

ELINOR

And we supported Henry Wallace, now all of the members supported Henry Wallace, but the leadership did and some of our membership did and we never required that everybody vote the same way and we had complete freedom, it was a very democratic union as the United Electrical Workers were and as the Longshoremen were, and as the office workers were. However, there was a fight on the national level and they were, I think, picked out of the CIO nationally. When that happened, the United Public Workers had a special meeting to determine what they would do. And I was not a member of the Executive Board but I was invited because I was very vocal to join those Executive Board members and we all flew back to, I believe it New York or to Chicago to talk about what our future would be on a national basis. And there were those in New York who said that it would be better to go down and loose every member and stand up for our principles but we should not affiliate with any other union. The man who made that statement was Jack Beagel. Jack Beagel today, I think he affiliated his union about three days later to the Teamsters and now he is a consultant and a person that is very effective in doing arbitrations in New York and he is quite a big shot. In those days, three days after he said he would stand and die and loose every member and not affiliate; three days after that or a week after he affiliated with the Teamsters Union. And there were those who felt that we should have joined AFSCME, but the conditions of joining AFSCME was that

some of the top officers would not go, but just the membership and other echelons would go and of course, the top officers did not want to be dismissed and so they turned down AFSCME's offer.

And then they got some invitations from various other unions from all unions because this was a very good, strong, large union of public workers.

The result of that meeting in which people were prone to make long speeches and not mean them, it was decided that they would do nothing and that each group would make their own arrangements which effectively destroyed the united public workers. And wasted a wonderful group of trade unionists in my opinion. We came back to our various states with no decision made.

Q. There were about ten unions that were kicked out of the CIO at that time, did that happen (inaudible)

A. Let me answer your question by telling you that isn't what happened. What happened was when these leaders came back to their own states and communities, they did affiliate with various unions in their own communities. But they split up. The United Electrical Workers did not do that. The United Electrical Workers split into two unions. One was the CIO union lead by Jim Carey, the other the UE which was the original union, maintained their identity and have contracts and they have shrunk but they have not gone out of existence. And today

they're talking merger the two unions with the IUE, so they had their own history. But the United Public Workers when the leadership went back to their various states and communities, primarily what they did was to affiliate with existing unions in their own communities. And looking back on that, maybe that was the best thing to do. I don't know, I haven't made my decision. But in California, in San Francisco; the unions that were wooed by AFSCME and Building Service they affiliated with the Building Service Union because the Building Service Union was the most progressive union in the AF of L at that time and they were militant and were effective and they gave them complete autonomy to continue their locals; they didn't swallow them up, they affiliated them and they were very happy. And down here in Los Angeles, we remained independent for a while; for probably a year and it was a terrible time for us. We lost our checkoff with the county of Los Angeles which means that we had to start collecting dues; the business agents had to collect dues.

Q. And that affected all the different kinds of places of work that you had, that you were representing?

A. Yes. And it was a period of great concern and worry but we solidified our forces and our leading stewards became dues collectors. It was a very, very difficult, tough period for us. I have to remind you there were no collective

bargaining laws supporting either city or county workers and our strength had diminished. But our organization was in tact. And we were signing up new members although we had lost members, who did not quit the union. We didn't lose who said no, I'm not gonna belong to the union because this happened. What happened was, they were very loyal to the union but they didn't pay their dues every month. We didn't have the (inaudible) to maintain ourselves. After about a year, we were wooed by AFSCME and by the Building Service. Now, the Building Service Union started to organize and raid my union in the hospitals as soon as this happened. And they came in, into the jurisdiction and they started to organize at the Harbor Hospital and Oliview and the Medical Center. They could not get a foot hold on Rancho. They used to put up their leaflets and we used to tear them down, and we'd put our leaflets and they tore them down and it was a real conflict.

Q. You were an open shop then?

A. We had open shop. The workers did not have to join our union, they could sign up into any other union. And they tried to take our members away and raid us. They were not successful. We beat the pants off them. Because our members were...we had this George Hardy, CIO-type of structure. The union was really structured on the stewards system and the stewards held true and the stewards knew the value of the

union. Our opposition was the Employees Association which was charging 50¢ and \$1 dues and my union was charging \$2 dues; and \$3 dues and our members would belong to both, they would belong the Association to get their cemetery lots and their pots, and pans and vitamins. And they joined our union for a fight. Now, we didn't win our fights all the time when we went before the Board of Supervisors or grievances. They saw us fighting and they didn't see us, they joined us. We were all there fighting and it was a very close knit union. And therefore, we were very delectable to the other unions who were trying to affiliate our union. We spoke to AFSCME their approach was...first of all the head of their union local was an ex-policeman, very reactionary and whose style was very controlling and the structure of the union was that the locals paid their dues into, most of their money went into a Council of which he was the head and then he doled out what he thought the locals needed. And the stewards and the membership had no voice in anything. And our data board interviewed AFSCME and then we had a committee and the committee met with George Hardy. I didn't even want to met with them, 'cause I was mad at them cause they were trying to raid us at the hospital. They didn't succeed but they were trying. We were busy marching in Labor Day parades and we were busy before the Board of Supervisors and we were busy carrying on grievances while all this

was going and we didn't have the money to run a union. We were in a small place.

Q. And who are you talking about, talking to BSEIU and you were mad at them because they were trying to raid you and about the merger? About affiliation?

A. I was really reluctant to even have that conversation with them because knowing the sacrifices we had made to organize that hospital and seeing them, I regarded them as a enemy. I didn't know who they were; all I knew was that we had organized them and now they were coming in and trying to organize them. However, Dick Liebes and John Jeffery, from up north, persuaded me that I should meet George Hardy and meet them and do it with an open mind. And I decided that was the right thing to do, so we met with them. Within about five or ten minutes of meeting with George Hardy, we, the committee was so overwhelmed and impressed with the fact that this union was as effective, activist, and militant and represented the workers and believed in the steward system, they told us how they admired our leaflets, that we had such content and that we were such good organizers and that the only way that public employee organizations would grow is if the United Public Workers and the Building Service would merge. And I was completely convinced of that. You see, the difference between AFSCME and the Building Service was that AFSCME offered us everything. They offered

to get rid of their officers and make us their officers, that they would sacrifice their own people in order to get us. We felt very distrustful of them and we were not impressed. When we were approached by George Hardy, what he promised us was a continuation of our fight, and our struggle to win things for the workers. And that impressed us. We met as co-equals. They had some hospital workers in Oliview and they had an office, they had a local called 347 that represented a few hundred hospital workers. But they had a treasury of \$2000. We had the propoerted members, we had members but many of them were not current in their dues and one month they'd pay and two months they wouldn't and we had nothing in the bank. I think we had \$17.34 or some such thing. We had an office on West Sixth Street. George Hardy came down and with his committee they looked at our office and they said, well (looking at our beaten old mimeograph machine and our typewriters, and our old desks) he said the evaluation of your equipment is about \$2000. So both of the unions will come in equal. That was a very generous evaluation of what we were bringing in. But his intent was to make the affiliation equal and to give us the new union autonomy. So we did not only affiliate, but we joined with Local 347 we were Local 246 and we adopted their number, 347 and we joined with them. The head of that was Ed Bratrude and he remained the head. I became a senior business agent and another person became Mr. Moore, Sidney Moore, who

was Black, became senior business agent. We amalgamated and merged and I think in the first two months we must have signed up 500 new members and we built this organization. We had our checkoff back.

Q. How did you get your checkoff back?

A. By the fact that we merged with Local 347 that had checkoff.

Q. You lost your checkoff to contract?

A. Oh contracts for public workers during those days. I'm talking about the early 50s or '53. There were no contracts there was no public recognition, there was nothing to cover the rights of the public employees. They just did it by ordinance. The Board of Supervisors, one Tuesday voted after they were notified by the CIO that they were no longer in the CIO; they simply removed the checkoff. They said the checkoff was granted for a different for different organizations.

Q. So they removed it because you were independent and the reason why 347 had it was because they were AFL.

A. Right. Right. It wasn't hard to get it. I don't remember what the rules were. But they had the checkoff. The result of that was that we organized and George Hardy said that this will only work if you do not try to become what you consider to be a state, AF of L union. The way that this will work is if you continue your CIO techniques of mass organizing and setting up stewards, and committees

writing the kinds of leaflets and being as activists because we are an activists union. You are in the AF of L. You are gonna find out that there are some AF of L unions that are just as good as the CIO unions, and just as dedicated. And he was just absolutely right. We then had research available to us. And we had the full strength and resource of the Service Employees Union, Building Service and we worked very closely. Our offices were across the street from each other on West Seventh Street. We had little store fronts and they had a little larger than store fronts. They had a two story--a place on the second floor. And we helped each other out and it was a glorious period of growth. We organized, as I say without any framework.

Q. When the two unions merged (inaudible)

A. We merged with a county of locals which had one hospital primarily and that was Oliview Hospital.

Q. And how many members do they have altogether?

A. We had a few hundred members.

Q. In the hospital, but how many in that union?

A. In that union altogether, they may have had about seven or eight hundred.

Q. And how many members did you come in with?

A. I think we came in with about 400 dues paying. Not the dues payments, let me put it that way because our members...

because we had to hand collect the dues, they all were on our books, but they all weren't paying dues in the same month. And within one month, I think we got a thousand more on check-off. Total on checkoff. We had to convert the ones we had. And those that hadn't paid dues but were still members of the union, it was not an impossible job. It was a very exciting job, to say alright now, you don't have to pay back any of the dues you didn't pay. We are starting fresh, we're gonna treat you as a fresh person and forgive the back dues and here is a card to sign and the county will deduct it from your paycheck. So getting signups were simply fantastic. Some of them were signups of the members that we brought in and then there were new memberships that we brought in. So it totalled maybe a thousand in a period of a month or two.

Q. AFSCME at that time, had they organized any hospitals?

A. AFSCME had not organized any thing but probation workers. They had nothing in the county. Very, very little and they were not considered a strong or viable union. They had a number of small unions. One union had 25 members and the other ones had whatever.

Q. So you merged with BSEIU in what year?

A. '53.

Q. '53. So you were in...

A. An amalgamated union of city and county, state and education workers then. Building Service had its own

Board of Education local. And so, the members in my union who were in the Board of Education, then transferred into that union. That union grew.

Q. And those Board of Education workers were what kind of jobs?

A. They were custodians, bus drivers, the same kinds of workers that we have.

Q. Did you have clerks at all then?

A. Very few, very few. Mainly there were the blue collar workers, cafeteria workers and so forth. And that union grew. Then we had state workers. Not many. A state worker local was set up state-wide, Local 411. Then, our state workers then joined the state workers local union. In 1962, the county workers were very restless and became very dissatisfied in belonging to an amalgamated local. They felt that the--although now we have surpassed the city in organizing the city part of the union. There is more organizing going on in the county part of the union than the city part of the union--the leadership of the union was primarily from the city. Because the city workers built that union. Not the county workers. The county workers started at a later period and the city workers were in the majority in this amalgamated union. I mean in the majority of the leadership but not in the majority of the membership. And we found that having two separate

employers and two different occupational lines and interests, that the workers in the county wanted their own union. They wanted a county workers union. And the city workers, were not happy about the fact that the good, more than half of their union wanted to leave and be in their own union. There was a very bitter fight. We in the county, our members asked the International to place the whole union under trusteeship until there could be a decision on this matter. Hearings were held. Charges were made. It was a very difficult period and finally there was a hearing and the International granted two charters. The charters were for the Los Angeles City Employees Union and the Los Angeles County Employees Union. We became Local 434, in the fights for more. There was tremendous growth. Both on the part of the city workers and on the part of the county workers new local following our disillusion and the chartering of the county workers local. The greatest growth came when they had their own local.

Q. And what was the city workers, what local was that?

A. They kept their number, 347. The seniority that the county workers had in the city was kept in our constitution, so that nobody lost any benefits by the fact that they had changed to the new union. It was not an easy transition because there were those--we had some members who felt very strongly about staying at 347 but the majority of

them voted overwhelmingly for 434.

Q. Can you tell me, in the period of the mid 40s to the 50s were there any important strikes that happened? Were there any important...the kind of mass organizing that you did were there times when you had a demonstration or an organizing drive or a strike that got some specific gain?

A. In Service Employee?

Q. Un-huh.

A. Well there were many strikes in the private sector. There was no strike in the public sector but we had demonstrations. We had demonstrations at the hospitals, we had demonstrations at the Board of Supervisors.

Q. So you didn't strike at all during that period?

A. No, we did not have a strike. Our first strike came... first of all it was held by the state. The public workers did not have the right to strike. As a matter of fact many of them were holding to the fact that they didn't have a right to join the union. We had to fight in the public sector against the old sovereignty concept that public employees had no rights and they were public servants. Other unions were not anxious to organize public employees because there was an absence of any law giving any direction or any protection as there was in the private sector. And we in the 50s were fighting the fight that was made in the private sector in the 30s. It was primarily by the old

type CIO unions, the industrial unions where that was made. Now, you must remember that in the 50s, there was a merger between the AF of L and the CIO. I believe it was in the 50s. And that gave strength to the labor movement. But no other unions wanted to bother organizing service employees or custodians in the private sector and they weren't interested in the public employee sector. Our union was. And yes, we marched in parades, in demonstrations, and the Longshoremen were very active in this state and in this area. And the CIO unions had large strikes in which our members helped them walk their picket lines.

Q. What about any particular strike on an issue that you were organizing, I mean, on a particular demonstration on an issue that you were organizing around or trying to...

A. Well, we organized around the fight against the Taft-Hartley Amendments. There were large demonstrations and many of our members, some of our members went back to Washington in their demonstrations. We participated when we were in the CIO. And then the CIO was much more active than the AF of L. Then when we merged and came into the Service Employee Unions, there were demonstrations against the Taft-Hartley Act and against anti-union employers. What happened for the first time was that we... (end of side A)

(beginning of side B)

... Right here in Los Angeles, an organizing committee, I believe that happened in the early 60s. There were some international unions that were interested in mass organizing. Now you found most of the old, CIO-type unions in that, the rubber workers and the steelworkers, and many of the old time CIO unions, as well as some of the AF of L unions. Service Employees was part of that and they played a very large role in helping us organize in the hospital. They were very very helpful to us. We walked picket lines against Proposition--I think it was called Proposition 18; when there was a move to declare California an open shop state and to do away with union shops--to destroy the effectiveness of union organization. And there was involvement at the Catholic Church which was very prominent in that; there were demonstrations and a terrific organization was set up state-wide with coalitions. The Service Employees Union was particularly active in setting up coalitions with the community because we always had very close ties. George Hardy had very close ties with the auto workers and in Watts, we set up a Watts labor action committee and helped subsidize it. In the community, itself, George Hardy was very active in mobilizing the entire state. Mobilizing the workers and educating them the voters; not only our union members but everybody on the meaning of this right to work bill that was proposed by the manufacturers and the Chambers of Commerce. We were

successful in defeating it. And these were very educating experiences for our members. We had mobless picnics on Labor Day and we had a sense of trade union unity and the Service Employees Union was a leader. George Hardy was a leader.

Q. You had mentioned earlier about how you first became involved in the California labor movement, it was (inaudible) to the labor theatre?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you ever go back and do any of that in any of your organizing? Was the union involved in it?

A. No, SEIU was not involved in it. And I did it personally from my own actions. There were various labor theatre groups that was set up to put on plays; we put on the plays before the union but the unions themselves were not actively involved in the running of it. Now, I was a labor representative and one small group, we didn't even have a name. It was through this labor theater that I met my present husband. Because there were people there who were writers, who helped us; that were active in the Hollywood unions. I was a labor person representing the labor unions on this small theater. We put on wonderful plays and we put it on before the labor union and I was introduced to my husband through one of the writers there.

Q. That sounds very appropriate.

A. Yes, isn't that marvelous.

Q. So then you continued that kind of activity?

A. Well, not enough. We were so bogged down with the daily chores of organizing and union representing. Again, all these years without any legal framework, without an NLRA or an election procedure or anything. One of the big fights during that period was during the period of trying to win social security. County workers, only ten percent of the county workers ever collect their retirement. The others do not because the hospital workers don't stay there long enough and that come in at an older age and they work don't work there long enough and the retirement systems used to give them so little money that they had nothing and they were not covered by social security. So, Local 434 took us about four or five or six years to fight it. We were the only labor organization that fought for it. The County Employees Association were absolutely opposed to it and we fought against it and the County Board of Supervisors fought against it. The only people that wanted it was our membership.

Q. Why would another union fight against it?

A. They weren't a union at that time. The County Employees Association was a in those days, a company union and they were made up of managers of departments and they were anti-union at that period. This was in the...

Q.

Q. Is that what is now 660?

A. That later became 660. They became a union in a different organization after 1966 when the collective bargaining came on the scene. Well, I'm not up to that year yet. But during this period they were...

Q. Those things just helps me get straight which locals... there's so many locals around here...

A. We have the (inaudible)...because our opposition was the County Employees Association, which was a real company union and they used to get up before the Board of Supervisor and say these workers are getting enough money so we're not recommending any more money for them, but give somebody else more money. And we would get up before the Board of Supervisors and we had a research director who was now a professor at one of the universities, Bill Williams. And we had a research director. We used to come in with thick volumes of research that we had done and we studied comparative of prevailing wages and presented our materials to the Board of Supervisors; it was an open meeting. They couldn't bear those meetings, they would last for hours and we'd give them fact and figures and they were unprepared to meet them because they didn't do that research. Their decision not to give us any money was just that. Although by law they did make a survey and we were always able to attack their surveys and I think a turn in the county organizing came

one year when we were fighting for a minimum wage to be increased and the County Association at that time got up and said that's too much money that you are proposing to the Board of Supervisors. It would be more sophisticated to give them less of the minimum wage. And there weren't too many people in the audience when this happened but there were county workers. Because when we came there we always brought county workers and workers with us. We couldn't believe our ears. So here, we had a proposal to raise the minimum wage say, 5½ percent and they only raised 2½ percent because the County Employees Association said that that was better and we were fighting for more. So Local 4, at that time we were, I don't remember what local we were at that period, I think we were local 434. We put out a leaflet. We quoted the words and we got it from the recording of the Board of Supervisors who wanted to give us more money, who agreed to give us more money. And then the County Employees Association representatives what they said and what we said. And without editorializing it, we gave the fact and asked the workers to draw their conclusions. The result of that was the following of week we came there with a mass of workers who left the hospital, that came down there and supervisor Hahn, who was the spokesperson for the underdog made a motion to increase it to what we had originally demanded and it passed. They dropped out of the Association and they joined the union, many of them. And that was the beginning of a

tremendous organizing drive. The sense of the...the begin-
to develop in and among the county workers that the union
knew about collective bargaining and the union would represent
their interests; that the Association was good for travel
and pots and pans and vitamins, and cementary plots. In the
60s in the state, as the unions were growing and the Teachers
union was growing and Service Employees Union was growing,
we became the Service Employees Union in the middle 60s.
That was because of the decision on the part of people like
George Hardy to organize, massive organizing in all of the
service industries but picking as targets hospitals and public
workers. They changed the name to Service Employees which
was really more descriptive than Building Service. In the
state, we got some friendly assemblymen, who were friendly
to labor to introduce legislation who at least recognized
the rights of public workers to organize themselves and into
unions. And that gave the first era of respectability to
the whole question of organizing. There was no election
procedure, there was nothing like that.

Q. And when did this all happen?

A. This happened in the 60s, early 60s. After Local 434
won social security rights from the state legislature for
our workers, you see the social security law made it possible...

Q. I want you to back up and tell me how you won that.

A. Well, first we had tried for about five years through
the Board of Supervisors to have them pass this resolution.

Q. And you tried through meeting then?

A. Public meetings at the the Board of Supervisors, bringing down our members, making a pitch during the negotiations, making a pitch at other times, other than negotiations, visiting each one of them, bringing our membership down, and to no avail. So finally we went to the State and Governor Pat Brown, and we were successful in having him sign the social security legislation that we were successful in bringing forth just affecting Los Angeles County. Because many of the others did not want it. Their organizations did not want it. Other unions took different positions. We were the only union fighting for social security at that time. San Francisco had won social security for themselves about the same time. We found that it was more effective when we got less opposition if we just limited it to the areas that we represented rather than making it statewide and we did that and we were successful in getting the bill passed and signed by Governor Brown. At the point, where he was signing the bill, the Association was so opposed to it that they were giving out leaflets and materials saying that we lied and that we didn't win it and that it wasn't passing.

Q. When that happened when you went up to State Legislature, did you bring carloads of people up to demonstrate, did you have people go in the lobby, how did you?

A. We did both. We demonstrated here for social security, but we sent groups up to the legislature to meet with out assemblymen, people who lived in their district. And they mostly were shocked to learn that when a hospital worker was ready to retire that many of them did not have retirement from the county; and didn't have any social security and were destitute and had to go on welfare. They also found out that only ten percent of the county workers ever retired. They also found out that when they did retire, they go anywhere from \$74 a month to \$125 a month. And they couldn't live on it. It was very clear to see that they needed the protection of social security.

Q. And then that affected across the board all...

A. No. It only affected Los Angeles County.

Q. And then in Los Angeles County (inaudible)...

A. For Los Angeles County workers. It was set up so it gave the right for the workers to choose an option of those who are currently employed as to whether they wanted to make the change and to accept social security or not to accept just to be on the retirement system. All new workers would be covered by social security. And we knew looking forward into the future, there would be new workers and that would become a permanent condition. The union had a marvelous-- we had a wonderful research director, Barbara Springer. I think today she is a judge. I believe she is a judge. I don't know. At any rate, she was brilliant. She developed

a fact booklet which was used by everybody in the county, not only union members because it set out the options according to age and it set out charts and did not sell it. It didn't sell the workers to please join social security. It showed them where they would benefit, where some of them with long history of retirement, might not think they benefited, or whatever. It just laid out the facts on the basis of that, people made their choices as to whether or not they wanted social security. Those who did not opt to take it, many of them, in later years, tried to get back in but it was too late--as they were told it would be and they deprived themselves of many benefits.

Q. So they had maybe one chance then?

A. They had one chance to join. Now since that time, and that was a purely 434 victory.

Q. It affected a lot more than your workers?

A. If affected 60,000 workers who could make up their own mind--they had a free choice. Now in recent years, many of the higher paid workers have been trying to get the county and the state to take LA County out of social security and mainly there people in the higher echelons and also I might say some members who are working and moonlighting and they feel they don't need. They're not worrying about their fellow or sister worker. So 434 has been the one consistent fire for social security because our members would be severely punished by it. And the County of Los Angeles has tried to

do it and to convince us, and we've succeeded in beating down all the efforts so far.

Q. Now, we're going to jump back up to the right to union representation for public employees.

A. Well, we had a series of bills. They were the--it was the Brown Act, Congressman George Brown and Vil Burton were the two assemblymen who were leading the fight for workers' rights in the state legislature. This was after the right to work bill had been defeated and Service Employees was organizing. It was the fastest organizing in the union in the AFL-CIO and it became the largest public employee union in the State of California and it became the largest AFL-CIO union in the State of California.

Q. And that was in the 60s?

A. That was in the beginning of the 60s through the 70s. They moved from seventh to sixth, to fifth, to second and now first. They became the largest in the 70s. It was because of the foresight and setting the targets of the hospital field and the health field and the public worker field. Now what happened in the 60s was--in 1966--the Board of Supervisors at our regular session and after presentations by the union, passed an ordinance--no let me put it this way--let me restate it. In 1966 we were

presenting our case to the county for a decent wage increase and we were very low paid. The county administrative officer was proposing a wage increase of something like 46¢ a day. I mean it was the most ridiculous wage increase, practically no wage increase. At the same time, he proposed a wage increase for the head of the department hospitals which would have been something like \$500 a month. The county workers were getting very restless and very unhappy. We were having lunch time demonstrations and nothing seemed to work. One Tuesday morning simultaneously in every county facility where we had members, we had a committee who was set up and they met with the heads of their hospitals to try to get the head of the hospital to support their efforts to get a decent wage increase and to call up the Board of Supervisors and let the Board of Supervisors know that there were meetings being held and why the head of the hospital thought that the workers were doing the work should get a decent pay raise. What happened was when those telephone calls came in to the Board of Supervisors there was a meeting in session.

Q. And did that tactic work?

A. The tactic was brilliantly successful. Every hospital administrator then called the Board of Supervisors and I representing the union, was down at the Board of Supervisors watching them receiving the calls. What happened was that these committees in the hospitals grew because the workers all knew that this was going on and some people called the press

and the press came out to the hospitals and the workers started to have informal meetings in some of the hospitals in their large auditoriums and were meetings and gathering mainly in the Medical Center. That was the hub of the whole thing. The Harbor General Hospital and the Los Angeles County General Hospital; that was with the two major forces in that. The Board of Supervisors went off the deep end and they got hysterical and one of the members said not only are they not going to get that pittance of a raise, not using those words, but we are not going to give them any money. And we're not going to give...and the 11 percent raise that we voted for the social workers, that's going to be reduced to 5 percent and nobody else is going to get anything. No clerks, nobody is going to get anything. That message got back to the hospital directors and the committees that were meeting. Whereupon, in the hospitals the workers did not even go back and get their pocket books or their sweaters, they walked out of the hospital--the picture hit the front page of the papers--and they marched, they walked about four or five miles to the Board of Supervisors which had adjourned and was going to meet in the afternoon. The social workers heard about that and the clerks.

Q. Did the social workers part of your union?

A. They were in local, yes, they were part of the union.

They were part of Local 434. The social workers and the clerks

who were a part of Local 434 also heard, got the news through telephone about what happened in the morning. And they converged from their automobiles, they drove down the Board of Supervisors hearing. And because they drove, many of them got there before the hospital workers. So, in order to accommodate everybody there were thousands of workers maybe two or three thousands, so the hospital workers sat on the laps of the social workers. The Fire Department was called and wanted to clear out the room and however, we persuaded them, because they were good members of the union not to evict any of our members. There were thousands of workers and the television cameras, and the newspaper cameras were there, and the workers were there. Some of them went up to the offices of the members of the Board of Supervisors, well that followed a little later.

Q. Was that spontaneous or was it organized?

A. It was both. It was organized as a tactic not to walk out of the hospital. But the tactic of having simultaneous meeting was the official union tactic. The walk out came when the workers got the response of that and our business agents were with them and they walked with them. They took a vote that the heads of the union, that the officials there and the workers there, and I was down at the Board of Supervisors making the arguments down there and they joined me. Now, after I was down at the Board of Supervisors, the morning was adjourned until 2:00. I went back to my office and called

and let other people know. Then I got a call from the county sheriff or the police department and saying do you know that as a result of this morning that your members are walking from the hospital down to the Board of Supervisors. They're on their way. So, I let the union hall and rushed to meet with them so we could all walk in together and we all walked together. We were joined as I say, the social workers were there, the clerical workers were there and occupied building, I don't mean overnight but we came there everyday for a number of days and we signed up hundreds and hundreds of workers. We finally reached a tentative agreement with the county that they would sit down and bargain with us, which was the first time that ever happened; that there would be wage increases given.

Q. What do you mean that it was the first time they ever sat down to bargain?

A. They didn't bargain. What used to happen is that we would make a presentation, it was collective begging. We'd have committees and we would meet with them in rooms, right in the public with everybody there and we would make our presentation, but there was no dialogue. They didn't respond to them, they listened to us and thank you very much and we will take it under advisement and they did what they wanted to do.

(End of tape)

(Beginning of tape 2)

George Hardy played a tremendous role back in the, I believe it was in the 30s--late 30s--in ridding the union from the control of the gangsters. He organized on the West Coast a group of young men and supported by his father who was the head of the union out here--a campaign to rid the union of gangster influences. He was helped locally on the West Coast by the Longshoremen when at one time a group of gangsters tried to take over the union offices and he prevented it. They came over and they were massing in the parking lot and George and his friends looked out of the union window and they saw them and they called their friends in other unions in San Francisco at that time and they called the Longshoremen and the Culinary Workers and everybody said that they would round up defense of the union and they would come right over. In the meantime, there had been some kind of a truck...in the meantime after telling it to the food workers, culinary workers, the truck came--sort of a catering truck came and parked beneath the union headquarters and large trays of food started to appear from the truck as though a banquet or a great number of dinners were going to be consumed, or lunches were going to be consumed in the building. The driver started up the stairs with all of this food and the gangsters were standing around watching and suddenly decided maybe they should not go over and

try to take over the building and they all left. A few moments came over with clubs and the labor movement on the West Coast were there to help the young turks like George Hardy and Jack DePoe, the Chaney Brothers and a number of others who were going to defend the union against the gangsters. What they did was, they got together a group of young building service people and they hired a truck--Great American Bus Company--not a truck, a bus company. They got a bus, and think they were charged about \$35 a piece and they took it and stopped off at all the locals that they knew about in the International on the way back East where a convention was gonna be held. Then when they hit New York, they went to see Tom Dewey, who was the prosecutor from New York to get rid of gangsters and with his help when the Convention opened, there was a group lead by Tom Dewey that came right into the union Convention headquarters and arrested everybody sitting on the stage, which was the leadership of the union in those days. And hauled them off to jail and most of them were put in jail as a result of that and the reform movement, which was George Hardy and the young people in the union took over.

Q. What year was that do you know?

A. No. But you can get that from him. It was the time of Dewey when he was the prosecutor. I'm not sure of the time. It was Scalise, from the Chicago mobs, was head of the union. Then as a result of that, a incorruptable group was put in

with the agreement that Tom Dewey and there was an Oversight Committee to see to it that the union would be run by the membership and not by the gangs and the gangsters. George Hardy lead that movement. That was the turn of the union to the building service and I think McFetteridge became the first president under that regime.

Q. You've only worked in the labor movement in Los Angeles, right?

A. As a full time organizer, right. But I have been very active in--I was very active in New York.

Q. What was the year that you first became active here in California?

A. I became active here with the public employees with the National Federal Workers Union and that was the year of about 1945.

Q. What I'd like you to do now is to kinda take yourself back to 1945 and what was the labor movement in Los Angeles like in 1945 when you first became involved.

A. Well, I was a member of the United Federal Workers and we had a chapter at the Office of Price Administration and it was a very small, weak union. It was a part of the CIO. I was interested in becoming a union organizer. I was a young actress at the time putting on theater for the labor movement. There were some theater groups that were putting on shows and it was the time of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's third term, I believe. Fourth term it must have been.

Maybe it was 1944 and we put on some theater for re-election of the President. It was then that I realized that I did not want to perform for the workers, I wanted to be with the workers, I wanted to organize because I had done volunteer organizing since I was 15 years of age in New York. I went to the CIO and really was very impressed with their tremendous organizing interest and their progressive positions on everything. I met people from the Steelworkers, and the public workers, I mean there were no public workers--there was the state, county and municipal workers at that time in the CIO that represented city workers and very few county workers. Then there was my union, the Federal Workers which was very small and very ineffective. I asked somebody how do you become a union organizer. The person who was the research head of the CIO said well, are you in a union now? And I said, yes of course. And have you belonged to a union before? And I said, oh yes, of course. He asked me what unions and I told him, that when I was an actress, I was with Actress Equity and then when I was a teacher I was a member of the Teachers Union back East and a member of the social workers union back East, but I never worked full-time--I was a volunteer. I helped organize taxi cab drivers and helped organize other waterfront workers when I was in college.

Q. In New York?

A. Yes. I tried to organize them...

Q. Are those the same taxi cab drivers that we have?

A. No, I mean they were different people but there were attempts to organize them and to organize on the waterfront, I helped out with the National Maritime Union when I was in college. Also, sanitation workers were trying to organize and so a number of us went out and tried to help the union that was doing it. But, I knew I wanted to be a full-time organizer. And, he said to me what's wrong with the union you belong to now? Why aren't you active in that? I said, well it's small and ineffectual, and they don't know how to handle grievances; there's just a few of us and he said if you are critical of it work in it. Become a steward, become a leader and after I had been turned down by many other others who said that they could not hire me because I was woman--or they wouldn't hire me, I was particularly effected by that kind of advice because it seemed to me the right way to come up in the union movement which was to earn my...pay my dues so to speak. I was always a member of the union. I had been very active in New York because of very good unions, but this was a very poor and ineffectual union. And I did just that. I became active in the union and I was fired three times. I went to the CIO Counsel and they put me back on the job for three times and then I came in as a clerk and ended up as an economist. By that time, it was a merger of the United Federal Workers and the State County Municipal workers and some other small, public employee, independent unions. We formed the United Public

Workers, which I believe was somewhere around 1945.

Q. What that just a local merger or was that national merger?

A. It was a national merger and a local merger followed.

Q. Once the United Public Workers came into existence there was no more Federal workers?

A. That's right. And Elinor Nelson was the president and this reporter, Bernstein's father was another officer. I don't know whether he was secretary-treasurer or whatever he was. His father was an officer in that union. And so the United Public Workers...

Q. I have a question on that. When they were purged out of the CIO was it involved by the federal workers and the public workers.

A. No, the federal workers had already merged into the public workers. When that merger took place, here in California there was an interest in building a large Amalgamated Public Employee Union. In the past, in the 30s they tell me that there were independent public worker unions here and that these state, county and municipal workers, which is different from AFCME; it was the CIO version of AFSCME existing here in the State of California and that the social workers were very, very active and some of them went to jail for their unions.

Q. In the state county?

A. In the state, county and municipal workers union in the 30s. I'm talking about the 40s. I came in in the period of the 40s. And then there was the state relief workers union which was an independent union. Many of them were in the

CIO. The merger and the new union which was established, the United Public Workers embraced a number of small, independent unions; United Federal Workers, and the State, County and Municipal Workers. Here in Los Angeles our union grew I think between--well the total membership between these merged unions became Local 246, United Public Workers and it was composed of federal employees, county employees, state employees, school employees.

Q. On the federal employees, what kind of federal employees?

A. They were mainly in the Office of Price Administration and several were in miscellaneous federal agencies around, but after the War was over, and most of these federal agencies which were war agencies had gone out of existence; there were very few, there were no federal workers left. So for all intensive purposes it became a state, county board of education and city amalgamation.

Q. And the county workers were...?

A. The county workers were all part of Local 246, United Public Workers...they came out of United...

Q. The county workers would have been people working in different offices right?

A. There were a few hospital workers, very few and there were some office workers, and there were a few librarians and they were scattered here and there. I think at one time the total was about 3500 members in Local 246 and it was

primarily a city workers local. The bulk of the membership was in the Department of Public Works. The Sanitation Department and the Street Maintenance Department. Primarily Black workers with Black leadership in that local union. The county workers were scattered between the Department of Charities, which is what it was called that day at that time and other certain parts of the county and it was a very small group. I had become a steward and a chief steward and I was voted to be president of the Local 246. And I heard that there was an opening on the staff and I put in my application. I was turned down and very frankly told that I was a woman and therefore wouldn't qualify. I said well, why would the workers have confidence in me to elect me President, why can't I be an organizer? The answer was well, they have confidence in you as a president but they feel that only a man is strong enough to be able to negotiate --not negotiate because we had no negotiating rights--but to fight and meet with county management or city management, that only a man could fill the job. Finally, I worked out an agreement that I would be on probation for three months. The way it went is--the dialogue went is--"We can't hire you. Why not? The general manager at that time said, well you're a woman. Well. You have to go out a night. And I said, so what? I'm not a member of a religious order. I go out at night. I'm a married woman. What's the problem? And then he went into it wasn't he, it was the membership and I decided

that I would agree to a probationary period of about 90 days. I went out to Rancho Los Amigos Hospital which was the county poor farm where we had a few members. They lived up to what he said. They did not want a woman organizer and they were disappointed when they saw me. I told them about the probationary period and they agreed that that was a fair way to handle and they would give me 90 days and everytime I went out there they used to say, where is Sam? He was the name of the general manager. I would say well, he's coming next week. In the meantime we handled all kinds of basic grievances, they had no grievance procedure--there was county hospital workers, there was no collective bargaining, there was nothing for them. You really had to beg and you had to represent them without the right to represent them and I was new and fresh and green and was completely untrained. I really worked on my instincts. I felt very close to the workers. I had to travel about an hour and three-quarters a day, every day to get out there so I spent about three hours on the road to get there. I lived practically lived with them night and day. We were able together to solve many grievances. The workers out there were primarily from the South, they were Caucasian. Ninety percent of them were white and they had about twelve Black employees who were all custodial help. They were isolated. They sat at a table only with Blacks and the single people sat at one table and the married folks sat

at another table and the place was run on a strick, class basis. After I had organized them and handled and settled other kinds of grievances, we finally had educational programs and I brought in other resources of the CIO. We had films and filmstrips and all kinds of educational material. They marched on Labor Day and they partipated in the struggles of the CIO. Generally, it was a marvelous experience for them. And many of them had come from good union backgrounds. As a matter of fact, the nephew of the found of Labor Day, Peter McQuire, his name was Bob McQuire was one of the active members there at Rancho Los Amigos. At the end of 90 days I told them that Sam was going to come to the next meeting for a decision. And they said, who's Sam? And that was the end of that and that was end of my probation and I had succeeded in having it. Right after that, we brought up the grievance and I brought in a very mixed group of white members, mixed meaning single and married and young and old. We went into management on a grievance relating to the way they set up the dining room. And the real reason for it was that the single men wanted to sit at the single women's table and one single man wanted sit at the married couple's table, because some couple there were friends of his. We brought all those grievances up and I introduced the grievance of the Black table, where the Black members sat and the head of the hospital turned to the Southern and Texan members and said, is she bringing that up for the CIO or

is she representing your point of view. Do you really want to sit and eat with these colored folks. And they said yes. They are members of the union and everybody should be able to sit where they wanted to sit. That was the beginning--a series--all of these grievances plus that grievance was a turning point in the development of the union at Rancho Los Amigos.

Q. Was that standardized to have that? Both in terms of segregated racially and having people married, single...?

A. Well the hospitals were so far removed from any kind of democratic set up. They were run like military establishments. As a matter of fact, we had a hospital that was just a year before a military establishment. It was a military hospital. And that was Long Beach Hospital. These hospitals were run on the military basis, full of class and sexual divisions as to who could do what where. Many of the attendants to the patients at that time were male attendants. As well as female, you had many more men then, working as attendants than you do now too. The men were making demands very similar to what the women are fighting for now, and that is more safe conditions. A lot of them were developing heart trouble and serious medical problems, back injuries from lifting patients. And these were the men that were hired to lift the patients. So, true their working conditions were so bad and the pay was, I think the lowest paid was \$103 a month. A few years before

that they had had their salaries cut. They were in very bad shape and the union was the only way out. They had no illusions that they could win any of it without the union.

Q. Who owned the hospital?

A. County. County hospitals. One of the county hospitals. It is called the county poor farm because the patients were chronic patients who were there for years and of course now, it is one of the outstanding hospitals in the world for rehabilitated surgery and for joint diseases and during the period of infantile paralysis it became the leading hospital in the world. It has changed so completely. It is also one of an outstanding hospital on the treatment of children's diseases known internationally. That was fairly typical hospital conditions in Los Angeles. Now there was another large hospital--the County Medical Center--which I was sent to as an organizer to organize and there the majority of the workers were Black. You had more turnover there than you had at the Rancho Los Amigos. The atmosphere was a completely different atmosphere. The Black workers were very aware of the fact that they were being oppressed. The firings at that Medical Center were the highest in the area. The treatment of the workers was hard to believe, you had to bring a ham and give it to your foreman in the laundry in because there were no foreladies. You gave it to the head of the laundry in order to get a good efficiency rating. If you didn't get a good efficiency rating, you were fired.

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They had a bookie joint--run right out of the county hospital laundry. They appointed some...all of the supervisors were white and the workers were Black. One of the white supervisors had her shoes sent a shoemaker to be fixed and part of the laundryworker's duty was to do her personal errands. This was not unique. They treated them as the workers used to say--it was like a plantation. That hospital was very easy for us to organize. I was the only organizer covering for the county hospitals. All of you, which was a residential...

(end of tape 2, side A)

(beginning of side B)

The Los Amigos which was the county poor farm, those were the long term care, convalescent care places where the people were bedridden for twenty years with arthritis. But it was place where the people lived close to their hospital and there was long term employment of workers as well. And then there was the Medical Center which was the one place where the poor people in Los Angeles could go--the only place they could go for help. The Medical Center was ripe like a plum for organizing and it was originally organized by a social worker with a Masters Degree, Iona Wheeler and a custodian, Lembrick Belfrey. They used to talk to each other about how terrible conditions were and why couldn't they organize into the CIO because the CIO to the poor people in this area was the pencilin, it was the hope of the future. The craft unions were not interest in organizing the blue collar workers or organizing industrially. This union, which was the CIO union made the Medical Center it's target. And we organized up and down and sideways and we decided that we would stop hotshotting an individual here and there and they were all departments of the county and they would concentrate on the hospitals and that's what we did. I was the hospital organizer and representative-- I organized them. And did it in a the traditional, George

Hardy fashion. Didn't know that they should be inplant committees, but that's what we did. We set up committee, we had that kitchen, the laundry and the attendants, and the x-ray set up stewards systems because there was no way in the world one person could handle sixty miles or a hundred miles of travel to cover all these places.

Q. So you worked as an organizer or as an organizer and business agent, right?

A. Yes, yes. Nobody was purely an organizer. You organized, but at the beginning I was an organizer and there were business agents who handled grievances at the beginning. I organized and then I became the organizer and business agent.

Q. You said that you had four hospitals that you were organizing. At that time, how many other hospitals were organized?

A. Those were the four hospitals.

Q. Were there any already organized in union when you started organizing?

A. No.

Q. So you really tackled the first...completely new territory?

A. Yes. Yes. Yes. In the private sector at the same time, there was Local 399. Local 399 primarily represented the service and the building services. They were headed by

Luke Daniels, who George Hardy says was one of the greatest organizers he ever met. There jurisdiction were building custodians, old custodians everywhere, market custodians in libraries, just custodians.

Q. That's all private sector?

A. Non of the public sector, only private sector. No, it wouldn't be libraries. They were a building service union and gradually started to get into the hospital. They were Cedars of Lebanon, they were in City of Hope and the union was started by George Hardy, with whom you should speak because he and four other people came down here--they were the first to come down here to establish the first unions. They came from San Francisco and at the Hatchapee George Hardy told his father to stop right there at the Hatchapee, everything south of the Hatchapee was going to be George's. His father had to ask his permission. He came here with four young men.

Q. And that was prior to the time that you started?

A. Yes, that was prior to my arrival here.

Q. Let me get the picture now. In the forties after the... during the War, let me just go back for a moment, there were more federal workers organized because...the unions that had federal workers had grown because of the number of workers during the war. The question, is I know for example in the auto industry the union swelled during World War II because of the munition industry and because

had basically a maintenance and membership agreement which meant that everybody that the job had to join the union. Was there anything like that which helped build any kind of public employee unionism?

- A. No. Really not. The growth of the public worker union happened John F. Kennedys Executive Order. The federal workers who were organizing didn't have all that many members, but they did grow from what they were in the pre-war days because there were more people working in federal agencies. They dropped as soon as the agencies were terminated at the end of the war. In the state, county and municipal field, during the period of the CIO, there was a tremendous organizing drive because the AF of L was a based on craft lines and they were not interested in industrializing--I mean organizing for instance, a county or a city. They were interested in the carpenters or the craftsmen. It was during the period of the CIO when they had a number of relief workers or social workers or the equivalent; that the organization started to grow--organizations of public workers started to grow. They were state employees at that period. Sam Yarodi put a lot of their leaders in jail and baited their unions and fought them. Because the concept of public workers joining unions was not acceptable. It was a very daring thing to do. Librarians were always union minded. It was

very interesting. Librarians and social workers joined unions. Sanitation workers, whether they worked for cities or counties, were also very organizable. There were not illusions on the part of the sanitation worker about where the power lay and the fact that they needed to get together to organize. We were very successful in organizing sanitation workers. And that also applied to the blue collar workers and the street maintenance men who worked the caterpillars and the big machinery, and dug, the laborers and so forth. The blue collar workers. We were very successful in organizing them. That's true in San Francisco as it is true here. It is fairly much the same history. The kinds of workers joined. The men who worked in the Department of Water and Power organized. As a matter of fact, one of the men who was Dean of the City Council here, Gilbert Lindsey, was the president of our union in the Department of Water and Power when he was a young elevator operator. And they had no illusions. An elevator operator knew exactly what side he was on and they organized. They organized in the Department of Water and Power and they organized in the City Hall the custodial groups and the elevator operators, the street maintenance workers, the garbage collectors and the blue collar workers understood that they needed a union and they needed the strength of an amalgamated union. The hospital workers who had no protection under the law, who was not covered by any state law covering hospital workers

right to organize, were not covered by the NLRA, were the most, next to the farm workers oppressed groups. They were treated like charity workers--that they ought to be glad and this is their contribution to charity. You have to understand the history of hospital workers. Building service unions decided at an earlier time in the 40s that despite the absence of any collective bargaining laws that would protect the right of the workers to join, despite the fact that they could be fired for joining the union; that there was such a need. They sought unionization. There such a need, there was such a fertile to organize that this union, only this Service Employees Union decided to organize these hospitals. They were the first in the field in California. They became known--SEIU in those days was the BSEIU--became known as the champion of the poor--of the working poor. And of the minorities because minorities worked in the hospitals and we were close to the ILWU--the Longshoremen in those days and we were a very progressive force. We were an independently progressive force in this community. Of course, when I am talking about this union and the beginnings of the union I am not talking about the SEIU, I am talking about the United Public Workers which then became the SEIU. The AF of L at that time which existed, was very much opposed to the CIO and the organizing of the steelworkers and the shipyard workers and all the other workers and certainly the public workers. The AF of L and the CIO were in locked combat

until at a later period in the 50s it was the merger of the AF of L and the CIO. So, although there was this feeling on the official level, in the hospitals many a carpenter, many a painter and many an electrician joined our union, Local 246. They joined the same union that also had the garbage collectors and the street maintenance workers and the hospital workers because they respected our fighting for our membership. We had low dues, we had a terrific history of winning grievances without any kind of grievance procedure, we had an ad hoc grievance procedure that we enforced only through the sheer number of the participants. The first time that I went to the hospital to organize the Medical Center, they had two guards who took me and held me spread eagle and shoved me right down the steps out of the hospital. I was in the next day organizing. I used to organize. I had a high (inaudible) in the Administration because they picked me out of the hospital. So I organized in the dressing room, in the bathrooms, in the kitchens. The men used to string up a blanket or a sheet and they would change their uniforms on one side and I'd be pitching the union on the other or developing a grievance procedure and the women would take me into their dressing rooms and they had beds then at that time for custodial help and kitchen workers, because they worked very bad hours and sometimes they had to stay there or had to rest. There was this special area where they would stay and shield me from supervisors who would come

in to see if I was around. It was a wonderful period of everybody participating in it. That's how we organized the hospital.

Q. That was based on the CIO philosophy?

A. That's right.

Q. At that time were there any proprietary hospitals organized?

A. No.

Q. So really, with the beginning of those county hospitals, that was really the beginning of any kind of hospital organizing?

A. I wouldn't say that; 399 had already began to organize the Jewish hospitals. The philosophy of the Jews has to be understood. Right out of the Old Testament comes the responsibility to take care of the poor and the sick and the orphan and the needy. You had to give the best fruit of your field to that and that was the beginning of social work really and social responsibility. The Jewish community centers were set up in the middle ages. They were set up in Europe. Self-help--the community had to help each other because nobody else would, that's really what happened. And we survived of that. When the Jews came to this country--immigrated into the port cities in the East--New York, they were the heart and sole of the garment workers union. They were very union minded because they had nothing to gain from the so-called establishment. They had to organize themselves in order to

be able to eat and feed their children. When we started to organize here, you must realize the private sector hospitals were not covered by the National Labor Relations Act. You could have an election and get 100 percent and the hospital did not have to recognize you. There was compulsion and there was not state law or nothing. So it was the sheer, militancy of the union that really did it. Now, you will have the check with George Hardy on the years and times that they had originally organized the City of Hope and Cedars of Mount Sinai-- those were the only three major hospitals that were organized and I would say that the Cedars Hospitals, it took twenty years after the first date in which they tried to because some of the corporation heads who sat on the Corporation Board of Cedars Sinai were the largest employers and although many of them had unions in their own plants, they fought the union for twenty years but 399 went out...but when we were organizing the major thrust was in the public sector of hospital organizing.

Q. Was 399 at that time part of the BSEIU?

A. You will have to check with George. I believe that when he came out of the war which was in '45 it was at that time he decided to come down to Los Angeles, so I believe it was just about that time that they started, but you will have to check the date with him.

Q. You had said that Los Angeles was a very anti-union town at that time, what did that mean in terms of your organizing?

A. Well the history of Los Angeles was full of violence against the unions. It was controlled at that time by the Chandler Family and the Otis Grey Family. They fought the unions viciously at that time and it was an agrarian--had been agrarian economy--you had a lot of retired farmers coming here from the midwest. It was not an industrial town until the 40s. The War helped transform the whole look and economy from ranching and from agriculture into light and heavy industry. It was during the war period that the whole face of Los Angeles changes and the unions came into effect and the fight was not during the War against the union. It was the unions helping to deliver the war effort and to work on the ships and the munitions and the air planes. There was a complete spirit--much more of a spirit of cooperation during those war years. The whole attitude was that they were going to keep this an open shop town. The 20 leaders of Los Angeles of the biggest banks and the insurance companies and the newspapers and the ranching interests got together and they formed organizations to keep the unions out. We had several trials that was the bombing trial where people were accused of bombing the Los Angeles Times which set the unions back. There was some very famous Clarence Darrow trials here. You could not get upon a

street corner and deliver a speech if it wasn't approved by the establishment. There were arrests made. I think Upton Sinclair had some trial cases where he went to Signal Hill in Long Beach and recited the Constitution and was arrested. It was a tremendous movement--there were counter movements too. There was a movement of the senior citizens who built up a tremendous organization statewide for senior citizens. Until the New Deal came, it was no help for anybody who had any serious social problem or who was unemployed. Southern California was completely different than Northern California and they prided themselves in being an open shop town. They fought the unions with everything they had. You see, they had two concurrent things going during the War they needed the unions, they needed the workers and the workers brought their unions and organized into unions and there was a period of...there was the whole question of the laws that were set up to recognize unions, so the CIO grew during the period of the War time because the workers were in large industrial plants and they were able to organize and they had the federal law to do it. Although they weren't striking during that period of war, they took a no strike pledge. But the established families of Los Angeles, the established industries had their own councils and they fought against the unions like the unions were the enemy. And they were very proud of the fact that they had few union members per capita as compared to the Northern

part. At the same time, the contradiction was that the greatest place and source for future organizing and union building was right down here in Los Angeles and George Hardy recognized that. And that's why he took the SEIU building service union down into Los Angeles. He knew that this lack of organization and degree of the oppression and treatment of the workers and salaries were so low and the treatment of oppression was so high that this would be a fertile place for organizing and his prediction has worked out. That's true.

Q. Was there anybody doing any kind of similar organizing at that time?

A. Well the shipyard workers at that time, rubber workers, the steelworkers, the auto workers and the machinists were. Yes.

Q. They were called industrial workers?

A. All industrial workers and the CIO, not in the AF of L.

Q. But when George came down then he was the first one to come in and really start organizing nonindustrial workers.

A. George Hardy was the first person in the building service union, was the first union to come down to Los Angeles and create the atmosphere for massive organizing. Except for the CIO unions and remember building service was an AF of L union; it was the only AF of L union that came down and did heavy organizing. Did any organizing.

Q. And at that time, they worked very closely with the

CIO. SEIU worked very closed with the CIO union during that time period in Los Angeles?

- A. They...I would say that they worked very closely with the CIO unions up North and started to work with some of them down here. But actually, at the very beginning they were alone. There were four lonely guys who came down here and sometimes they slept in the union office--they had no place and no money to go with. They brought their lunches in and they slept there and were determined and they signed people up one by one. They'd go into an office building and talked to the custodians and my God the custodians looke at them as though they were sent from Heaven, because nobody had ever cared about building service workers before. They built it one by one by one by one, it was a massive organizing. Now my union, Public Workers was the CIO union. So we in the CIO were doing what George Hardy was doing in the AF of L along parallel lines. But we were in the public sector and he was in the private sector.

- Q. Can you bring me up to the point that from where you started on the staff as an organizer for a hospital to when you joined up with BSEIU and what were the events that happened and how did your union change?

- A. We were organizing city workers, county workers, state workers, Board of Education workers and in the period of the 40s when we became United Public Workers and we were thrown out of the CIO--that is the national union of United Public

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Workers following our support of Henry Wallace for President.
Many of the most, very militant, fine unions in the CIO were
voted out...

(end of tape 2, side B)

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