RICHARD T. FRANKENSTEEN

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

OF

RICHARD FRANKENSTEEN

Interviewed By
Jack W. Skeels

University of Michigan - Wayne State University
Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations
October 10 and 23, 1959; November 6, 1959;
December 7, 1961

Oral History Interview of Mr. Richard T. Frankensteen by Jack W. Skeels, University of Michigan - Wayne State University Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, October 10 and 23, 1959; November 6, 1959; and December 7, 1961.

I was born in Detroit, Michigan, March 6, 1907. My father was Harold L. Frankensteen and my mother was Grace Loretta Smith. I have one brother, Donald, who is five years younger than I am. I was educated in the Detroit public schools, graduated from Central High School, attended the University of Detroit and graduated from the University of Dayton in Ohio, in 1932. I was married in April of 1932, preceding my graduation by two months. We have three children: our first is Carol Lee, our second is Marilyn, and our third is Richard, Junior. They were born one year apart, all in the same week.

As I said, I graduated in 1932, which was the height of the Depression. I had taught at Chaminade High School in Dayton and intended to make teaching my career. I had hoped to practice law and teach school as an adjunct; I do not know which would have been the adjunct. In any event, I had intended to use both. My wife had taught dancing in Dayton and intended to continue in Noblesville, a little town in Indiana where I had been offered a coaching and teaching job. Through litigation against the Noblesville High School, an English teacher forced the school board to retain her services and thus removed the teaching part of my new assignment. In short, they could not afford both Johnny Wooden and I for the coaching. I either had to start out my teaching activity with a lawsuit or accept the fact that Johnny

Wooden, who had been an all-American basketball player at Purdue and an Indiana boy, was given preference for the job. I either had to go through the courts to get the job or find something else. In 1932 there was not much to find.

Incidentally, I might go back just a little bit and tell you that my wife and I, on the strength of this coaching and teaching job at Noblesville, Indiana, had taken a summer cottage at Lake Orion, Michigan, and had spent our honeymoon up there, fully anticipating that with the arrival of fall, we would be at work.

The first job that opened up for me was digging ditches at a soccer field that was to be built on the West Side of the City of Detroit. A friend of my parents was interested in this project. I took that job. It lasted for just a few weeks, at which time my father was able to get me a job at Dodge Brothers in the Die Follow-up Division.

I worked in this division for just a few months and the program started to "peter out." By that time I had made some contacts within the plant and had made arrangements for a transfer to the production line in the trim department, where I thought the work would be, perhaps, a little more steady. At this point it would be well to point out that I had worked at Dodge for almost ten years: as an office boy during summer vacations; in the blueprint department; and on various jobs throughout the plant as in the crankshaft department, inspection jobs, etc. At this particular time, in 1932, I was transferred to the trim department on the trim line.

You will recall that this was about the time that President Roosevelt developed the NRA. Section 7A of the NRA gave men the right to organize without fear of discrimination. At about the same time, the Chrysler Corporation, in my opinion, hoping to thwart legitimate unionism, set up what they called their Works Council Plan. The Works Council Plan was devised so that the employees were to choose representatives based on the number of departments in the plant. An equal number of representatives would be appointed by management and an impartial chairman would be appointed by the company. In this particular plant, Dodge Brothers', we had 53 units or departments and, therefore, we had 53 representatives on the Works Council. Management had 53 representatives. The impartial chairman was a man named Herman Weckler, who later became executive vice-president of Chrysler. Our job was, as Mr. Chrysler's letter to all employees had stated, "to present any facts that were pertinent to the work conditions of the employees." I say "our" because I was elected as the spokesman of the men in my division of the trim department.

I had never heard of the Department of Labor Statistics or the bureaus that were perhaps available to me. But I knew this: I was working for 49 cents an hour. We had a bonus which we maybe got and we maybe did not get. We did not know how it was figured. We did not know how many managerial employees were included in the bonus. We did know that it was shuffled around, and we knew that regardless of the production, which did not seem to make much difference, the bonus did not amount to anything. I knew that

working every hour I was allowed to at 49 cents an hour, I was unable to pay the costs of our first child. I knew there was something wrong with a system where working every minute you could work, never missing a day, you still could not eke out a living.

I set out to prepare a document that would convince the Chrysler Corporation that their wages were not adequate. I might say that my father had served in a managerial capacity with Dodge Brothers for some time. I rode home from work with my dad on many occasions. I used to tell him of my aspirations and dreams. He said, "Dick, you are really a dreamer to think that anything you might say can persuade these people about wages and economic conditions. They know more about it than you will know in the next 50 years. They have experts to study it. And it is not a question of convincing them. It is a question of what they want to do." How right my Dad was as to convincing them!

Nevertheless, I set out to prepare a document for this Works Council meeting on what wage it took for the average family, in the City of Detroit, to live up to a decent standard. I found out the cost of butter, eggs, rent, housing, etc. I did it the hard way by preparing my own charts, and I really produced a very fine documented argument. I went before the Works Council and told them why we needed more money and what it cost the average family to live in the City of Detroit. After making this very lengthy presentation which was accorded full and very courteous attention, Herman Weckler, speaking for the corporation, gave me this answer

which awakened me and actually led me into the path of unionism. He said, "We do not control the cost of living. We have nothing to say as to what the price of butter, eggs, or meat may be. We do not regulate rents. We cannot tell if your wife is as frugal as some other wife, or whether someone else's wife is more frugal. We cannot control the spending habits of people. All we know is that we pay a going rate, comparable to those of our competitors. We are in a competitive market. We cannot pay more than our competitors if we hope to sell cars and stay in business and provide jobs." There was nothing wrong with his answer. It was true. It certainly made obvious the fact that if men who were working wanted to improve their conditions, the only way they could do so was to organize the competitors and force their wages up. In effect, remove wages from the category of raw materials. The company's answer was so callous and so hard that it offered no out, except to organize. It was, in effect, an invitation to organize.

As for the Works Council, we bargained for clean windows and floors without grease, and many things that were important but meaningless in take-home pay. When it came to dollars and cents, when it came to economics, we were powerless. We recognized that we were just a sham outfit that was being used as a smoke screen to prevent the employees from doing something which would actually benefit their conditions.

At that time, I had no background in trade-unionism. I knew nothing about it other than the little I had read. What I had

read was that the unions were a bunch of crooks, that they were run by very bad people, all of whom had been painted by the press as gangsters, mobsters, etc. So, like most employees in the City of Detroit, the great open shop City of Detroit, I wanted no part of any of these racket organizations, such as the AFL, etc. There was no CIO then.

Of the 53 representatives of the Works Council, you can well imagine that at least 30, and that is being very conservative, were controlled by the company. Our 53 were thus divided. Their 53 was solid because "the man who pays the fiddler calls the tune," and they were all working for Chrysler. So the Works Council was just a complete farce. In any event, our bargaining meant nothing. Not wanting anything to do with the AFL but needing a union, we set out to form an independent one.

We called it the Automotive Industrial Workers Association. We charged 25 cents dues, which included the initiation fee. About that time our growth was just tremendous. We worked within the departments and signed up people behind auto "bodies" and around the rug department, wherever we were out of sight. We moved so fast and our growth was so rapid that Chrysler could not quite keep up with us. They did fire three fellows, Mike Dragon, a fellow named Floyd, and Whitie Mead. They tried to precipitate a stoppage which would have destroyed us. We almost went for it, but we did not. We waited until they needed production. A pattern was established that lasted for many years. When they needed production, they needed us. That was when we bargained.

We were able to return the three fired men to their jobs and gain other concessions. Chrysler still hoped they might be able to control this "little" independent union. At least, they reflected, it was not powerful enough to do them too much damage. It did not have the strength of the labor movement. It did not have the backing of finances. They could not quite decide whether to try and throttle this thing in its infancy or to hope that maybe they could capture it.

They refused to accept the fact that it was an organization. Most of us served in a dual capacity, representing the Works Council as well as this independent union. We told the company that we had to have the opportunity of talking to the people whom we represented to find out what their point of view was and what it was they wanted. When we sought to meet with our people, the company offered us their garage for meetings, not as the independent union, but as the Works Council. We turned them down. We said that we felt we could serve the interests of the workers best by meeting on our own time and in our own meeting halls and that we could discuss things more freely without obligation. As I say, our growth became quite rapid, particularly at Dodge. That was the heart of our organization. Our meetings with management were never with recognition of the fact that we were not the Works Council. This Works Council Plan had been put in effect at all the plants of Chrysler. We soon made contact with the other Works Council bargaining agencies to set up one organization. We did - Chrysler-Kercheval came with us as well as Chrysler-Jefferson and

Highland Park. We soon built up quite a sizable organization. In fact, within the first year our organization had grown to some 40,000, around 26,000 of them at Dodge. This was the latter part of '33, perhaps early in '34. We still wanted no part of the American Federation of Labor.

Let me digress a moment: At this time Francis Dillon was the appointed president of the so-called Auto Workers Union, AFL. They had almost no members in Detroit. They had a few organizers who would occasionally put out a leaflet in front of some plant, but they had just a handful of members. We had a few in our plant, Jack Cousins and Harry Ross, to name a couple. They had tried to organize within the AFL but then also joined the independent union. They had tried to swing the independent toward the AFL, but later gave up on that and became very solid members of the independent union.

In 1936 the UAW convention was held in South Bend, Indiana. Whatever strength of numbers they had came out of South Bend, Studebaker and Bendix. They also had some members in the Wisconsin area, in Racine - that was the bulk of the Auto Workers Union. At this convention in '36 and after a fight against control by the AFL under Dillon and by appointment of William Green, the UAW was offered their autonomy. The AIWA had been invited as fraternal delegates to view the convention. Along with us there were Art Greer and Tracy Doll of the independent Hudson Motor Company local and several others. I was asked to speak at the convention and, without conferring with my own people, I stated, I could make no

definite commitment; but I did say that if their autonomy was granted and, if on the basis of free elections, they were naming their own officers, I saw no reason why our organization should not affiliate with them and build our strength together. We realized by this time that without the support of an organization we were going nowhere.

I might go back a little bit. We started to spread out mainly in the Chrysler plants. However, Graham Paige had quite a similar setup and a man named Ed Ayres, who later became very active in the UAW, joined with us. We set up an organization at Graham Paige.

I want to tell you how and why I left the plant and about my activity at this point. I have mentioned the growth of our organization. We had organized the employees at Herron-Zimmer Company, which was a small molding plant that made the window frames and dash panel, etc., for the auto industry. Our independent union had taken them in when they had come to us and asked for organization. Upon organizing them, the management fired several and we had no alternative but to strike. I was at that time working in the Dodge plant, meeting after work with the various department units. We met with each department. I was working well into the night - one, two o'clock in the morning - and then on the job at seven the next morning. It became pretty tough. But with this strike, we had no paid officers, we had no paid personnel, we had no organizers, and we found ourselves with a strike on our hands, and no one to handle it. The members of the union voted me a salary of $50 a

week. Now I had a tremendous personal problem; I had to give up all the years of seniority that I had accumulated at Dodge in order to take this break. There was much trepidation for me and not just my job security.

I went over, led the Herron-Zimmer situation and settled that strike. It was my first major bargaining strike, quite a ticklish situation for a greenhorn just out of school. We came out all right and signed a contract with Herron-Zimmer. Thus I now found myself in a position of full-time organizer for this union. We started to move from plant to plant and our growth was very rapid.

About this time, 1935, Matt Smith, who was president of the MESA, approached our organization, the Automotive Industrial Workers, as well as the Tracy Doll-Art Greer group at Hudson, which also had strong organization in the City of Pontiac at the Pontiac Motors and several other places. He suggested we amalgamate. I might say that Matt buttered me up. He offered me the presidency of the amalgamated group. I later found that being president of that organization was tantamount to playing about sixth fiddle to Matt Smith. The secretary ran that organization. It was not an amalgamation he wanted anyway, it was an assimilation. He was just going to take us all over. Looking back, that might not have been too bad. Matt was a pretty capable guy in the business of running a union and making gains for his people. Although we had several meetings and had shown a great deal of interest, we decided that it just was not for us.

The Automotive Board was set up by Franklin Roosevelt in March, 1934. We appeared in front of that board on several occasions and sought redress for grievances; but we found it was a meaningless board. Dick Byrd, who was supposed to be labor's voice on the board, certainly was never a spokesman for labor. In our opinion, he was the worst of the board. We felt that, in spite of the fact that he was spokesman for the Chrysler Corporation, Nicholas Kelly was the fairest member of the board. Leo Wolman, public member and chairman of the board, was not nearly as bad as Byrd. At least we did not expect too much from him; we did from Byrd and we did not get it. Byrd had been a member of the Tracy Doll and Art Greer organization.

I had one embarrassing situation. I was quite young then, about 27 years of age. I went before this board and made a presentation. They told us that we would gain experience through this Works Council. I told them that we were not interested in experience, we were interested in results; we did not care about learning how to present something, we wanted to know how to get something. I tried to make an attack on the board and I did it in a very clumsy fashion. Intending to pay a compliment, I said to Nicholas Kelly, "You know, Mr. Kelly, you are the best of a bad lot." Mr. Kelly looked at me and said, "You are a very impudent young man." I could feel my face flush because those words that had come out of my mouth had been so completely unthought of. I was really trying to pay a compliment. The board meant very little to us. We had many skirmishes with them and we were in front of them on many occasions, but the results were usually meaningless.

Skeels: Was the board very effective in trying to lessen the amount of discrimination against union members?

Frankensteen: We had not had too much controversy on that score. We had not had too many people discriminated against. We had grown so fast. I do not remember whether we took the cases of the three fellows that we thought were discharged for union activity before the board. I am not sure. But in any event, we returned them through our own economic strength.

Skeels: You do not feel that the board at that time made any positive contribution then?

Frankensteen: I think their contributions were most limited. In fact, I think they served as a deterrent to organization, that was about all. As I say, I am a little hazy on their overall activity. They were not important enough, at least, to have made too much of a lasting impression on me.

I think this next story has significance as to the meaning of the "open shop City of Detroit" and its repercussions on keeping organization out of Detroit in those years. When we were organizing in Dodge, we set up by divisions. We had a Motor Division, Trim Division, Skilled Trades Division, and so forth. We had the paint shop organized as a unit. One of our most militant members was a worker in the paint shop named John Andrews. John Andrews and I were very, very close friends. John, a former member of the AFL, had been active in organization. He was a clean-cut, fine-looking young man, who was hot all the time about not taking anything from the company. "We have strength now, we do not have to take anything

from them. We can handle ourselves." And he would come before the meetings and say, "We ought to strike these so-and-so's for this," and so forth. In fact, at Johnny's insistence, we had one meeting at a little coveralls store in back of the plant for the purpose of going out on strike. Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed.

Johnny and I became very close friends through working in the organization. John would pick me up and drive me to meetings. He would come over and take me to one of the other plants when we had a meeting on a Sunday morning or Saturday afternoon. We went back and forth socially. Our wives became friends. John had one child. At that point we were expecting our first baby; this was in 1934. The Andrews and Frankensteens became inseparable. We were laid off at Dodge at the same time, a seasonal layoff. John and I decided to take our wives and go up to Lake Orion, rent a summer cottage and stay up there until we were called back to work. We did that. We were enjoying this vacation when John came to me and said, "Dick, I have an uncle who produced chautauquas for General Motors throughout the country. He is very much interested in your operettas." (At the University of Dayton, I had put on three shows, had written some of these operettas, and had a yen to produce one professionally.) John said that his uncle would like to sit down and talk to me about it. "Incidentally," John continued, "my uncle had a great experience with labor. He was in Massachusetts and had a costume shop there at the time of the shoe strikes when they imported

so much foreign labor. And suddenly labor got on its hind feet and became a very radical group. They had all that trouble in the shoe industry. He is very much interested in you. Would you mind if I invited them to come and spend some time with us at the cottage?" I said, "Why, of course not, Johnny. I have had my mother and dad up here. You certainly are entitled to have guests. It would be very nice to have them." He told me that they were immensely wealthy people, millionaires, but they liked to spend time with his wife, Dee, and himself and see the child. In short, they would like to be with us.

A week or so later, the aunt and uncle arrived from Massachusetts. They were driving a great big Cadillac car. They insisted on taking us out to dinner every night as my wife was expecting. Because of their solicitude we could not do any cooking; they just feted us and treated us royally. I thought, "What wonderful people they are, and what a labor background!" This fellow knew the labor movement, he knew the interest I had in music, and he, himself, had had this great experience in shows. So we just had a wonderful time. At the conclusion of the vacation, the uncle said, "Would you send a copy of that show that you have written to me? I have a friend, Donald Ogden Stuart, who I know would be interested in doing something for you with that show. He has great connections in Hollywood and he has been a major producer." I told him that I would send it on to him. But I did not have the music copy written and I thought I would wait on this. I just put it off because I was engrossed in my other activities and I had a mass

meeting coming up. Incidentally, the uncle helped me write my speech, and a very militant speech it was, for the mass meeting we were planning at Belle Isle.

We had invited Father Coughlin, who was then at the height of his "social justice" preaching, so to speak. We had previously had Father Coughlin as a guest speaker at a meeting at the State Fair Coliseum to address an organizational meeting of our group. At that meeting, Father Coughlin seemed to feel that this was his organization. He started to say, "Your dues are this - we will have another meeting..." "We will have another meeting at Belle Isle." Well, of course, we were tickled pink because, on the strength of his name and his program at that time, we organized a lot of people. However, Father Coughlin never sat with our executive board. He never had a meeting with us. He had no more influence on our organization than the fact that he was a guest speaker. But we became known by many, particularly the AFL and others of our detractors, as the Coughlin Union. In any event, we were preparing this mass meeting at Belle Isle.

We had our Belle Isle meeting and I will not go too deeply into it. It is a matter of record that we filled the Island. We had a fantastic crowd. Coughlin's name had brought these people out and we signed up thousands of people on the basis of that meeting in all of the plants that we were working in around Detroit. The press gave big pictures of this gathering. It was really the biggest labor gathering, I believe, that had ever been established in Detroit or its environs.

The La Follette Civil Liberties Committee was very active about this time and asked me to appear. Upon arrival in Washington they asked me if I could identify some communications and reports which were addressed to the Chrysler Corporation by a labor spy. It could be but one person; my good friend, John Andrews, had written these reports. He had been hired by the Corporation Auxiliary which was paid many, many, many thousands of dollars from Chrysler for the purpose of espionage. John was a paid member of their outfit! To say that I was shocked would be putting it mildly. It was inconceivable to me that a man could be as close as we had been and still do what he had done. My wife had baked custard and taken it over to Dee when she was sick. We had gone back and forth, family-wise, taken a cottage together, spent all this time together, and yet he was turning in a written report daily of where I went, who I spoke to, what I said; everything I did. Every movement that I made was reported to the Corporation Auxiliary and subsequently to the Chrysler Corporation.

I stated in front of the La Follette Committee with Herman Weckler, vice-president of Chrysler, and K. T. Keller, president of Chrysler, present in the hearing room, that I had gone to many penal institutions to study narcotics for a thesis that I had written at the University of Dayton; I had interviewed narcotic addicts; I had gone into the various courts around the country to hear their sentencing of dope addicts and peddlers; and I had recalled specifically the words of Federal Judge Edward Moena in sentencing two men, one a dope addict and the other a dope peddler.

Judge Moena said to the addict, "I am giving you a sentence which I hope will be curative. I hope that you will come out having licked this habit of narcotics. You are a sick man and I hope this is a curative treatment for you." But then he turned to the peddler and said, "But you are a menace to society, not an addict yourself, you know what this does, the depravity that it creates in the minds of men and what it does to his physical being. Yet, for lucre, you sold yourself and this product. You are a menace to society and I am giving you all of the penalty that the law allows me to give you, and I wish it were more." And he sentenced the men. Then I said, "And I just want to say to Mr. K. T. Keller and Mr. Herman Weckler, sitting here in front of me, that in my opinion they are worse than the dope peddler because they know what they have done to this man. They have made him an outcast with the men that he has to work with and live with, and they have turned him into the worst type of stool pigeon imaginable." Herman Weckler, upon taking the stand, said, "This is a normal part of our business. We have to know what is going on." That was the answer of the Chrysler Corporation to their espionage.

I returned home and my wife and I talked about it. As I said, I was just stunned, as was she. Johnny disappeared, incidentally, as did his wife. They were never heard of again, at least by me, and that was good as far as I was concerned. Most likely they went some place else and did the same work for the Corporation Auxiliary in some other plant. I guess that is the way they worked it. I said to my wife, "I wonder whether we ought to notify or tell Uncle

Hubb and the aunt about Johnny and his activity." Incidentally, their name was Bath, Hubb Bath. And my wife said, "No, blood is thicker than water. We would just involve ourselves in a family situation. The best thing to do is forget it." So that was that.

I was again asked to appear in front of the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee to hear other reports. I think it is anticlimactic to tell you that the uncle was the head of the Corporation Auxiliary, who had been brought in by Johnny for a more thorough check and a more thorough job of information gathering for the Chrysler Corporation from me. I just about gave up on human beings when I found that out.

Donald Ogden Stuart was always regarded as a left-wing writer. I do not know how far the left-wing tendencies extended or whether it was true or whether it was not. Neverthless, that was the reputation that I learned of Donald Ogden Stuart. I never could quite gather why Hubb Bath had wanted me to send my musical story to Donald Ogden Stuart or what he was going to do with it. I later talked to Benn Allen, who was an investigator for the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee. He told me that the Chrysler Corporation had made arrangements that if I had sent my story on, as Hubb Bath had asked me to, good, bad or miserable, they were going to take that story and arrange to make me a lucrative enough offer to take me out to the West Coast and get me out of this labor movement. That was how far they were willing to go. And they were going to play on the weakness and the desire that I had to produce legitimately a show that I thought had merit.

They were going to go that far to get me out of the labor movement. I wrote a letter to Donald Ogden Stuart. He replied with a letter which I still keep for my mementoes, telling me that he had a very fine brand of scotch and he hoped that over a bottle of scotch someday we would be able to sit down and discuss this happening and how it came about. But I never met with him, neither circumstances nor time have brought us together. So I still do not know the complete answer - or what his participation or his role was; innocent or otherwise, I do not know.

This story, while it is particularly fresh to me because it happened to me, was typical of what was going on throughout the entire auto industry in the way of espionage and spying. Of course, Pearl Berghoff, the king of strikebreakers, had made many millions of dollars breaking strikes in Detroit.

About this time the first major strike occurred in the City of Detroit. There were three unions involved: the AFL, the MESA and the Automotive Industrial Workers. We all had membership in the Motor Products plant, which was located on Mack Avenue next to the Briggs plant. Motor Products was also a manufacturer of molding. I mentioned Herron-Zimmer, and the fact that we had struck there. I might say to you that in negotiating with Herron-Zimmer, we found them to be a very fine management and they were quite sympathetic, surprisingly, to our demands and to our position. But they said that they were in a competitive situation and that they could not sell or compete with some of these firms in the molding industry and the outlying areas who were selling so much

cheaper than they could because of wages. Our philosophy and our theory was that we had to take wages out of competition. In other words, they had to make their profit on the basis of their ability to produce, their mechanization, etc.

We started to organize at Motor Products to try and eliminate some of this competition. We met with a fellow named Kelso. The MESA joined with us in a dual negotiation. In other words, we were then talking the amalgamation with them and this was at least a good chance to work together. So we bargained together with the company. I will never forget Matt Smith. Matt was a vitriolic guy, very honest and decent, but very vitriolic. He was, I guess you would call him, an iconoclast, plus the fact that he, an Englishman, completely refused to become a citizen of the U.S. He was an independent, strong-thinking guy, but a real hard fellow to understand, particularly to someone who had not been associated with too many of the socialists or communists or isms group that I later learned to know. But anyway, we sat down with Kelso, the works manager of Motor Products. Matt Smith looked at him and said, "How do you keep yourself low enough to hold the position you hold?" Well, about that time the fur began to fly. It was not too long before we found ourselves without anyone to talk to and a strike on. The AFL, the MESA and our own group were all on strike. We had two headquarters, the AIWA headquarters on Lycaste and the AFL headquarters which was further down the street. It was a long, costly, bitter strike. One man was shot and killed in the strike. All the windows were bombed

out of the plant or broken out with sticks and stones. Streets were filled with tear gas. There were incidents of "head-splitting" and policemen's clubs were whirled. Newspaper headlines attacked the strike and the strikers. Two union headquarters were bombed. I knew that we had no part in any of the bombing nor had anybody been paid by us to do any bombing. Yet either the AFL or the MESA headquarters had been blown up. It was a bloody, violent, vicious strike. I do not believe Detroit had seen anything like that in its history.

We were sadly disappointed by the fact that Father Coughlin, who had professed himself to be our friend, either went on a vacation or refused to speak out for us. Instead a Methodist bishop came out on our behalf, even raised funds for us at the time. I am not Methodist, and there is no malice intended in my statement. But Father Coughlin just let us down cold. He did not do a thing for us. I think he made one public statement and that was all.

The AFL decided to go back to work. Francis Dillon thought that this was a way to show the independent unions that they were nothing, so he sent the AFL people back into the plant. After weeks and weeks of striking, we found ourselves with the plant operating pretty fully; our strike was losing its effectiveness, although the headlines were still glaring and the violence was still rampant. We had no part in that violence and we could not figure out where all of this was coming from. Who was throwing the stones and bombs and tear gas through the plant windows?

We did not have our answer, again, until the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee exposure showed us that Pearl Berghoff, king of the strikebreakers, had been hired by the industry to come in and create this violence; to create the violence and headlines which painted labor as the kind of racketeer that I had read about. Then I began to realize how some of these stories found their way into public light; how minds were influenced in the belief that Detroit should be the "great open shop city" and so forth. This was their way of poisoning the minds of the public against labor unions!

We used some strategy in that strike. Motor Products invited all of the employees back to work; they said the strike was over. They invited them back to work even though we were still maintaining our picket lines. Seeing the spot that we were in, we decided on one desperate move. We called our people into a meeting, told them to put their badges on, to go in there and clean that plant out. And they did. There were some very humorous stories told about the situation as they went in and drove every person out of that plant. It was completely closed down again. The pay-off was that we lost the strike. However, we still had a nucleus there. We got our people back in and within a couple of years we had successfully reorganized the plant and had negotiated a collective bargaining agreement with the company. We maintained pretty good relations over the years with them.

Going back to the espionage, it was common then to use Pearl Berghoff and all of the other strikebreakers, the labor spies and the black list, which was so predominant in those days.

I might tell you about Briggs. The Briggs plant, Meldrum and Mack Avenue, had been known for many years as the sweatshop of the City of Detroit. It was the place where men who were blacklisted in every other plant because of union activity could go and get a job. Because they were patrolled by the Ford Service Department they felt they could control anybody who might come in there. It did not matter who they were, if they wanted them out, they fired them. Every fifth man, we used to say, even every third man, was a spy. They had a machine set up comparable to the Ford's Harry Bennett organization, the Service Department. They felt that it did not matter who they hired. They could take any kind of worker and force him to do so much work because of this system. We started to organize the Briggs plant. We soon found that each time we would organize and call a meeting those who attended it were ousted the next day. We knew that they had spies there. We told people to park their cars blocks and blocks away or to ride with someone who was not involved, and to come to the meetings. But they were always reported and fired. We had several hundred people ousted from the Briggs plants. We had never met with the Briggs management and we had no avenue to meet with them. They would not even think of talking to us. There was nothing we could do from that standpoint. So in desperation we called a meeting of all of the night shift at the Dodge plant. At that time our headquarters was on the corner of Milwaukee and Chene, where we had a large hall.

By this time, I might tell you, I was organizational director for the City of Detroit for the UAW. We had now completed our amalgamation. I also was a board member of the auto workers at this time. We had amalgamated after the 1936 Convention. Within the AIWA we had a very sharp fight and a lot of convincing and converting to do. We did, however, succeed in getting a vote of our organization to join with the, now autonomous, Auto Workers Union with Homer Martin as president.

In any event, we called a meeting of the Dodge night shift and as people came into the hall, we told them that if they stayed for the meeting, they could not leave; that they would have to stay right through. Anyone who wanted to leave would have to leave before the meeting; those who stayed were to stay through so that no information could leak out. We even closed off all phones. We got a tremendous turn-out of our night shift workers. We had a staff of organizers and some excellent speakers, including Leo Krzycki of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. We kept the people who attended the meeting all night from the time their night shift was over, which I should imagine was around midnight, until the following morning. We had coffee, hot dogs, cookies and cake. We told stories, anecdotes of the labor movement, its early history, humorous speeches, everything. Along with that, we worked out a plan whereby so many cars would be lined up with a certain number of people to a car and a captain for so many cars. A route and the parking locations were set up with people stationed at the allocated spaces. We worked out a regular military organization

setup to move on the Briggs plant. I led, arranged, called and set this up. And in the early morning, long enough before the morning shift was to start, we took these cars and had our people form what we later called the flying squadron. This was the start of the flying squadrons and also of the running picket line. We formed a ring around the Meldrum plant of Briggs and we closed it tight. As people came to work, they either had to bust through the picket line or stay out. From the inside of the plant tear gas was thrown; they tried to break our line. In spite of the tear gas, our people reformed their lines and we closed the plant down tight. By eleven o'clock in the morning we had succeeded in closing the Briggs-Meldrum plant. It was a major step for us. We knew of no other alternative but to fight this constant discrimination. (Along with that, we were running into a very serious problem of lead poisoning in the Briggs plant, but I will come back to that.) After closing the plant down tight, our picket line was called off and we went back to headquarters.

I had been up all night. I stretched out on a bench in the hall and went to sleep. About one or two o'clock in the afternoon, I received a phone call. The voice identified himself as Harry Bennett. He said, "I would like to have you meet with John Gillespie on this Briggs situation." I knew of John Gillespie only by reputation; I had never met the man. I told Bennett, whom I had never met nor spoken to before that I would be very glad to meet with Mr. Gillespie if it meant some action on the Briggs situation, and that I would wait for his arrival. We had never

met with anyone from Briggs' management, only our own workers in the plant. Bennett said that Gillespie would be over to pick me up to talk to me. Knowing Gillespie by reputation (as I will bring out later), I told several people where I was going; because I did not know what kind of ride this was going to be. John Gillespie came over and he said, "You know, Mr. Ford is a great believer in good wages. Now he will do nothing to enhance the union or to build the union. He will do nothing towards any kind of union recognition. But if it is wages or working conditions that are improper, then Mr. Ford wants those things straightened out. As you know, Mr. Ford has an interest in the Briggs plant. They make our bodies." We knew that the interest was much deeper; that Ford controlled a lot of the policy of Briggs. But anyway he said, "What are you asking at the Briggs plant?" I answered, "First of all, we are asking for a return to work of all these people who have been fired because they had the courage to come to a union hall and to join a union. We want every one of these 250-300 people returned to their jobs. Secondly, we want (I believe it was) 10 cents an hour increase."

By this time we were approaching the Briggs plant and I expected to be taken in to meet someone from the Briggs management. We pulled the car into the lot, parked it and he said, "I will be back in a little while." He came back in about, I should say, an hour. He said, "Well, okay." I said, "Okay, what?" He said, "Okay, we are going to return the people. Have them all report to their jobs tomorrow. They will report back and there will be a 10 cent increase."

At that time Emil Mazey was one of those fired as was his father and brother. They were among many others. We called a meeting and I went before this meeting to tell them the story. I told them exactly what happened: how the meeting was arranged, and so forth. In keeping with the fiery Emil of those days, even though he was on my staff, working part time while he had been fired, he said, "This is a sellout. This is no legitimate organization. What kind of a setup is this? Somebody said that we have a return to work on these bases. How do we know that we are going to get that? Maybe they are going to get us in there and oust everybody."

I answered him by saying this, "If you cannot organize the Briggs plant with an increase in wages and a return of all these people who have been fired, then you are the lousiest staff of organizers that I ever heard of in my life and you do not deserve to have a union. As far as I am concerned, we do not need the Ford Motor Company to organize for us; we can do it ourselves, providing we can get our people back in that plant." The result was that they voted overwhelmingly to go back into the plant and go to work. I need not tell you that the result was overnight organization. We got the increase, and we got the men back to work. It was a smashing victory. But it shows the influence that the Ford Motor Car Company, through Harry Bennett, had on all of the other plants with whom they did business.

That was the beginning of the tremendous growth that we had in organization in the City of Detroit. We had offices at 8944

Jos Campau; that was in the early days of the AIWA, the Automotive Industrial Workers, prior to the UAW. Getting back to growth, we had people working as clerks, perhaps 30 to 40, and it was nothing for us to bring in as many as 1000, 1500, 2000 people a day. They would come up, get in line and join the union. Chevrolet Gear and Axle marched over, almost in a body, to join up. That is the way we were spreading. This was about 1937 when we had this tremendous growth of organization. We had broken the fear. We had moved fast and our organization was growing rapidly.

I can tell you some stories that are almost unbelievable, stories that ought to be told. I only had a staff of, I think, five people for the whole City of Detroit. We worked the night around. Many, many times I would spend three or four days sleeping in my office. We just could not take time out to get home, because of night meetings, night shift meetings, meetings with management, etc. We just could not keep up. Our growth was that rapid. We were signing contracts right and left.

I signed, incidentally, the first union shop recognition agreement in the UAW with Thompson Products. And the man I signed it with later had a nervous breakdown because he yielded to us on a union shop. They had to put him in an institution; the pressure was that great from Thompson Products. He had yielded to our organization and that is how bad it was for him.

I negotiated as many as four and five contracts a day. Trying to alleviate some of this pressure, I sent out telegrams to all the firms with whom we had disputes, and to those places

that we had organized, asking them to meet at the Statler Hotel. We took a floor of the hotel and assigned the organizers who had been handling the various plants to certain of the groups. We had separate suites for the many who did come down and met with us. I would then meet with each of them and help work out the agreements, or adjust the disputes, and so forth. Morris Field was working for me then. Morris had turned in a report to me that one of the firms had a crane that was operating at such a low level that the men had to duck as the crane was moving. It was a real menace and the workers wanted that crane to be elevated properly so that they were not in danger of being decapitated. We had sent a wire to this firm asking them to meet with us. They walked in and I met with them. They said, "We got your telegram. We note in it this question of the crane. We wonder why you sent us this wire." Morris Field was late in arriving so I said, "Well, I do not know the details, but Mr. Field will be here before very long and I am sure he will acquaint you with it." When Morris Field arrived, they said, "We have no such problem as this." He said, "The hell you do not," and started to storm. They said, "Now wait a minute. We do not even have a crane." He said, "What company are you?" They told him. He said, "Oh, man, you are the wrong company." We had no one in that plant. But that is how fast it was moving, and how much fear companies had of the flying squadrons. They were all scared stiff that they were going to be chosen the next day as the one that would be closed. The firm came because they did not know what was cooking or whether they were next or what was happening.

We had the Detroit Stove Works, where we had much subsequent trouble. We went in there and organized them. We did not even have a committee. We had no one. Some men had called us and told us that the men wanted organization, but they were so afraid that when we got out there, no one would identify himself as the one who called or would serve on the committee. We had to go through the plant and pick out people and say, "Come on, you are on our committee." We went in and worked out a setup which enabled us to have recognition and we then broke their fear and formed a union.

I remember the L. A. Young bargaining sessions. We closed L. A. Young down with the Dodge flying squadron, but legitimately, with their own people also participating, although the Dodge flying squadron formed the backbone of it. I remember meeting with their attorney, Grant Cook, who would smoke a cigarette and then break the cigarette and throw it. I did not smoke at that time, but I picked up cigarettes and did the same thing. I said, "Look, we can break as many of these as you can. We can do the same thing, but it is not going to lead us to a conclusion on this organizational situation." We had quite a hostile time with him. We later broke that feeling down and L. A. Young and Grant Cook became very good to deal with over the years. This was just a part of the mushroom growth with which we could not keep up.

We had five men prior to this sudden upsurge of organization and if a man was able to bring in five members in a week that man was a star organizer. I mean it was tough. People were scared

stiff. Our staff would be out calling on plants and workers were afraid even to listen for fear they would be fired. But once the fear broke there was pent-up desire to redress some of the wrongs that had been happening in the industry and workers realized that the black list was broken.

The black list in Detroit was such that if a man was fired as an "agitator," that was what they marked on his card - "Agitator." Word went out all over the city. It was relayed from plant to plant and these men could not get jobs anywhere in Detroit. The black list was spread throughout all of industry. Many men lost their homes, their jobs, everything, because they had the nerve to be in the forefront, perhaps not even as organizers. Maybe they had just joined early in a plant. The black list was such a tremendous weapon over the heads of people that they were scared to death of joining an organization. The black list lasted for many, many years in Detroit. All the time that they were bragging of the "great open shop City of Detroit," that was how they kept it open. Many, many times people changed their names. They worked under brothers' names, and completely phony names. In later years, the companies allowed a period for people to give their proper names and identification without penalty; they recognized what had happened in so many instances. After that, of course, anyone who falsified their records would be discharged, which was legitimate.

My next meeting with John Gillespie occurred during the Midland Steel strikes. Midland Steel was doing a lot of work for the Ford Motor Company, as had Briggs. The sit-down strike at

Midland Steel occurred at about the same time that the General Motors strike was on in Flint, relatively close at hand. John Gillespie put in an appearance at Midland Steel trying to remove some dies from the plant. We turned him down cold on that. I talked to him and told him that we would not permit dies to go out of there. If there was any attempt to use force to get them out, we were prepared to meet force with whatever force was required. In those days they were using plenty of intimidation.

Now I will get back to the Kelsey-Hayes situation. I might point out that George Edwards, who is now a Michigan Supreme Court justice, was working in the Kelsey-Hayes plant as was Vic Reuther, Walter's brother. Bob Kanter, I believe, was also working in the plant. In any event, there were several who later became UAW staff members who were employed in the Kelsey-Hayes Wheel plant. We had very little membership in Kelsey-Hayes Wheel. We had had a great interest evidenced by the workers, and we had had no particular discrimination of any kind.

I must first point out that Kelsey-Hayes made brake shoes for Ford Motor Car Company. Prior to Kelsey-Hayes making the entire brake shoe production for Ford Motor Car Company, the Bendix Company in South Bend had been a co-supplier. But Bendix had had a labor situation and Ford, in anger at Bendix, had removed all of the dies from the Bendix plant and placed them in Kelsey-Hayes, which was a very unusual situation. Almost never did Ford allow its production to be threatened by having its eggs in one basket; but here they had done it. And our timing was almost perfect.

Of course, we were primarily leveling at Ford. We hoped to be able to get Ford in just such a position as we now found that we enjoyed.

We negotiated with the Kelsey-Hayes management. Mr. Kennedy was then president. We presented to him a demand for a 75 cent minimum for men and women. And they almost laughed us out of the office. That was fantastic! Seventy-five cents for men and women! The men part was not so bad, but to think of equalizing a minimum rate of 75 cents for women was beyond their conception.

During the course of the negotiations ~~Chrysler~~ Culver was then, as he is now, the head of the Detroit Employers Association. They were much more potent and powerful in those days than they are today. Their influence then was very dominant in all industrial relations because they were the tie-together, the knotter-upper of the various viewpoints of the manufacturers.

In meeting with Mr. Kennedy, we found that next to him was Chester Culver. And Chester Culver's position was most adamant - a 75 cent minimum would be revolutionary and destructive to everything that was good for the competitive position of industry in Detroit. In any event, failing in the negotiations, we struck the plant with a sit-down strike. Many moves were made, many threats were made: they were going to come in and remove dies; Ford was going to get a writ of replevin and take its dies and make them in some other spot. But I think they knew that, had they taken the dies, they would have found a very, very unsatisfactory set of dies because our people in the plants had removed certain pieces

of the machines and had put them in various places that would not have been too easy to find. So if they had taken the dies, they still would have been in tremendous difficulties, in addition to the fight they would have had to get the dies out, unless they had received a court order. The strike lasted, it seems to me, some five or six weeks. In any event, we had hoped to get the people out by Christmas and have the strike settled by then. On the outside of the plant, we were carrying placards showing Ford cars on sleigh runners. The slogans read, "How does your Ford run without brake shoes?" There were a lot of slogans showing the Ford on skids and so forth. But it became very serious for Ford. Their production was becoming very greatly affected. We knew that the pressure was starting to work on Kelsey-Hayes. I do not believe that we got the people out by Christmas. If we did, it was right at Christmas; and I am not certain of that.

I would point out that at that time Walter Reuther was working for me on my staff. Walter and I slept at the headquarters of Local 174 on benches for several nights. The Kelsey-Hayes workers were still being brought into Local 174; later on they became a separate local. Walter and I had slept with our clothes on. In fact, our wives had brought us changes of clothing at the headquarters. Because of the threats that we had received that they were going to try to rush the plant and take the machines out and so forth, we felt we had to be close by. Incidentally, no violence developed in that situation.

In addition, I would add, the Teamsters Union had offered its full support. At that point, Walter and Jimmy Hoffa were working very closely together; they were on pretty good terms. The Teamsters had volunteered their support to help us if we ran into any situation. They would not haul anything out.

We finally worked out a meeting through John Gillespie with Mr. Kennedy. Here is the way that meeting worked: it was the same old pattern. John Gillespie again called. He asked if we would be interested in working out a settlement. "Mr. Ford is very much concerned with the situation, but will not, of course, do anything to protect the union." This is the same story as in Briggs. "If it is wages, Mr. Ford is very sympathetic to the fact that wages should be up. You ought to recall that it was he who established the $5 day, the $6 day," etc. We told him, again, that we would be glad to work out a situation where there was no discrimination, where the union was recognized, and where a wage increase equaling our 75 cents for men and women was established.

The negotiations became quite interesting and amusing. As we entered the room - we all kidded about this - we could see in person, Mr. Kennedy, his assistant, Chester Culver of the Detroit Employers Association, and we could see a ghost of Henry Ford sitting there. John Gillespie did not enter the picture, but he had told us to sit with Mr. Kennedy and again present our demands and position, and this time they would be met. And sure as shooting, just as he described the situation and just as he suggested, that

is the way the settlement came out. That was a smashing, tremendous victory for the union. For the first time in the City of Detroit, we had established a 75 cent minimum for men and women. There were many other concessions that escape me now; nevertheless, that was the fundamental and the prime consideration.

Each of the moves we made served as an organizational medium for us to move into another area and that is the way it worked out. All of the time we were, of course, leveling at Ford, hoping to bring them in line because, as long as Ford was still unorganized, they were the great stumbling block to our progress both in Chrysler and General Motors and the competitive threat to us was tremendous.

I want to back up a little bit. Someday in the future much is going to be written and said about the use of the sit-down strike, the legality of it, and the lawlessness of the people involved. There is an old adage: Two wrongs do not make a right. But when you are in industrial conflict, it is warfare. When a strike occurs; when you are in a situation where you are fighting an entire industry with a black list; with years of open shop history; with all of the power and the money and the press and everything else controlled as it was by the power of the advertisements and so forth; then you have to fight fire with fire. This is industrial war. We had seen, while peacefully picketing, our lines violated with gangsters employed by industry. Now you cannot ask one group to be lawful and peaceful and picket to try to influence the minds of people when you have another group

exerting force and pressure and violence. And in those days that was the policy and pattern of the industry. And the adage that I say was proven here was that each action has a reaction. The reaction of labor was to fight to protect its jobs the only way it could: by sitting down where workers were not on a picket line to be pushed around by the police department, pushed around by the hired thugs that were brought in by the Berghoffs and others whose job it was to break strikes. Whether or not that is a good defense of the sit-down strike, at least that is the way we justified doing what we did. And it worked out. We successfully formed an organization. Our people were not lawless people. The union people did not want to fight that way but they had no alternative other than to supinely surrender to the powers that were. So that is my defense and my position for the use of the sit-down strike. I have never felt that apologies were necessary in spite of all the editorials on the seizure of private property and so forth. It was an expedient, true. It was not legal, true. But it was an action against illegality where there was no chance to win in a court because there was no law to protect you. So much for that.

I am going back now to discuss the factionalism and what happened within the organization itself. We will go back to the 1936 Convention in South Bend, which I attended as a fraternal delegate. The 1936 Convention was really the beginning of the Committee for Industrial Organization's approach to mass production industries to bring them in line with their thinking. The Auto

Workers convention of '36, headed by Frank Dillon, who was appointed by William Green, saw the move to give autonomy to the convention, spearheaded by Wyndham Mortimer from White Motors of Cleveland and by several others. Ed Hall, who was then secretary-treasurer, was also a strong advocate of the elective officers for the union. Mr. Dillon also saw the approach, for the first time, of such men as Adolph Germer, representing John Lewis; Leo Krzycki, representing Sidney Hillman. He saw their influence being brought to bear on these young delegates who were now starting to think in terms of industrial unionism.

My first contact with the Committee for Industrial Organization came about during the Motor Products strike when Adolph Germer came in, representing John Lewis, to offer assistance and to try to weld the MESA, the AFL and the independent union into a force to meet the onslaught of Motor Products. At that time he briefly told us of the aspirations and aims of the CIO, the Committee for Industrial Organization.

Factionalism, of course, got away to a good start in that 1936 Convention. Those in power fought against autonomy, although Bill Green came in and addressed the convention and told them that they would have their autonomy. There were delaying moves and many avenues of escape were sought. But finally, as history records, the autonomy was granted. At that time in meeting with the CIO representatives, the auto workers pledged themselves to work in the same direction. Naturally, it was in their interest to do so. This was a young, new, enthusiastic organization.

Factionalism was bound to occur. There was bound to be a struggle for power, for leadership, in this organization. First of all, you had a mobile group of people. You had an educated group of people. The desire to take leadership was strong. There were a lot of able people who were fighting for leadership jobs. Alignments changed almost overnight. You had to be thinking very hard to remember who was with you at one convention and against you in the next.

Homer Martin, as newly elected president of the UAW, was not a strong leader. Homer was an excellent speaker, and as someone once said, "No one was as impressed or more impressed by Homer's speech than was Homer." He was a lot of things to a lot of people. Those who knew him best found that he would make a public speech saying one thing, but in private advocate something else. Homer was thought to be, by the men closest to him, a demagogue and without the power to really weld together an organization.

A lot has been said about the various political groups and about their part in the factional fight. At that time I do not believe that one-tenth of one per cent of the membership of the Auto Workers Union had any political ideology. I do not believe that you could have found one-tenth of one per cent who knew the difference between communism, socialism, Trotskyism, Lovestoneites. Those names were merely names to the overwhelming majority of the people who comprised both the top leadership and the membership of the UAW. But because those were vociferous organized minority groups, they did play a role in the early days of the UAW. The

role they played was made possible because of the struggle for power and the newness and greenness of the organization.

I recall hearing Matt Smith speak in the Motor Products strike situation at Schiller Hall. This was at a mass meeting on the strike. Adolph Germer sat next to me. As Matt Smith spoke, Adolph Germer said, "Socialist." As another speaker spoke, Germer said, "Communist." And as someone else spoke, Germer said, "Trotskyite" or "Lovestoneite." I was so amazed. I said, "How can you tell by their speaking what they are?" He knew from what they said and how they said it, as I later learned to do. They all had certain cliches, certain terms, and certain modes of presentation that to an informed listener were almost as obvious as if they had a badge on. I later learned to almost smell them myself. These people, with training far beyond the average auto worker's knowledge on matters of politics, did play a role. They were zealots, like the communists on an organizational drive. They were zealots in putting out leaflets and working around the clock.

They all came into the organization. Now their role in politics was even more subtle because, as they would throw support in certain directions, they would try to influence individuals. And they succeeded in many instances, at least to the extent that at convention times, their little bloc could well be a balance of power. Though it was an insignificant, minute leadership, they had woven their way into such locals as Allis Chalmers, Midland Steel, Local 155. The communists had taken those. The

socialists were strong in 174, in 157, and in several other local unions. And as I say, even though numerically they represented almost no strength, politically they were of sufficient strength to designate whatever groups with whom they happened to find themselves with their own tags. In other words, where the socialists lined up, the whole group became known as the socialist group. Where the communists lined up, it became known as the communist group. A misnomer completely, but nevertheless, that is what was brought about by the implications of their participation.

Skeels: In those days was there this sharp division of thinking separating socialist from communist?

Frankensteen: Very definitely. The only time that they lined up together was in their effort to put together a farm-labor party. At that point they worked fairly close, although even there the socialists finally pulled away from it. Only Walter Reuther of the socialist group was permitted to work with the farm-labor party which was communist dominated. The division within the auto workers of the communists and socialists in the early days was not as sharp as it later became. The line apparently in both of their crooked ways had finally come to a meeting point about that stage and they were working together. How important they were in stimulating and keeping the fight going is hard to say.

About this time, around '37, early '38, another group became quite dominant. That was the Lovestone group. The Lovestone group was a splinter group from the communists. In fact, they

opposed the communists; opposed the socialists also. They were led by Jay Lovestone, who had at one time been secretary of the Communist Party. In the Auto Workers Union, Homer Martin now started to seek aid and comfort from the Lovestoneites. As the fight grew, he started to lean more and more on people like Bill Munger, Francis Henson, Lester Washburn, all of whom were members of the Lovestone group. Homer Martin had brought in Francis Henson as his administrative assistant. Francis Henson was an outstanding Lovestone member. Bill Munger, who was named editor of the paper at that time, was also a Lovestone member. Lester Washburn, who was a member of the board, was a Lovestone member. Eva Stone played a role in women's activities, in organizing and so forth. She, likewise, was a Lovestone member. This little group started to give its advice and counsel to Homer Martin.

By this time the fight was quite intense in the UAW. There were two factional groups in the UAW. Fundamentally, other than the basic struggle for power, there were no real differences. On a picket line, all the groups were together. By the groups I mean the officers of the UAW and the board members. When it came to policy, even within the union, there was very little fundamental difference among the members. It is hard for me to remember all of the alignments and the switches that took place over the years. You were "with" part of the time and "against" part of the time. All people switched.

You had two caucuses. There was a Progressive caucus and a Unity caucus. The Progressive caucus was the Martin group. The

Unity caucus was the group that was led by Walter Reuther. At one time the communists were part of the Unity caucus; in later years they became a part of the Progressive caucus. Even the names lost their identity. It was hard to keep up with the shifts. Actually, the shifts were based more on the fight for jobs and the fight for positions, etc.

In other words, each of the caucuses had a wide range of supporters. There might be Lovestoneites in one group, but there were also a large number of very conservative unionists, extreme right-wingers. There were only the two groups, and the union was made up of extreme rightists, extreme leftists, centers, and all shades of thinking. There was very little political thinking by anyone, except as these few political groups would have to take root somewhere. I think that the factional fight within the UAW could have been ended much earlier if there had been more compromise, perhaps on the part of the "ins" to the aspirations of some of the "outs." Walter Reuther had been on the "outs," he was in the minority. Walter wanted a vice-presidency so bad that he would never let the fight die until he could get it. He was struggling for that position. If there had been a move to open up and create a vice-presidency for Walter Reuther, I think the fight might have ended, although actually not the fight against Martin.

Martin, I am convinced, had gone all the way over to management's side in his desire to retain his power. I do not think that he did it for financial remuneration. I do not think that

he switched over because of any economic gains or anything that personal. But I think in his desire to maintain his power, he had gone all the way over to where he was taking advice from the Ford Motor Car Company through Harry Bennett. I think that he had gone all the way to that extreme position. In any event, Martin made his own break when he lined up against the CIO and made his fight to split the organization. He took what he could and, of course, formed the AFL Auto Workers Union.

After the 1937 Convention I had been named as assistant president to Martin, which gave me a status above the other vice-presidents in that I was the administrative vice-president. I never enjoyed the factional fight. I believed, honestly and sincerely, that we were hurting the cause that we were trying to advance by this continuous fight. Now do not misunderstand me. I was as factional as the next guy because in a fight, you fight. But basically, I wanted to see the fight end. I thought that we could do some constructive good if we could end this fight. There was no reason that I could see for the fight. Personally, - I guess this has been one of my troubles all my life - I like people. I did not hate anybody who was on the other side, personally. I had no bitterness against Walter Reuther or any of the others.

I thought that this fight could be ended. I recognized the role that the politicals were playing: Tucker Smith was representing the Socialist Party, Jay Lovestone was representing the Lovestoneites, Gebert was representing the Communist Party. I suppose that this was juvenile thinking, but I believed that the officers of our

union could call on these people and tell them that we wanted their hands out of the politics of the UAW; perhaps we could sit down and show a constructive program and get all of them to say, "Look, we will go along on a constructive program and that is the end of factionalism." So I had talked to Francis Henson, who was Martin's administrative aide, and had told him that I thought that we ought to sit down and not negotiate or bargain in any form, shape or manner with these people, but tell them that here was our program, "Now we want you guys to either go along - your people to go along - with this program, or we are going to fight all of you to get you out of any influential position whatsoever in this union." My intentions were purely and simply to end the factional fight. But in the nature of the factional fight, the implication was made and charges were made that I was trying to bring these people into a position of power within the union where we had to negotiate with them; which was never my thought or any part of my thinking.

I came out at that point with a program, a declaration of policy, on the part of the union and I wanted all of these people to go along with this declaration. There was nothing wrong in that, except that Homer Martin held that I had done this by going over his head. Well, I suppose knowing a little more about political thinking today than I did then, he had some merit to his argument. I suppose I should have cleared this or fought through the thing with him, but I was trying to get it out in the open and I knew that he would have blocked it. This was

something intended to pull all the factions together and to end the fight. Here I was in one office with Homer Martin and the secretary-treasurer and the other vice-presidents were at the other end of the hall and we hardly spoke. You could not have an organization functioning that way. My desire, and it was sincere and honest, was to end this fight. Whether I chose the right tactic, I am not prepared even now to say because that is too long ago. My thinking perhaps was not the same as it is today as how to best approach a matter.

Martin's first move was to oust me as administrative vice-president, to demote me to the status of the vice-presidency to which I was elected, which was all that I ever wanted or had a right to expect under that election. I had never sought the position of administrative vice-president; it was proffered on me. But in any event, this was the break. Martin then proceeded to oust us, which he had no constitutional right to do, without charges and trials and all the rest of it. But Martin ousted me, Walter Wells, Ed Hall, George Addes and Wyndham Mortimer. He kept on only R. J. Thomas of the vice-presidents. The reason he kept him on was that R. J. Thomas had been the least factional, perhaps, of all the group. He had been elected vice-president at the Milwaukee Convention and had less time to formulate political alliances and so forth.

The fight became history. The rank and file responded. It was a knockdown, drag-out fight and the rank and file rose overwhelmingly in support of those of us who were ousted as against

the Martin group. The CIO came in and tried to patch it up. They tried to force Martin to reinstate the ousted people and to weld the organization together and to call a convention, which Martin refused to do.

Lewis, Hillman and Murray had talked to Martin and had called him down to Washington. They had talked to Martin about welding together this organization and told him that it was impossible to expel a leadership that represented as much strength as did the ousted leadership, plus the leadership that they still represented within the organization. But Martin would have no part of it. A convention was called for 1939 in Cleveland. The delegates were 90 per cent, and that is conservative, in the corner of the ousted people. Incidentally, R. J. Thomas had broken with Martin and was now working with Hillman and Murray as well as with the ousted group to weld the organization together. By this time Martin already had gone to a separate organization. I mean he was building for it. He did not even participate in the 1939 Convention. By that time he had tried to seize local unions, their assets, and so forth. In fact, many local unions were protected with shotguns from the seizure by Martin's people. And local unions had meeting after meeting wherein they expressed themselves, through voting, as being loyal to the CIO and wanting to stay within the CIO.

At the convention in Cleveland in 1939, George Addes and myself had the overwhelming support of the convention as far as delegates were concerned. We had been out in the field and we

had done such a thorough job. We went into that convention with the support of the people in our pockets. A program had been worked out and the caucus, which certainly represented the overwhelming majority, had set up the officers with Addes as president and myself as secretary-treasurer or vice-versa. We had the strength to have elected an entire slate. But Phil Murray and Sidney Hillman came in. (Incidentally, I always felt that Phil Murray was one of the closest personal friends that I had, and he was.) Phil Murray said, "Look, you fellows just cannot do this. The organization is the most important thing, and you fellows have been too close to the fight. You are too vulnerable to Homer Martin's ability or his power to bring a lot of membership into his organization if you fellows become the spearhead because you have been so closely identified with this 'ouster' fight." He wanted a president who was a neutral, who could pull the Martin forces into this new organization so that Martin could not have strength to have a power bloc against the union. In looking for that type of person they even went to the local unions. There was talk of Dick Leonard, who had been non-factional. There was talk of Ed Ayres, who was the president of the Graham Paige local. And many others were considered.

Of course, we were very adamant. We were not going to be pushed around like this. We had the votes, we had the strength, and we were going to fight. And it dragged down right to the last wire as to who the officers were going to be, and finally we capitulated to Sidney Hillman and Phil Murray's position that

the best interests of the organization could be served if we did not take these positions. We were not happy. Although today, I can see where Phil Murray was absolutely right and so was Sidney Hillman. Had we gone in, we would have had to fight to pick up the other membership. We would have carried all of the militant strength that we had with us, but we would have lost a lot of the extreme group who were with Martin and we would have been unable to pull them back. Whereas Thomas, who had been close to Martin and working within their group, had enough influence to pull them away from Martin, and it was a good choice. Thomas was a darn fine president. He was always a compromise. In later years even, when Walter Reuther and myself would build up power blocs, as we did, the strength was about evenly divided. Walter could never have stepped up as president as long as I was there, and I doubt that I ever could have as long as Walter was there because we both had about equal strength. When I say "we," I am speaking of the group I was with, George Addes and Ed Hall were long gone and so were many of the others, but in the later stages it was a fight between Thomas, who was in the middle picking up strength from both groups as we could compromise on him as the candidate.

Thomas' great mistake was in believing that he could put Vic Reuther and other people in positions of power and that they would go along with him. They were only waiting for the time to oust him. Walter Reuther could not have made the presidency had I stayed in there because our strength was too evenly divided.

When I resigned in the 1946 Convention, I was not able to deliver my strength. While I was there I was there to protect them, too. But when I was out, they did not want to be on the "outs" with Walter, who was going to be a powerhouse, so they switched over. I could not deliver that strength. Thomas lost by a hair.

I cannot remember a fundamental issue that was really an issue. Oh, there were some that were made, as in the convention in '43 on the piecework issue. Again they brought political implications to bear on what was not a political situation. But my position at that time, and it would be my position today, and it would have been my position at any point where I was representing people who were affected as the people I represented were, piecework under those conditions was a proper thing.

Now let me give you the background on that statement. The government had a freeze on wage increases. The only way wage increases could be granted was to show an increased productivity which would be paid for. In other words, a plot of ground would have to show that it had more productivity through effort put in before more money could be paid than had been paid previously. That was the gist of the argument that the government used. Now they agreed that piecework could be paid in that fashion.

I represented the aircraft industry for the CIO. I was also director of Chrysler, but within the UAW. We had done a yeoman job of organizing. I think we brought in more aircraft members into the organization than all other groups brought into the UAW in that period. We had organized Douglas; we had organized

Curtiss-Wright at Paterson, New Jersey. From coast to coast we had organized the aircraft industry - Ryan Industries, almost every unorganized plant was brought in. That is still a proud chapter in my life because that was a very hostile, tough industry to organize. We had very strong competition, both from the machinists and from the teamsters, and from the fact that there had been no organization. It was in remote territories where we had no strength of organization to help us, but we made tremendous strides. The aviation workers were the lowest paid of any basic industry. They could not get a wage increase in any way. They were frozen at a wage inequity that was atrocious. The only possibility for the aviation workers to get a raise was to establish piecework. They were already doing the work. We were trying to turn out all the production possible. Yet it was impossible to obtain a wage increase without an establishment of piecework. This was dictated by our government War Labor Board policy.

Now the arguments against a return to piecework were these: we had gone through abuse in the auto industry where we had seen piecework rates established, production built up, and then the industry would come through and slash the rates. You would have to rebuild your wages with greater and greater speed. It was a sweat shop condition, and it was pushing and pushing and pushing. This was true. But my argument was that we now had an organization that was strong enough to patrol piecework and that we had a right to a return of the money to the worker for this extra productivity

which we were all turning out anyway for the war effort. This applied particularly to aircraft.

But due to politics, this issue became a political football. By this time the communists were in the war picture and wanted all-out production, therefore, the argument went, you must be a communist if you were for piecework. That was the kind of twist that was put on legitimate trade union problems which came before the convention. That is how strong politics remained through that period of life in the UAW.

We tackled North American Aviation at Inglewood. It was a tough organizational job, but we succeeded, won an election, and were established as the bargaining agency for North American. We went into negotiations and we had a list of demands which included a 75 cent minimum for men and women. Now think back. The Kelsey-Hayes strike was in 1936. Here we are in the first year of the war, 1941, and we are still fighting for a 75 cent minimum for men and women in the aircraft industry. It shows you how far behind they were. The strength in the aviation industry was divided. There were three unions: the machinists, the teamsters and the auto workers who had strength in the various plants. But we were all together, there was no friction. And we had made this demand as a universal demand for all of the aviation industry. We had a conference of all the various unions out there.

We were in the process of negotiating. At that point the National War Labor Board was in existence and I was a member of

that board. Our demand had been turned down by the company but we had taken the issue to the War Labor Board. And I had reasonable assurances from William Davis, who was the chairman of the board, that his inclination, speaking from the public standpoint, was in favor of it. With that assurance we were reasonably confident that we would have the 75 cent minimum established by the War Labor Board.

However, we had a group out on the West Coast who had gotten into this plant. Some of the young leaders were striped with communism. They were members of the Communist Party, and they kept advocating action and immediate action and so forth. So the result was that while I was in Washington before the War Labor Board, these people closed down the plant. I made 11 flights between Washington and Los Angeles in a period of one month on this North American situation. We had it under control until they pulled this strike. At that time I decided that this was a "knockdown, drag-out" fight. We were not going to lose everything that we had gained in aviation, all the organizational work we had done, we were not going to allow our goals to be sacrificed because of the leadership of an outside group of communists who were trying to establish something other than gains for the workers. They were interested in this strike because it was prior to Russia's entrance into the war, and they were looking at it from the standpoint that this was a capitalistic war. It changed very much after Russia got in it. But up to that time it was a capitalistic war and anything they could do to sabotage it, they were doing.

I called all of the staff members who worked for me on the West Coast to a meeting, and I said, "Are any of you responsible for this situation?" Of course, no one said they were. I said, "Well, I will tell you what the position of our organization is: that plant is to go back to work, every person in that plant on that strike is to return to work immediately, and we are going to continue negotiating and go through the bargaining procedure. That position is supported by R. J. Thomas, the UAW board, Phil Murray and the CIO." (Incidentally, I served in a dual capacity. I was appointed aviation director by the CIO as well as the UAW. I was paid both by the CIO and the UAW. Phil Murray was the titular head of the drive because the CIO had taken over to lend its support and organizational forces to us in this drive on aviation.) So I had cleared with both Phil Murray and R. J. as to the position, and they all agreed that this strike had no right, it was a wildcat strike, and we were not going to support it.

It was a very hectic situation. Apparently Walt Disney's artists, a lot of them communists, had painted cartoons with my face on a rat's body and so forth. We called a meeting, and they waved these signs, would not allow me to speak, they kept waving these signs in my face. They wanted the strike to continue. Nevertheless, I said they were going back.

Wyndham Mortimer had been assigned to me, he was no longer an officer of the union, but had been assigned to me and was working for me on the West Coast as an organizer. I said, "Mort, what is your position?" Mort looked at me and said, "Well, I

am with the rank and file." I said, "You sure are because you just got canned; you are no longer on the staff of the UAW." I fired several others.

I called a mass meeting for all the aviation workers in what became known as the bean field, which was across the plant at North American. I drove in there, and there were thousands and thousands of people, not just the aviation workers but curious people from all over, plus all of the left wing on the West Coast who had assembled their crowd to heckle me. They would not let me speak. So I said, "You will hear me. If I have to go on the air to make you hear me, you will hear me. I am ordering you back to work." That is when they waved the signs with the rat's body and so forth.

National Broadcasting Company offered me a coast to coast hook-up. The President of the United States, President Roosevelt, was very much concerned with this strike. I had been in touch with him. They were vitally concerned with the fact that this was affecting our production efforts and we needed this production. Madame Perkins, who was secretary of labor, had entreated me to get this plant back to work. So National Broadcasting Company gave me the time to go on the air. And I still have a copy of the speech I made, incidentally.

I denounced the communists. I said that Henry Kraus, who had been editor of the auto workers' paper at one time, was out there; he had been sticking his hands in this; that Mortimer and the others had given comfort and aid to these people, and that

I was making our position clear; that the communists were to get their hands out and stay out of the aviation picture, that they would have no part of it, and that we would use all the power of our organization to see that they did keep their hands out of it.

I fired the officers of the local union, placed a provisional staff in charge of the local, and for the first time, the troops were used. President Roosevelt sent the troops in. I had told the workers that the government was going to send the troops in; that the order was on the President's desk waiting to be signed; that there was no way of stopping it; that it was a national emergency; and that we could not hope, as a new organization without even the semblance of organization, to fight the public pressure, the Army of the United States, the policy of the government, and still win a strike. And it was contrary to the policy of our organization, the UAW and the CIO, and we ordered them back in. It was a violent, bloody, bitter struggle. We got the people back in the plant and maintained our organization. The results were, in the final analysis, that we came out with the 75 cent minimum for men and women. I then went into the convention of the UAW almost within a month after this North American situation. We came out with a fine organization which is still existent, incidentally. It would have been the end of organization on the West Coast had we not taken the position we did.

I went into the convention at Buffalo a month or so later. All the California delegation, which was predominantly left wing,

led by Lew Michener, the regional director, took little American flags that they had in front of them and started waving them whenever I stood up to speak in front of the convention. I had the advantage of having the microphone and I said, "You know, I would rather have you wave the American flag in my face, a flag that I am proud of, than to have you wave the flag that you would like to be waving, which is the flag of Red Communist Russia." The complete convention went into a standing ovation and applauded. That was the last time they waved the flags in derision in that convention. But this strike was a major issue, and it was one of the first real attempts at sabotage on the part of the communists where the war effort was involved. Of course, later on, the communists became the great believers in all-out production and strikes were taboo; anybody who went on strike was a Benedict Arnold according to them.

Let me relate some items about the campaign to organize Ford. Our offices were in the Griswold Building at the time I was made director of the Ford Organization. It must have been about 1935 or 1936. Ed Hall had been in negotiations in some of the outlying plants of Ford. This was in the organizational stage.

In any event, I had a fellow, Sigmund Dobzynski, who was one of the Lovestone group, too. I had inherited him from Homer Martin. He was president of the National Automotive Fibers local. He was on my staff for the Ford organization drive. We had Percy Llewellyn, who was working in the plant, and a

few other fellows from the plant who were working on the drive. The original problem was to break down the fear in the Ford plant, and the fear was tremendous. They had a "Service Department" second to none.

Again, as we had done at Briggs, we held meetings of four and five people because we knew that to call more than that number was a sure sign that they were going to lose their jobs because of spies. Even with four or five we found that our people were being ousted from the plant. It was a tremendous problem to break down the fear and get people to come out to a meeting or to try and get groups working within the plants to organize. We knew we had pretty good sentiment in the plant if we could crystalize it and get some way to break down this barrier of fear.

I devised and worked out a campaign that took into consideration billboards around the Ford plant. There were pictures of fellows in their coveralls coming out of the plant, dejectedly and head bowed and worn out. On the other side of this picture was another one with a man coming out of the plant with head up, the American way. We had some wonderful, wonderful billboards planned and prepared.

About that time we had very little money, and organization finances were a real problem. John Lewis had committed himself to help us out and had done a wonderful job. You recall his slogan of "Organize the Unorganized." So in view of the fact that he was contributing money to the Ford organizing drive, I cleared with him on whatever we put out. I will never forget

this as it was a very good lesson in the philosophy of John Lewis, which I think is of interest. I went down to Washington, and we were all enthused with this billboard and poster and slogan campaign. We sat down and we went through it, and John Lewis looked at the material and he said, "There is some very fine material here. Now it becomes a question of where to place the emphasis and the money. Now this would cost..," and he went into whatever the figures were. He said, "Let's see, that would be..," and he broke it down into the number of people that that amount would hire as organizers to make contacts with these people in their homes, personal contacts, and so forth. He said, "In spite of the fact that that is a very good medium, and it might break down a lot of resistance, I think the money would be better spent in direct personal contact with the people." So our billboard campaign at that time did not get off the ground. But we did put more people on the staff. We made very halting progress. We would go ahead for awhile and then it would die down. We could not seem to get the drive off the ground. The fear was too great.

I am leading up now to "The Battle of the Overpass." That was 1937, in May, I believe. We had opened up a headquarters out on Michigan Avenue, I believe. We took an old bank building and we had put up a big sign on the top, Ford Organizing Committee Headquarters, and we had placed a man in there hoping that we might at least get some material into the plant. We had, as I say, been calling all of these various small meetings. We had tried a couple of large meetings in an outside arena where we

might get the people out just to hear a message without signing up. Finally we decided, for the first time, we would distribute leaflets at the Ford plant. We went to the plant because it was very hard to get to the people any other way. It was impossible to get them out. We decided, in spite of the threats that had been made publicly that they would not permit a distribution of leaflets, to challenge the constitutionality of whether we had a right to free distribution of literature. We prepared a leaflet. I do not know if there is even a single copy of that leaflet still in existence. In any event, Walter Reuther, Jack Kennedy, Bob Kanter, and I decided to go to the Ford plant.

J. U. Kennedy, since deceased, was a very, very fine fellow who made a fine contribution to the organization. I believe he came out of the Douglas and Lomesen plant. He had been at one time with the Metal Polishers Union. Jack had been a board member and had been on my staff for quite some time, a very competent, hard-working fellow.

Going back to the overpass, Jack Kennedy, Walter Reuther, Bob Kanter, and I decided that we would go out to the Ford plant and survey where we were going to place those who were going to distribute the literature. So, without a piece of literature in our pocket, we drove out to the Ford plant. The most logical place to look over the situation was on top of the overpass at Gate 4. In view of the publicity and the threats that had been made by Bennett as to what would occur if leaflets were distributed, a considerable interest had been built up. Some members of the

clergy had asked to be allowed to go out and watch this. The press had been notified and had all of their representatives there, photographers and so forth, which made what followed look like this had been a dress rehearsal. The reason I am telling you why these people were present is that we did not expect the situation that developed. At General Motors Transmission plant when we tried a leaflet distribution, they had thrown paper bags of water out the windows, and plant guards had grabbed leaflets or taken them away from some individuals. We expected something like that to occur. But of what did develop, none of us had the faintest premonition. If we had, I doubt that any of us would have been foolhardy or brave enough to have gone out with just the four of us. We had nobody with us as bodyguards or anything of that sort. In fact, Jack Kennedy must have been in his sixties, and Bob Kanter certainly was not the Jack Dempsey type that you would take along for protection; he was a little thin guy.

We were up on top of the overpass to look the situation over. A couple of the photographers asked us if we would pose for a picture up there. So, smilingly, the four of us stood viewing the cameramen. The picture clearly shows men around the top of the overpass leaning over the railing or just standing in little groups. We thought it was a normal procedure, none of us knew anything of the overpass other than from driving past it. I had never been up on top of the overpass or even around the Ford plant to that extent. The picture clearly shows these people

starting to converge on us. Within minutes of our being up on top of the overpass and the shooting of this picture, the trouble started. They moved in. There were no words spoken. I have read descriptions where there were words exchanged, but there were none. They moved in and just started banging away. I lost track of what happened to the others, although I later learned that Bob Kanter had gone over the top of the overpass. Jack Kennedy was unharmed, I suppose, because of his age. He had just been marshalled off, but Walter and I got the pummeling.

It was really an organized, well-handled beating. They had professional guys do the job, and they knew how to do it so that you could not retaliate. In my instance they took my coat, pulled it up over my head, and then proceeded to lambaste me, as the pictures clearly show. They had Angelo Caruso, who had been a gangster. He was later found murdered in front of the Dearborn Police Station. They had a couple of plant foremen and a couple of former prize fighters as the group doing this job. Well, holding my coat over my head, they then kicked and knocked me out. While I was on the ground, they would hold my legs apart with their feet, put their heel in the pit of my stomach and twist, kick me in the groin. My head was like a piece of raw beef steak. My vest was ripped off me, my coat was ripped off me. A gold football, an all-state medal from football, a Champion sparkplug from a negotiation, the Cornell trophy on a watch fob, pen, pencil and papers all disappeared. They were scattered all over. I do not know how many times I

was conscious and unconscious. I remember that I got a great kick out of one thing: I recalled from football some of the lessons that I had learned about relaxing when you are taking a beating. In other words, if you are going to get whacked, try not to stiffen up. And as they kicked me I kind of chuckled inside. It is funny what your mind takes you through when you are in an actual situation. I had no fear because it was all happening too fast. You could not have fear. But I remember I chuckled a few times to myself as the kicks missed or I was lax enough so that it did not bother me as much as they thought it would. In any event, I did have this satisfaction: when they had the coat over my head and Caruso was pummeling me, I was able to get one hand up and catch his ear, and I ripped the hell out of it. I had that satisfaction anyway. I could not see what was happening to Walter. We met down on the highway. We had both been bounced down all those steel steps to the ground. We were finally picked up by a Detroit Times newspaperman. He took us to a doctor's place and they bandaged us. I remember I was nauseous from the beating. My stomach felt like it had nothing to cling to. We were both beaten terribly. Walter's temples were out over the top of his ears where he had been beaten.

Now I want to clear for you what developed a little later. I can only tell you this from what I saw in the pictures and what I know was to have happened because I was no longer there. We had arranged to have this mass leaflet distribution. Many, many minutes, perhaps even an hour or two, elapsed between our

beating and the arrival of the people to distribute leaflets. Busses drove up with the people and leaflets. Cars had been parked nearby with people with leaflets. But all of this was later. We had no leaflets with us, not a single leaflet. Now then, they tried the distribution and, of course, the same thing resulted. Tony Marinovich and a couple of others who were leaflet distributors were badly beaten, injured quite severely. In fact, to the best of my knowledge, one of the fellows, as a result of this beating, had a very serious mental condition. I believe he was institutionalized for quite some years and, in fact, later pensioned.

We had a court case against Ford as a result of this beating and we were given a judgment. We finally got the case taken up in Hamtramck; Judge Grunkowski, I think, was the judge. We received a verdict against the Ford Company. A settlement was worked out. All the money that was awarded to us was turned over to the workers who had been beaten. Although Walter and myself had a judgment against them, our share of the money was given to the people who had been beaten who were workers in the plants.

They had threatened to turn a steam hose from the roof on the distributors, and so forth, but apparently that had all been just propaganda and talk to avoid a distribution. To my way of thinking, "The Overpass Battle" did more to organize not only Ford but to solidify organization in all the plants of the city than any other single happening. I think it was the worst thing

that Ford ever did from the standpoint of trying to keep a union out. It just stimulated and brought people in by the hundreds that had never had the courage to join the organization.

A couple of months later, maybe less than that, the CIO jumped into this drive with both feet. Staff was put on, money was put in, and they took full advantage of the overpass situation to stimulate and to really build organization. It started to work, I mean it started to break and break beautifully. The rest, of course, is well-known history.

Skeels: I have always wondered why Mortimer and Ed Hall were not present.

Frankensteen: You see, this was just a normal routine and no built-up situation. If it had been, we would have had the whole board there including the president of the union. This was merely another organizational approach. It was the first time for the distribution, but there was nothing historic in the plan of it. It was only the results that made it historic.

Skeels: John Gillespie helped to work out settlements in the outlying Ford plants before "The Battle of the Overpass." Was there any change?

Frankensteen: No, always in the outlying settlements John Gillespie's statement was, "Mr. Ford believes in high wages, but he will do nothing to help protect the union. There will be no union security or union recognition." There was no such thing in any of those proposals that said union recognition, but in each instance we knew that the result of putting people

back in, or the wage concessions given us was the union strength. This was not a question of bargaining on money or any other matter. This was a question of organization. The Ford policy was consistent in that they were opposed to that.

We had offices in the Maccabees Building at this point. There was a front office and a big general office that I used for the staff meetings, and we had a blackboard up there. On the board I had listed the name of each man, where he had been working, what plants he had covered, how many people he had brought in, and so forth. And we used that when we were discussing approach and organizational means and so forth. Anyhow, John Gillespie walked into my office. I immediately called in my secretary and said, "Cover up that blackboard or erase it." (Now this followed the meeting out at Ford by a few weeks.) He had a paper bag and he laid it on top of my desk. He said, "Now look, no questions asked, no lies told, but I was sure you would want this." I opened up the bag and there was my watch, my gold football, all my medals, the pen and pencil and all of the articles that had been lost from my clothing. So I figured no questions asked was right, there was no use. He had made it very plain that I was not going to get an answer anyway, but my things were returned to me.

Skeels: Had any of the union people been armed?

Frankensteen: No. If we had been armed, we would have been killed. I think that is a very honest statement because they were armed to the teeth. In the pictures you see in the pocket

of W. Comment, one of the Ford fellows, a pair of handcuffs hang down from the back. In the hand of another man you see the butt of a gun. On another man you see the brass knuckles. If we had been armed, that would have been a perfect excuse. It would have been provocation, and they would have said, "Well, this was just in self-defense." I am sure of that. In fact, we were told on later occasions by way of "scuttlebutt" that that would have been the pay-off if we had been armed. So we did not have as much as a jackknife. We had not anticipated any such violence as that. We had expected perhaps, leaflets grabbed away from us, you know, from the people who followed us out, or that they might have roughed us out of the way or something of that sort. But we could not believe that in America this could take place. The powers that be, the Dearborn Police and the State Police did absolutely nothing to protect our people. It was brutal.

Skeels: You were present when the final organizational break came in Ford in '41?

Frankensteen: Yes. In fact, I suppose this is as good a time as any to put on record this story. I wrote the settlement of the Ford strike. I will tell you how I wrote it, and I will give you the details and the circumstances which you can verify. This has never been told. I was a fairly close friend of Murray D. Van Wagoner, who was governor of the State of Michigan. Our executive board was meeting, and Pat Van Wagoner called me on the phone and asked me if I had any ideas or suggestions on what

he was going to do with this situation. This was after the closing down of the Rouge plant, where we had blocked the streets with cars. He asked me if I would come over and meet him in Federal Judge Frank Pickard's office at the Fort Shelby Hotel. I went over and dictated the statement which settled the Ford strike, and I did that after consultation with the Auto Workers Board on what we could accept. But it could not come from us because if we had proposed it, the Ford Motor Car Company would have opposed it merely on the grounds that we had suggested it. In any event, I worked out and wrote the suggestion of what we would accept in the way of ending the tie-up and working this thing out. Pat Van Wagoner then made a call to the Ford Motor Car Company and threw this out as his suggestion, and it appeared in the press. I got quite a kick out of it because Pat was heralded as a statesman and so forth, and it gave me quite a thrill to know that the writing which I had done and the thing that I had set up made Pat a statesman. But in any event, that was my role in that particular phase of it.

Skeels: What CIO people were particularly important in this Ford organizing?

Frankensteen: Well, Mike Widman did a very excellent job, really a wonderful job of organizing, spearheading the drive. He was able to, of course, command more money and bring in more people. He was able to get all of the CIO unions to send in manpower, and it gave us a staff which we had never had before. I would say Mike was the prime figure, without any question. He was the

only one really. Then, of course, the contract was negotiated in the office of John Lewis, and that was his role there. But financially, dollar-wise and manpower-wise, it would have been many, many years before we would have succeeded without the help of the CIO.

Skeels: Did the federal government play any role through President Roosevelt or Frances Perkins?

Frankensteen: None whatsoever. Now let me qualify that to this extent that John Steelman, who was assistant to Madame Perkins, may have advised or sat in at some stage, but beyond that point, none. This was strictly worked out by the Ford Motor Car Company and the union.

This is conjecture, but I think it might have its place. At least this was the thinking of those of us in the union as to the settlement. Harry Bennett was most instrumental in the final settlement. Now as you know, he had been a prime labor-hater. He had been the guy who spearheaded the drive against any organization out there. Yet it was Harry Bennett who made the final concessions and went "hog-wild," in fact, they surpassed, in what they gave, both General Motors and Chrysler. I mean their pattern and their package was far better than what we already had in the rest of the industry, money-wise, and even security-wise. Now it was our conjecture that the reason for this, and for Harry Bennett's change of heart, was because he was on shaky ground, figuring that Henry Ford, Senior, would be logically the first to die, knowing that he was on the out list

with Edsel Ford. I think he figured that his best security in the Ford Motor Car Company was to be the man who could deal with labor. I think that, perhaps, was the reason for capitulation.

Now I have heard many stories. I have heard that Mrs. Clara Ford had definitely insisted to Henry Ford, Senior, that he settle this, that she did not want to be responsible for bloodshed, and that he had to settle this thing. I do not know. But those were stories at least that we have heard. I have heard that from quite good sources. But we thought, and I still think, that perhaps Bennett had the idea that if they had a contract, he would again enhance himself as he had in the days when he controlled the hoodlums who were hired into the plant, and when he protected the grandchildren from kidnapping and so forth. This was a new medium for Bennett to proclaim himself as the man who could deal with labor, and who knew how to deal with labor. In any event, the results were that we had the best contract, far better than we ever anticipated and far more than we would have settled for. It was far better than what they could have bought a contract for. We would have accepted much less and been happy to get our feet in the door.

Skeels: Was there any problem of trying to communicate with the foreign language groups?

Frankensteen: Yes. On foreign language groups we did a tremendous amount of work. We had Polish, Czechoslovakian, Italian, and every deonominational group set up. We had a leader, someone who could speak their language. We worked through fraternal organizations

and every mode of organizing we tried at some time or other in Ford.

Let me first tell some about park organizing. I am going back to '36, '37. My staff consisted of John Anderson, Walter Reuther, Jack Kennedy, maybe one or two others, and myself. That was the staff for Detroit. We set up park meetings. We would take a park like Chandler Park or we would go over to a little park without a name, such as the one over on Grand River near Clairmount. We would erect a stand or put benches up and talk to the people in the park, whether they were in an auto plant or from a dry cleaning establishment, we did not know. We would talk to them about the benefits of organizing and what we were trying to do in the auto plants. Over in Hamtramck, in the little park on Chene, we had meetings. In fact, a couple of times a week we would meet. Sometimes we could not get people off the benches to come over. But it began to grow, and we began to develop pretty good meetings. One summer I think that between Monday and Friday we would have as many as five park meetings, in other words, one a night held in various sections of the city. At that time, Walter Reuther and I usually would address the crowd and try to build some interest; find out what plants they were from and get them to bring in a couple of members. You were working for one, two, three, four or five people. That was a big week. Most of it was the fear that people had of signing up. We knew that we had to organize Ford. The competition Ford offered against us in the way of wage differentials and

working conditions as compared to Chrysler and General Motors was just too great. In other words, it was a perfect "out" for the companies to say, "We cannot do it, competitively we will be lost to Ford if we do." We knew that before we could ever make real progress in collective bargaining in these other plants, we had to take away the unfair competition of an open shop Ford.

We used every saloon and restaurant and bar and every place that workers went to. We had people in there buying drinks and sitting around and talking. We would even get up at noon on top of a box and speak even though the people did not leave their seats. We told them many times not to give any response, but just listen to the message.

I had a couple of major fist fights as a result of these impromptu talks in bars and so forth. I went into a little restaurant over near Fisher 23 plant. We would go out and select a restaurant where a lot of workers congregated and then we would go in and ask the owner of the restaurant or the bar, whatever it happened to be, if we could address the people. This particular day I stood up on top of a chair or table and addressed the people in the room about the benefits of organization and what we hoped to accomplish in this plant. I got heckled. One great big burly guy apparently had had a few drinks, and every time I would open my mouth to speak, he would say, "Blah, blah, blah. Yeah, the union's gonna do so much. You are a union, you are a great union." He would keep heckling, and I could not make myself

heard. The more I would raise my voice, the more he would raise his. I finally said, "You are either a company stooge, a paid spy, or a stool pigeon of some sort. You do not want to hear the truth, and you do not want to listen." He grabbed a beer bottle and started for me, and I dove off the table. I thought I had better get in the first blow. With all the momentum of the jump, I caught him and he went back halfway across the room. The owner of the place came out and he said, "You get out of here. I am not going to have my place turned into shambles. That is the end of that." We could not leave knowing that if we walked away from this situation we would never get back in there. We went outside and took a box; I got up there and I addressed them. I fully expected that this guy was going to come out. He looked like he could knock my block off. But he walked over and I thought, "Brother, here it is." I was ready. He put his hand out and he said, "You know, you have got a good punch. I am joining up." It turned out that this fellow had been a key leader in the MESA, and he was a wonderful, wonderful union member, a big Dutchman, German. I no longer recall his name, but he became one of our very active members and a good member. So we had to use that once in awhile. You drifted into some of those situations. That was part of the organizing drive.

We were able to get a few theaters to run trailers about organizing and its benefits. We came out with a book called the Flivver King; we paid for that. That was the story of Henry Ford, which was very pro-labor. It was written by Upton Sinclair.

We distributed that book free, got that in as many Ford homes as we could. We put out pamphlets, of course, and booklets, and we mailed out literature. We used the radio. We had regular, I forget now if it was weekly or monthly, radio broadcasts on the organization. We used the NLRB. We had a couple of cases there where we were able to put a couple of people back to work, and we focused attention on that and played it up to try to gain sentiment and sympathy. We subsidized discharged workers to have them carry a message and the need of organizing. Later on we put billboards out. They were wonderful, very successful and they helped a great deal. That was after we had a little money coming in. It was no longer a question of billboards or an organizer.

Let me move to another topic, that of race problems. Lloyd Jones illustrates this. Lloyd Jones had been a "hillbilly" preacher, had worked at Briggs for many years, and later had gone into Murray Body where he had always been active in whatever form of labor movement there was. He was a very competent fellow and a good speaker. Lloyd became president of Murray Body local. He was on the staff many times both as a full-time organizer and as a part-time organizer. Also he was active in organizational meetings while he was president of the local. He made a great contribution. We had a strike at Bohn Aluminum. Every strike in those days was a danger because when you called people on strike, you knew that every force was going to be exerted to try to break that strike. It is not as it has been in more recent years where a strike was merely a protest, and you knew that

before it was settled everybody would be called back to work. You did not have that assurance in those days. When you had a strike, you were gambling. Your people were gambling when they voted to strike that they might lose their jobs, and it was not easy to get another one. The black list was still prevalent.

In any event, we had a strike at Bohn Aluminum and the powers started to work. The plant was about equally divided between Negro and white workers. The foundry had mostly Negro workers. At least we thought it was about 50-50. In this strike we found that the question came up that the Negroes were trying to get more white jobs, and so forth. There were a lot of Southerners in there. It was fraught with danger. They were trying to call people back to work the plant even though the strike was on. It became a very, very touchy, delicate situation.

I decided because of this racial issue being raised that Lloyd Jones, a Southerner with a broad-minded, tolerant viewpoint, would be the guy to send in. We called a meeting and we asked Lloyd to go in and address the meeting. We told him what was happening, that this issue was being raised and that we wanted him to lick it. So Lloyd went in and he started talking. I was there as were a couple of others. But Lloyd was doing the job of clearing the atmosphere. Lloyd made a very dramatic appeal to these people about solidarity and the need for it. He told of a situation that he knew of in the mines where because of religious differences the mine owners were able to create dissension and disturbances and pit one worker against the other,

so much so that they marched down the street against each other, while the employer just sat back and waited for the battle to end and to call them back in at any price he wanted. He had it licked. The employer had them fighting among themselves.

After telling this story and leading up to the need for solidarity, Lloyd said, "By the way, what is the percentage of Negroes in the plant?" Someone said, "About 75 per cent." Lloyd, with all the Southern years of background, said, "Jesus, I did not know it was that bad!" We did not know quite what to say or how fast to say it. Anyway, the air was cleared; nothing happened. Lloyd had done a good job generally. It was just the one remark and it did not seem to stick.

But I think maybe this would be a good point to tell you about the break in of Negro workers into the industry, the battles and some of the problems. The Auto Workers always took the position that regardless of race, creed or color a man has a right to economic security and to any job that he is capable of holding. That was always the policy, although within the board itself we had a few fellows who resented the policy and went along only lukewarmly. In fact, one of the board members, Del Garst from Kansas City, used to speak of the colored workers as "Niggers." It was a constant source of friction on the board. We always kept correcting him. Finally, we did get him around to a point where he at least went as far as "Niggeros." That was the best we ever did with Del Garst. We had a lot of Southern board members, and their position was reflective of the Southern

States. But fundamentally and primarily our position was, and we enforced it, that the constitution of the Auto Workers gave the Negro the right to whatever job he could hold. Actually, it was a moot question because there were so few Negro jobs in the plant. Sweepers and foundry, that was all that was open to them.

Then the war years came, and there were worker shortages. The Negroes who had seniority in the plants more and more were seeking to better their status. Some of them had even gone to school. Now they had an upgrading program. I believe Cass Technical High School taught machine operation. At least one of the schools did. Some of these men who had worked in the plant, colored and others, went down and took these courses in the schools to learn how to do other jobs.

About this time, the Hudson Naval Ordnance plant was engaged in the production of Beaufor guns, which were very vital at that time and were the prime gun being made at the time for the Navy. I was in Washington, D.C. I was a member of the War Labor Board and the War Production Board. I received word from Forestal's office that the Hudson Naval Ordnance was on strike, that they had walked off the job, that it was very, very serious, that this production was of dire importance to us, and that we had to do something about it. He asked me if I could get that straightened out. R. J. Thomas, likewise, was in Washington at the time. Tom was a member of the War Labor Board also. Anyway, he asked me if I would meet with Forestal, discuss this situation, find

out the needs so that I would have that to fortify myself with and fly back.

They flew me back in an Army bombing plane. I will never forget that flight. It was one of those with the dome ceiling, and you sat on a wooden bench along the side. It was like a paratrooper plane. We came back in record time on a special flight. I was all alone in this bomber with the exception of the pilot, co-pilot and the crew. The Navy had a car meet me and drove me right out to the Hudson Ordnance plant. I think I must go back a little now. The Hudson plant had been for many years the scene of "Black Legion" activity. Now Hudson also had some very fine trade unionists. They had had an independent union, the AAWA. They had been among the first to merge. In fact, at the same time that the AIWA had merged with the UAW, the AAWA came in. They had some excellent fellows who later made fine contributions to the labor movement. But along with that they had a group of people in there who were the spearhead of the "Black Legion." They were also the guiding forces of a group known as the "Invisible Eye of Labor" which was a Ku Klux Klan, a "white-shirt" outfit or a hooded one. They had many Southern employees from the hills, the real rabid people who would go for that type of organization. I mean it takes a rabid person to go for that kind of a cult. These people, through their seniority, had been transferred to the Hudson Naval Ordnance plant. This meant a strong background movement inside that plant.

I arrived at the gate. I had not made my position known. They were on strike. They were sitting down in the plant. There had been no statement made, but from the time I entered that plant they started yelling, catcalling, and chanting all through the department. I walked through about five departments to get to the particular department where the situation had arisen, and they started chanting, "Nigger lover, Nigger lover, Nigger lover" all the way through. I got into the department and I got up on top of a machine. Management was there as were the Navy officers. Everybody was brought over next to the machine. I started to tell them the position of our organization. There was dead silence, not a word. I told them that I had just flown in. I told them the background of the situation, the essential need of this gun, what it meant to the defense of this country.

I might tell you that this whole strike was caused because two Negroes, who had worked for the Hudson Motor Car Company for years and years, had been upgraded from sweepers to machine operators after taking the courses that I described earlier. These same men had worked with them, had sat down with them, had their lunch with them, and had now been upgraded, and so they closed the plants down. These were not new people brought in or anything else; they were old employees.

I told them that those people were going to remain on the jobs that they had been assigned to. I told them that there was the Constitution of the United States that guaranteed the right of employment, regardless of race, creed or color, that all people

were created equal. I told them that furthermore, they had a constitution that they had helped to draw up through their delegates that prescribed the same thing, and that I was not there to debate, to argue or to convince anyone. I was there only to enforce their constitution. I was going to ask the management to oust anybody who was not back on their jobs working within the next 15 minutes. We would support the discharge of any person and there would be no union intervention if anyone were fired for refusing to go to work. I said, "I am not taking an arbitrary stand since this is your constitution that you drew up. I am only the enforcer of it as you have elected me to be." If they did not like my action, they could vote me out at another convention. If they did not like the language of their own constitution, they could change it through their delegated activity at the convention. But until that time, that was the way it was going to be. I hoped they would co-operate. I expected co-operation. Those who did not want to co-operate might as well walk out right then because they were not going to be back in that plant working. Well, they moved slowly back towards their machines when I had finished. I would not allow any discussion. I said that this was not a debate, this was not a meeting, this was merely an instruction and an order on the basis of the facts, that there was no time for debating or arguing any issue, that they were to go back to their jobs. They started back slowly. One big fellow had hostility written right in his face. He looked at me like - "If looks could kill, I would have been a dead man."

So they walked back to their machines, and I walked around all of the machines and talked to them individually. I found that many times a little pat on the back or a handshake or a "hello" or "how have you been" or something would do more good than you could possibly do up on top of a machine or any place else. So I tried this. I came to this fellow and said, "Give us a hand, will you, fellow, and see that this thing works." He said, "Ah will like hell," with as deep a drawl as you ever heard. He said, "I may have to work with the bastards, but ah shore won't like it, and ah won't do anything to help it out." But nevertheless, they went back to work, and that was the first time, to my knowledge, that upgrading had been successfully put in any plant in the City of Detroit, but it was established and we had no further friction. That was the end of it.

The phonograph records that you are taking with you to make copies pretty much give the detailed story of the happenings in the North American situation. However, I think that it would be well for me to give you a tie-in as to what took place prior to the recordings which you have. First of all, the workers at North American produced 25 per cent of the total aircraft production. You will recall that this North American strike occurred just at the time that the communists were claiming that the war was a capitalistic-imperialistic war. Russia was not involved, therefore, it was imperialistic. At that time they were not interested in national defense and were ridiculing the efforts of America (who was then not in the war) in their participation in the preparedness program.

With that as background, their attempt was to sabotage, and we found it all over, in what we called national defense and the producing of war implements such as airplanes, etc., for the national need. Of course, a little later on the tune changed and they became great disciples. It became a class war and a class struggle when Russia got into it. But until that time it was an imperialistic war according to them.

We were in the process of negotiating with North American. The wages were pathetically low. As the records point out, it was one of the 11 basic industries in the United States. Yet the wages were tenth lowest of the 11 basic industries in the United States. Yet their profits were third high in the country for basic industries. The discrepancy between the wage rate and the productivity was very, very sharp. The workers were asking for a 75-cent minimum. It seems almost ludicrous today to talk of a 75-cent minimum as if it were a big thing. But actually the 75-cent minimum (I sat in on the original accomplishment of obtaining that in the auto industry.) was not too many years before when we had the Kelsey-Hayes strike and subsequently the Midland Steel strike where a 75-cent minimum became the pattern. So it was only a matter of a few short years that intervened between the 75-cent minimum established in auto and the follow-up with the 75-cent minimum in aircraft. But they were working at 45 and 50-cent minimums on the Coast.

When you spoke of minimum, that is a misnomer, too, because the classifications without unions were almost an unheard of thing.

So the minimum became the mean or better than the mean as far as the rate of pay that was paid throughout the industry, skills notwithstanding. So when you talk of a 75-cent minimum, you are not speaking of the sweeper or the minor skills, you are speaking of people up the ladder who were getting 50 cents. After they had reached the 30 and 60-day trial period, they were still getting 50 cents. So this 75-cent jump was really quite some jump.

Now the demands were absolutely proper. We had no quarrel with the demands of the workers for a better return on their invested labor than they were getting. But we found that we would go into negotiations and whatever progress we might make, it was offset the next day, even though the committee agreed the day we were in there with the negotiations and discussion, the next day they would come in having completely changed their position and saying that they no longer approved of what they had agreed to the day before. It was not long until we discovered that this was being implanted by outside influences. I called names and mentioned people as is brought out in the record. I mentioned those who were sabotaging and leading this sort of thing as the Communist Party directed. Some of our own hirelings were part of this group.

The National Mediation Board at that time, established because of the war emergency, had been meeting with us on working out these inequities and trying to bring about a contract. We were making progress. We had reason to believe that we were going to accomplish a good share of the things we were asking for, union security and

wage benefits and means. We were practically commuting. I made 11 trips to the West Coast in one month. I flew out there 11 times and back between Washington and Los Angeles. I was constantly on the hot seat trying to keep this thing from blowing up into a strike. I left prior to the strike. Just prior to the strike I had a staff meeting at which time I laid down the law that our people had to sit on the situation tightly so that it did not get out of hand and get away. We had a few people out there who wanted a strike. They wanted to show the militancy and I think now, and it has been proven, they wanted to sabotage the defense effort. I got into Washington with a committee for bargaining and I received a call from the West Coast that the plant had gone out on strike. As I stated, they were making 25 per cent of the total aircraft for this country at a vital time in our history, 1941. So I immediately was excused from the negotiations and took a plane out to the West Coast.

I called a meeting of the staff. That was my first step. I had then about 15 people assigned to the West Coast in aircraft. At that time I had approximately 100 people in aircraft throughout the country. I called a meeting of all the people on the staff out there. I told them that our policy was that this strike was illegal; this plant had to be returned to work immediately. I asked if there was anyone who wanted to take exception to that policy and if he did, he was no longer going to be there. Among those who stated that they were going to stand with the rank and file was Wyndham Mortimer. I turned to Wyndham Mortimer and said,

"You no longer represent this organization. You want to stand with the rank and file. You are now a rank and filer because you are fired." Several others were removed at the same time. Mortimer was the best known of the group.

I think time has played tricks on me. Apparently I had the meeting with the staff and then went on the air to address the membership. However, I called a meeting of all the people in the plant for the bean field, which was adjacent to the plant. It was vacant property across from the North American plant in Inglewood. I called this meeting and intended to give the workers the official position of the organization and why they should return to work. I can tell you now as I told them that I was in constant touch with President Roosevelt and Madame Perkins. I had the definite word from them that an order to assign troops into the North American plant was on the desk of President Roosevelt waiting for his signature. They were giving me time to get the plant back to work without having to use the troops. Everything that we had worked so hard to build in the way of an aircraft organization was now in jeopardy. If the troops came in, as I point out in the record, we knew that the people who had been organized less than a few months certainly were not going to be able to withstand public opinion. They were not going to be able to oppose the national defense effort. They were not going to be able to oppose the troops of the United States Government and still maintain an organization. If that strike was broken, it meant the end of organization as far as Douglas, Ryan and all

the other plants on the West Coast. I think a fair assumption would be that it would end organizational efforts throughout the entire country in aircraft.

Certainly the aircraft workers were as patriotic if not more so, at least they were more cognizant of the needs of producing than were workers in other basic industries even because they lived it everyday, the security measures, the precautions, the camouflage all made them more aware of the imminent dangers that we faced than perhaps workers in a less strategic industry. So with that and the normal patriotism of the average worker, a strike such as this, which could only be interpreted as a strike against our own government and our own defense, would have very little support when those facts became obvious. With that as background I had this meeting with the staff.

As I said, I fired Mortimer and several others and we ordered the people back to work. Then came the broadcast which you have. Following that, the next day was the bean field meeting. Unfortunately the publicity got out as to the bean field meeting. This thing, of course, was headline news in all the Los Angeles papers. It was a beautiful warm day. I believe it was Saturday, although it could have been Sunday. I am not sure now. But tourists and interested spectators and curiosity seekers from all over came to the bean field meeting. We had not 10,000 but perhaps 25,000 people with the highways flooded with people for this meeting. It was impossible even under ordinary normal circumstances, although we had microphones set up and platforms built for us, to address this crowd. There was no semblance of order.

First of all, a group of left wingers, many of whom were then a part of the Cartoonists Union, some of whom worked for the Walt Disney Studios, had painted placards. They had taken my head and put it on a rat's body and they all had cards. Each time I would go to speak or open my mouth, they would throw these cards up. They were all in the front row and properly placed. They would stand up and start yelling and mimicking and making noises to distract from anything I could say. I tried perhaps for half an hour to make myself heard and it was impossible. I stated that if I could not address them there that I would reach them via radio and give them the pertinent facts. I left the meeting and I walked through the crowd. I might say to you having been badly beaten at Ford in 1937 along with Walter Reuther, I felt that I was in that same type of situation. I walked through that crowd and I had my neck bowed expecting to be whacked over the head each time I took a step. We finally made it to our car, got into the car. They rocked the car, tried to turn the car over and so forth but we got out of it and were able to drive away.

I then went on the air again at which time I pointed out that the troops were in readiness, that Madame Perkins had given us a deadline as to when this plant would be returned to work and if they were not back the next day the troops were going to be in there. We wanted to avoid that at all costs if possible. However, the influence or maybe I should say the confusion of the situation was such that they did not return to work and as we had called the troops, as we had stated, the troops did then come in. They

were led by Colonel B. F. Resteen. The troops came in very orderly, encircled the entire plant and area and ordered the workers back to work. They responded as evidenced by the figures that are on the records - some 10,000 the first day, 10,800 the second day or whatever it was; but all of them were back by the end of the third day. The same situation would have occurred whether we supported it or whether we did not. But we had taken our position, and I am very happy that we did, that we were authorizing and supporting the return to work with the troops there. We did have agreement that at that point because of our position, and only because of our position, negotiations would be conducted since the official position of our organization was not in sympathy with this wildcat strike. The rest of it follows from the recording and gives you the story of it. The unanimous acceptance of the North American workers of the contract was the greatest vindication that I have.

Skeels: What did the convention do with regard to Michener then?

Frankensteen: You asked me a question that I am not clear on. Whether he was defeated in that convention or not, I do not recall. The best recollection I have was that Michener was not allowed to run for office for one year. I am hazy on that. I think that is the correct thing. That was the end of Michener as far as regional director on the West Coast was concerned. I think Jack Montgomery was elected succeeding Michener.

Now I will talk to you a little bit about the Ryan Aeronautical organizing and the first contract. There are a couple of highly pertinent factors involved in this first negotiation with Ryan.

We had succeeded in organizing the plant. It had been a lengthy campaign. We had taken a couple of people from the plant and put them on the pay roll on the outside and kept one or two on the inside organizing. We succeeded in solidly organizing the employees at Ryan Aeronautics. We asked for contract negotiations and we met. For the first time I ran into the fear of the organization such as I had seen in the very early days in the organization of automobile workers. They were just scared to death of everything that the union stood for. They could foresee dire prospects of any hope to live in the industry. They thought that this was a bunch of goons and ogres who had come in to take over the organization. We had to dispel that kind of feeling.

Of course, along with that was the financial picture where Ryan had fixed contracts and were paying 50 cents an hour. They did not want to budge from their 50-cent position claiming that they could not get relief from the government contracts that they already had existing. One of the main stumbling blocks was that we had asked for union security, union recognition of sole collective bargaining. I recall this might have a rather humorous aspect. I recall that they wanted more assurance than I was able to give them as to what our policies were. So we arranged a hookup between Phil Murray in Pittsburgh, Dr. Steelman in Washington and myself and the president of the company in San Diego. That conversation lasted for better than two hours and a half on the long distance phone until my arm was actually almost paralyzed from holding the phone. We gave them all the assurances of where we were going

and what we were trying to do. Dr. Steelman affirmed our position and stated that he would serve as the liaison between the union and the company to see that everything that each of us had said, one to the other, was carried out. So on that basis they gave us a form of recognition, a very mild form of union recognition. We withdrew the complete union shop and the issue then narrowed down to actual wages.

At one point (and this became very serious) one of the draft boards issued a statement that anyone who went out on strike against Ryan Aeronautics Industries would be conscripted into the armed services of the country. Of course, we blew our stack. We got hold of the head of the draft for the United States. We got a public statement that the Army was not a penal institution. People were not going in because they were convicts or criminals or strikers or for any other such reason. They were going in because it was their turn to go in or it was proper to go in or they met the qualifications. It was not a penal colony where you took those who were not wanted by society and into military service. Well, we had the complete support of the United States Government from the President on down on our position. The company that had aided and abetted this statement by statements that they had made, I think, were put in a ludicrous position and perhaps were even brought about to a settlement as a result of the untenable position that they had gotten themselves in with this kind of propaganda.

I recall sending a wire to the President of the United States about the wages in the aircraft industry. I had used the term

"peon wages" and I remember the personnel director said, "My God, you did not say that to the President, 'peon wages.'" He thought I was using the vernacular, instead of the Mexican peon wages. To make a long story short, we finally wound up with from a 50-cent minimum to a 62½-cent minimum and a very successful contract which was approved overwhelmingly. In fact, I might say that the vote for a strike at that time was 765 to 23 or some such figure. The ratification was, I believe if my memory serves me correctly, unanimous. It was a tremendous step forward. We then set out to organize Corsair which was the next plant on our drive.

Skeels: Actually then the next main victory was the North American, is that right?

Frankensteen: Yes. North American was the big one.

Skeels: What was the reasoning in moving on plants like Vultee and Ryan before you moved on a large plant like North American?

Frankensteen: I would assume expediency. Most likely the number of people that we had succeeded in organizing and the feasibility or practicability of the situation at the time. No, it was not. We were moving in all sectors. We had people and were conducting organizational drives. But depending on the progress, we would make our major pitch at the strongest. In other words, if we succeeded in signing up enough people for representation, we would move on that ahead of the others. You could not pick them as you would have liked to. So it was expediency.

Skeels: Now at this time at Ryan you were working entirely for the UAW as their aircraft director?

Frankensteen: Yes. At that time President Phil Murray of the CIO felt that the drive because of its tremendous growth and the fact that the UAW was not in a position to put on all the staff that we needed to keep pace with the organizational successes we were having, made a proposal that the aircraft drive be nationally conducted under the joint auspices of the UAW and the CIO. He asked if I would take over the directorship of the entire department for the CIO and the UAW. He would give us assistance, manpower, finances, etc., which he did. We were able then to expand our organization far more than we were able to afford under the UAW.

I am not going to try to give you the detailed organizational activities of the various plants. It might be well just to mention the names. We had Vultee in Downey; Timm Aircraft in Los Angeles and Van Nuys; North American in Inglewood; Boeing in Wichita; Douglas in Oklahoma City; North American in Kansas City; North American in Dallas; Bell in Buffalo; Brewster Aeronautics in Long Island; Brewster Aeronautical in Paterson; Vought-Sikorsky in Bridgeport; Fairchild in Burlington; Fairchild in Hagerstown; Glenn Martin in Baltimore. All of these drives were being conducted simultaneously. We had staff in each place and we would concentrate our efforts when election time came; or when we were in a push, we would bring more people in. But drives were being conducted all over the country. We were tying them in with the regional director of the UAW or the CIO in the vicinity plus the staff that we would

send in. I had Nick Dragon at the time going out to all these places wherever it was imminent. Wherever there was an election, he would go in for a month or six weeks or eight weeks and take some trained people in prior to the election for the actual organization, for the tie-up of it. I thought perhaps I would just deal with some of the high lights here such as I did with North American.

I think the next and perhaps the most significant drive that we conducted in the East was the Wright Aeronautical in Paterson, New Jersey, with about 18,000 employees. The Wright plant had a so-called company union in existence. It was a very, very difficult plant to organize because to forestall a legitimate organization, a group of leaders of this independent so-called union had been given privileges such as leaving the plant without punching their time clock, disappearing for a whole day and just coming in in time to punch out and they were granted better jobs and personal favors. The result was that they had been sitting on top of any successful organization. They had held it down rather than encouraging it and building up a union. Nevertheless, they had succeeded in, as I say, by-passing any legitimate organization through being in there.

We conducted a drive and I went in personally and spent many, many weeks in Paterson. It was, perhaps, the most corrupt situation that we ran into in the entire UAW as proven later with the convictions of several of the officers for absconding with monies during the course of their stewardship and so forth. But they had a very

tough rugged element in there, mobsters and gangsters and controlled groups that were really rugged. These so-called officers were utilizing these people and their strong-armed methods to keep anyone out. I had made overtures to several individuals who were officers or stewards or outstanding people in the plant. I had approached them at their homes or through meetings that had been set up in privacy, trying to get them to work with us towards building a legitimate organization. They called a meeting about once every month, as my recollection serves me, for the purpose of reporting on the stewardship of their officials and so forth, but a meaningless meeting except that they always had a big turn-out because they always had a beer bust and so forth in conjunction with it.

We had placed a couple of these workers from in the plant on our pay roll but kept them in the plant. It was unknown that they were on the pay roll but the object was to try to get them to propagandize for getting a legitimate union in there. They had a meeting on a Saturday morning. I had arranged it so that I would arrive at this meeting on the outside and ask for permission to speak. They were going to then take the floor and say that at least they ought to hear the other side of the picture and know what we had to say, that they did not have to buy anything but just to hear it. After a great to-do as to whether or not they would permit me to speak or not, I finally got in and was able to address them. I think I perhaps did a lot towards breaking the ice. At least I pointed up the differences between an indepen-

dently controlled union such as they had and a legitimate organization. We made quite some progress. We organized quite well. I put a large staff in Paterson. I think, again just hazarding a guess, (without any figures it is hard to recall specifically) I had about 15 men assigned to Paterson. We succeeded in organizing a large number of people but we had an election conducted for recognition as the bargaining agency and were defeated. It was a very bitter pill to swallow because we lost by a very close vote. However, we continued to organize and I believe it was a year later that we succeeded in winning the election there. Unfortunately, many of the officers who had been with the independent union were delegated to positions of leadership in the new organization.

Even though we handled major negotiations and got a good working contract and good rates and conditions, these people were carrying on many of the practices that they had carried on under the independent setup. So as a result of that, we had a lot of resultant friction and as I say, the jailing of some of these people for absconding with money and so forth over a long period of years. But out of it came a good, strong, clean union. It was the bellwether for our drives in Vought-Sikorsky and the other plants around Connecticut and throughout the East. This was our key local union in the East. As I say, it was a rugged, tough, hard victory that we won there. We put a lot of time, a lot of money and a lot of energy into it. The CIO had Allan Haywood and Krzycki and all the principal speakers of the time come in

and give us a hand in addressing mass meetings and organizational meetings. We worked around the clock on it but we did succeed and that did become, as I say, the spearhead and perhaps the largest aircraft local in the entire East.

Skeels: This was in Region 9 or 9A of the East?

Frankensteen: There was only one region for the East at that time. It had not been divided into Region 9 and 9A at the time. I believe there was another region in the East which covered Buffalo and I am not even sure of that. I think that Kerrigan covered the entire region. Martin Gerber came in later and they divided the region. This came under Kerrigan's jurisdiction.

Skeels: Did you then organize a drive like the Ryan in co-operation with the regional director?

Frankensteen: Yes, except that in the Paterson situation we operated almost exclusively. Our own staff operated on the election because Kerrigan had such a big region. I mean he wanted assistance but he had such a big region that he did not have the manpower or the people to put in, although Kerrigan always worked very closely with me.

Skeels: I was thinking otherwise there would be a problem of conflict actually.

Frankensteen: I never ran into that. In spite of the many allegations, I never played politics with the drive. I mean I assigned them into the region. Of course, Kerrigan and I were always politically allied. So there was never any problem there. Sometimes we ran into fear of that, in Livingston's region, for instance,

he had a great trepidation that all these people that I was sending in would be, if a political fight developed, his opposition and so forth. But I pretty well dispelled that. I did not have too much friction.

I think it is significant to point out that from the time of the Chicago Convention in 1942 until 1943, we succeeded in organizing one quarter of a million workers - 250,000 workers in aircraft. I ran into a very serious situation. There is an old saying that every action has a reaction. The early days of the auto workers union had seen a speed-up that came as a result of incentive pay and piecework that had been viciously abused. The auto industry, under the guise of incentive pay, had caused workers to speed up their output. Then when they got to a point where they were making good money, they would slash their rate so that their production was not compensated for. In other words, they were turning out much, much more under incentive. They would get a cut in pay and be right back to where they were when they started. So they had only a temporary gain and that for a very short duration. There was no union to patrol it. As a result of that, the reaction to it was that all incentive was bad. Now about this time the United States Government instituted a wage policy, wages were frozen and the only way that wages could be raised was to increase productivity. In other words, if a farmer who planted one acre of ground took that acre of ground and produced multiple crops or doubled crops, he could receive a greater wage for it because it was producing more of the goods that were needed. The same

principle was applied to all industry. In other words, the only way that wage increases could be granted, and the National Labor Relations Board held to this, was through increased productivity.

Now in aircraft, because it was basically a new industry and because of the great need for producing multiple planes, there had evolved short cuts and great productivity on the part of the worker. But the auto workers, with the prejudice built up over the years in seeing the abuses of the incentive system, would not agree. In the convention I was defeated and my ears were pinned back on the issue of trying to get more money for the aviation workers which we were entitled to and could have gotten under incentive; the incentive was going on anyway only we were not getting paid. All the money was going to the profits of the company by this greater productivity. But unfortunately for me, the damn Communist Party saw fit for greater productivity at the time because now the situation had changed, as I said earlier, from an imperialistic war, so-called by them, to a people's war because Russia was now in it; so they were out for all production. So they went along with anything that would get more production and because they joined in the basic opposition to anything the communists stood for, the auto workers forced me into bed with them on this issue and I was defeated on the issue of the incentive pay. But it would have meant tremendous progress and gains for the aviation worker. I tried to point out that the incentive system as it had been carried on in open shops without a union to protect it would not be the same as an incentive system where a union could

protect standards and rates. Nevertheless, the fear and reaction to the action that the auto industry had taken was too strong and we lost that issue. But that is one of the fundamental reasons why the auto workers have been historically opposed to piecework or incentive rates.

First, it pits worker against worker. There is no question of that. Also it has been abused in so many areas that they took a unilaterally opposed position against anything that smacked of incentive. I believe you have a copy or can get a copy of the safeguards that I have advocated along with this incentive program because the safeguards would have protected against the abuses that we had undergone in the auto industry. It was patrolled by more than just the union in the plant. Actually the output was being made. We just were not being paid for it and could not get the money even though the production was rolling out daily.

The years have played a lot of tricks on my recollective powers. I cannot recall the details or the specifics of the conference that took place nor even can I remember the year. It seems to me it was sometime around 1942 or 1943, perhaps 1942, that we had a meeting with the Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce that embodied the Machinists Union and the IAM, the UAW and the officers of all the aircraft plants or their spokesmen for the purpose of productivity in the aircraft industry as well as establishing basic rates. I think it would be well if you were to get hold of the actual documents if you can from that meeting which would give you a lot of the basic positions that our organiza-

tion took. Out of that meeting did come a tremendous advance in stability in the aircraft industry on the West Coast. I think that it would be proper to point out that the leadership of the UAW, all factions included, consistently took a position on equality of sacrifice, yes, but foregoing certain rights to strike and other economic pressures that the union could use for the good of the country in the period that we found ourselves in. Now as I say, all factions joined together in that approach. It was first established at the Masonic Temple in April, 1942, when we took this position. We called on industry to make an equality of sacrifice with us. But regardless of what they did, we took a position that we had certain obligations and duties as trade unionists and that was our policy throughout, a policy which incidentally was costly as you have pointed out to me in the struggle that we had with Curtiss-Wright where we lost out to the Machinists Union who had not adopted a policy of equality of sacrifice and foregoing the right to strike, I believe, at the time. So it did put us at somewhat of an organizational disadvantage but we felt it was a contribution towards our basic obligation to the country. We had many of our own people, minority leaders, some local leaders, who never did agree with us on the policy of no-strike during these war years but basically I would say that 90 per cent of our union supported the action of the sacrifice program that we put forward, and supported it 100 per cent. We had very, very few stoppages in plants during the war years. I think our record was outstanding in that field.