner. Like Lewis, Boyle has established trusteeships of any regional district where there are dissenting voices. At present in nineteen of UMW's 23 regional districts all the officers are appointed. In West Virginia and Kentucky, two leading coal-producing states, not a single district official is elected. Of 145,000 working

HERSTEIN: coal miners in the U.S., 90,000 are UMW members; 90,000 are pensioners or inactive and ineligible for pensions.

How come that in an industry so essential, and therefore with great bargaining power, there are so many bad conditions for miners? A special fund, Sinclair points out, kept secret until Ralph Nader exposed it, will allow Boyle, Titter, and Owens to retire at full salary for life with more than $1.5 million of the miners money as a nest egg. And yet many miners--members of the union--are denied their pensions. And mine disasters in this most dangerous occupation continue without adequate safety devices.

What about the relation of U.S. Labor Department with the miners and their leaders?

In the 1968 disaster 78 miners were killed in a West Virginia mine owned by Consolidated Coal Company. When Boyle went to the scene, he said, "As long as we mine coal, there is always this inherent danger."

Now we come to the reaction of the U.S. Department of Labor to the Yablonsky murders. There was a hot union election going on. There was continued disinterest on the part of the U.S. Department of Labor in the great difficulties that developed during that campaign.

When Yablonsky, the candidate running against Boyle, was knocked senseless in a meeting in Springfield, Illinois, George Schulz, Secretary of Labor, said, "It was done by an emotionally wrought union man reacting to Yablonsky's speech," although there was ample evidence that a group of Yablonsky's opposition was present at the meeting.

The policies and procedures ordained by Lewis have been carried on by his successors, even to the point of the union's linkage with coal companies, a "sweet-heart" relationship which dates back to Lewis. The UMW organization's vast wealth allies itself with the coal industry.

I have quoted at great length from the article, "UMW's Last Chance," by Ward Sinclair because I feel it is an excellent point of departure for a survey of the future of the American labor movement and its relation to regulatory government agencies, notably the United States Department of Labor.

American unions affiliated with the AF of L or now with the AFL-CIO are autonomous organizations. The national organizations have practically no power over them. Therefore, one cannot generalize about all unions on the basis of the activities of one union. The United Automobile Workers Union under the leadership of the late Walter Reuther has been conducted under very democratic procedures. Long ago it established a review board to which a member of the union can appeal for the redress of

HERSTEIN: grievances he alleges against the officers of the union. Moreover it has been noted for a social consciousness, a feeling of responsibility to the larger community. It has helped to get progressive legislation passed. It has been in the vanguard in the fight against racism and also against war. In the march on Washington, it participated actively. The AF of L did not participate. Other unions in various degrees have supported measures, fighting racism. But now we have the powerful AFL-CIO, with President Meany supporting the Vietnam War. The Machinists with a fair degree of liberalism is also supporting the war in Vietnam, as it has many orders for war materials. It is true that for many years the Machinists had in their constitution a clause to the effect that they would never recommend anyone but a white man for membership. The Machinists had been organized in the South. But for many years this provision had been largely ignored, and resolutions were brought in to the national conventions to have the provision dropped. But alas, now the Machinists are tied up in the military-industrial complex.

The unions have made great strides in the area of worker's education, and in addition have been generous in granting college scholarships to the children of their members.

One would hope that there would be the kind of cooperation with industry, that would not lead to "sweet-heart" contracts.

There is the hope that American labor would apply itself more vigorously to support the "unorganized", particularly the agricultural workers. There has been considerable activity of late by organized labor in that area. It is heartening to note how generously the International Ladies Garment Workers are helping the agricultural workers. In 1967, the ILGWU loaned the Farm Workers a health-mobile. In 1971, they contributed $12,000 for the purpose of expensive and essential equipment for the newly built clinic of the farm workers.

What of the relation of organized labor to the government agencies, both federal and state, established for the protection of workers? Liberals have often pointed out how some of these regulatory agencies have been stocked with members whose interests opposed regulating the industries they were supposed to regulate. Certainly the actions of the United States Department of Labor in the recent Yablonsky case were lax and indifferent. We need to be reminded that these agencies, especially those connected with labor problems, were established to serve the workers or union members, not their leaders.

Under conservative administrations organized labor will have to work vigorously as it has in the past against watering down of labor's efforts and gains. It will again have to assume the leadership that it exercised in the past against war and discrimination in every area of American life--political, economic, educational--on the basis of race or sex or national origin.

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