

political intelligence operation going so we knew they were after us, and we made the necessary moves to try to work it out for cooperation.

So then we laid this in front of Reuther, because Livingston and maybe a couple of other conservative officers on the board were working against us as well. So we tried to build the case. A lot of it was based on the 1952 victory on the wage arbitration decision, where we won the principle of equality with auto, since we were so far behind in wages and benefits with brothers and sisters in the autoworkers section of the union. So that became a very important part. We talked about the fact that the strike wasn't lost in a sense, because we did come through with some pretty important victories, not only in terms of the collective bargaining ~~game~~^{gains}, but also in terms of building the solidarity of the membership and having, even though in some sense it was a ~~loss~~^{lost} strike, a successful strike because of building the solidarity of the membership around certain important principles and issues. So we pointed out that we had met with O'Hallieran and we'd met with other people in the union to try to work on a more cooperative spirit around rebuilding the local, but we had failed in that because their political goals were at odds with ours. And since we were loyal members of the Reuther administration, we expected Reuther to come through for

10/17/6

us. ~~It, and~~ we embellished our report with pictures of Allard and O'Halloran, people involved from our local and their caucus, and that they were doing their best to work against us. During that period we were doing an educational program through the stewards organization more literature to the membership, and we felt that we were turning the corner on the rebuilding job. Reuther came through with a reply on March 11th, '54, saying, "I have your report. I'm in no position to pass judgment on it at this point." But he said to us that the International Executive Board and he had made no decision concerning interference in the internal affairs of the local and that there was no truth in any statement that the recent strike at North American was unauthorized, which was what one of the charges that was being made--that it was not authorized. And he talked about his desire of strengthening, uniting the union, and so promised kind of a maximum unity effort on his part, which is, in a way, giving us a handle, that we had his support even though he wasn't very explicit about that, which is the way he operated. Because he usually wanted to work with the office of the international union to line them up and then bring forces to bear.

Well, about that time Livingston had reported to the International Executive Board about the strike and his

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problems with us in the local and so forth, and said he didn't want to be head of the North American Aviation Bargaining Council anymore. He was just sick and tired of it and wanted to resign. Well, Reuther picked up on that, which was not said in his letter from him, but he accepted that. So then there was a decision of who to put in charge, since Livingston was in charge of the National Aircraft Department [UAW] and all aircraft locals were under his jurisdiction in terms of bargaining. So Reuther decided that he was the only ^{one} that could do that, and he had never been involved in aircraft bargaining before, but this was a real victory for us because his reputation and his record were such that we felt not only relieved but hopeful that we would get some genuine bargaining going on and less politics in the situation. So that happened in 1954. So as we went into the 1954 negotiations, Reuther entered the picture, and met with the management in the local union committees and assigned Jack Conway, his administrative assistant, which was something of historical irony because of the personal conflict between Livingston and Conway, Kircher and Conway, over the history, and here we had the guy who was in part responsible for some of our problems. I had known Jack, had become a close personal friend of his and his family's. So Jack was assigned the negotiations. Reuther came in for the openers and stuff and set the pace.

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But a strange thing happened in negotiations at that point, and I discussed this with this management rep recently about the effect that Conway had on this company. I think it's a little strong to say that he mesmerized these people, but he had such a way about him in presenting problems that there was real dialogue for the first time rather than this positioning that was going on and the theatrics of Paul Russo and Livingston. Here was a guy who knew how to deal with management people, since he had been Reuther's guy in negotiations with GM, Ford, and Chrysler during a period when Reuther was in the hospital and mending. So we felt that we had real good representation for the first time. One of the things we did going in was Jack got an agreement from Gene [Eugene D.] Starkweather, the vice president of the corporation, that we would negotiate in the room and not outside, that we would not go through the usual press releases and propaganda wars that had gone on during the '53 strike, that we would try to maintain a level of dialogue to try to achieve something. So during that period we made a lot of headway in terms of the process, and we felt that we were getting good representation on our issues. As a result, we got a very good settlement out of it. Now, one of the things that Jack reminded me of was that in the '53 settlement we had agreed at the end of the strike not to

negotiate on pensions in the coming negotiations, in the '54 negotiations, that there was an embargo on that. So Jack approached it on the basis, "Look, we agreed not to discuss this. Now, if you want to raise it as an issue, we're going to discuss it with you. But we're not saying you have an obligation. We're not going to pressure you into negotiating on this, although this has become pattern in the auto industry, steel, rubber, and so forth." And there were no retirement programs at that point for aircraft workers in the whole country, and, particularly, Southern California was the base of the industry. And we came back to that, and Starkweather kept raising it, so it was an indicator that they might be coming through with a retirement program just on their own. And I think Jack was skillful enough not to say, "Well, goddammit, you owe us retirement even though we got this agreement and so forth." He just kept saying, "Look, you've got no obligation to do anything on this. It gave them an opportunity to take the initiative and be the good guys. And they wanted to be, because the disunity in the membership had an effect on the corporation, and they wanted to deal on a better basis with us at that point. And I think that was one of the results of the strike.

CONNORS: I guess what we can say, though, is that the strike was successful in that the company did come around

to a different attitude towards bargaining afterwards.

SCHRADE: Yeah, they got hurt in the strike, and the disunity in the work force between the disparate groups meant that they had a job to do of bringing the thing back together to get good production. So we found ourselves in a situation where we wanted the same thing at that point. We wanted to build the membership up and regain a sizeable majority. We didn't have a union shop during that period, we were still organizing all of the time and politicking all of the time because of the opposition groups and so forth. So it was to our advantage to have this kind of more cooperative relationship. In fact, as a followup on our pamphlet, "The Midnight Walkout" reporting and talking about the strike, we put out the following pamphlet called "It's a Courtship, Not a Marriage" which was a Conway phrase, that we were in this long-term courtship.

CONNORS: That's interesting.

SCHRADE: And then there we run samples of the dialogue of the '53 strike showing the hostility and the tension. And then in the '54 negotiations the kind of dialogue that was more respectful of each and constructive in terms of getting to the issues and resolving them. So it was a good round of negotiations. And following our elections earlier in the year, it gave us a kind of solid support in the local and was a real payoff for the strike, and people

recognized that. So we had no problems in terms of the politics of the local for some time after that.

CONNORS: Well, speaking of some of the local matters, I think at this time you were beginning to think about building a new union hall, for instance. Did that take place during this time?

CONNORS: Yeah. One of the great people in the history of our locals, Art Carstens, who was in the [Institute for] Industrial Relations [UCLA] labor section, an old socialist who maintained that he benefitted from socialism in the United States, ^{-- had} gone to public schools, public university, worked for the government and now for a state university, ⁻⁻ and a kindly, lovable person who was one of the great labor educators in this country because he got people involved. He wasn't a lecturer. He wanted people to express themselves and was a great discussion leader.

CONNORS: Now, how did you know him?

SCHRADE: Well, they were recruiting. There was the labor advisory committee at the institute at UCLA.

CONNORS: Oh, at UCLA. Okay.

SCHRADE: And they ran programs and so forth, and we liked the kinds of programs that he did. He introduced us to people from Swedish trade unions, from the Histadrut from Israel, and we got sort of an international labor flavor into the education process. And he also got me involved in

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Q. correct, full name?

Q, do you know
the name?
name?

a lot of health plan activity, because the early fifties were in the days of the [Harry S] Truman report which set certain principles and goals for the country. And he had staff member lists with [Lee] Bamberger. We became very good friends. She's now married to Danny [Daniel] Schorr. She was into health programs, and then, with some recommendation from me, she went to work for the UAW in Detroit. We were involved there, and that was the period when we were also doing community work trying to protect the Kaiser Permanente health plans, because the Los Angeles and the state medical association were attacking them viciously as a new form of socialism, communism, and so forth, by having group health, which was actually in line with what the Truman report was saying. So we did a lot of the political work as a result of getting involved with Carstens.

Getting away from your point about the union hall--
CONNORS: The union hall.

SCHRADE: Well, the point is that, in becoming friends with Art Carstens and his family during that period, he built a new house in Encino with an architect, Wayne Williams, out of the firm Smith and Williams. I got to know Wayne, and he had some ideas about union halls. So we enlisted him to do some plans for us. He wound up doing four union halls for us and also the Lockheed [International Association of]

Machinists [IAM] hall--

CONNORS: Up at-- 727.

SCHRADE: Lodge 727.

CONNORS: Yeah, sure, up on Victory Boulevard.

SCHRADE: And in '57, I was not in the local at that point; I'd gone to the international staff. But the building was built and there was an AIA award building honor award for that building that year. It was the first union hall that ever won it.

CONNORS: That's the American Institute of Architects.

SCHRADE: Yeah, yeah. Actually, though, the UAW has had three very good architects on union halls in this area which might be something to look at one day. Richard Neutra did the Ford local, Lincoln-Mercury Local 923 over in Pico Rivera, and the Chrysler [Corporation] local hall, which was one of the earliest new union halls--what's his name? John Van de ^{Kar} something. He also did the house over here across the street, and I met him. I'll have to find out his name. I met him once. Jerry [Edmund G.] Brown [Jr.] lived across the street here until recently, and that same architect did the ^{UAW} Local 230 hall. So we had three very good architects doing union halls, which I think is something important.

CONNORS: So the hall itself was finally built and dedicated after your time as--

Q Can you recall the name?

Q Which union UAW? Where? Maywood

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SCHRADE: Yeah.

CONNORS: But ^{the point was what} ~~that was the point~~, you got the ball rolling.

SCHRADE: Yeah, with Williams. And we set up a building fund.

CONNORS: Building fund, yeah.

SCHRADE: Yeah.

CONNORS: We are talking now, I guess it's 1955, your last year as president. What's the ^{make up} of Local 887 at this point? Are there more mexican-americans coming in? More blacks, women, and less of a--

SCHRADE: Some, because the company was expanding the newly developed space division at that time, which wound up with the Apollo program and the Space Shuttle program, eventually, and also a rocket engine program--the space program being out at Downey, which had been there for some time at that plant since war time, and also out in Canoga Park, the rocket engine plant, which is still going--and then ^{they} also had a new division, ^A Atomics International, which was a small one, but was also part of ~~the~~ North American's expansion program during the fifties. So we're getting all kinds of new people into the local at that point.

CONNORS: What was at Atomics International? Was it a research and development sort of--?

SCHRADE: Yeah, and they were moving towards reactors. And it finally, eventually, developed into this thing up in

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Colorado, which is a heavy polluter, the plutonium production plant.

CONNORS: Oh, yeah. Right.

SCHRADE: Rocky--

CONNORS: Flats. Rocky Flats, yeah. So you're saying the makeup is becoming more diversified?

SCHRADE: More diverse and spread out through L.A. County and eventually expanding into Orange County with the Autonetics division. I'm not quite sure when that started, but it was during that period. And up into Palmdale and Edwards Air force Base, which became a final assembly area for some of the big aircraft programs.

CONNORS: Can you recall some of the women who were active in the local 887 activities? I know that in Red [William C.] Aston's manuscript, for instance, he mentions a few of them.

SCHRADE: Yeah, Ciel [Cecilia] Carrigan, who is no longer alive, she was one of the real stalwerts^a in the local; Francis Bowie, I can remember, a black woman who became our picket captain at the main gate because she was such a great character and a really good organizer; Hazel Blakey I remember; Jack Hurst's wife who was in the cafeteria unit-- The names are escaping me but--

CONNORS: Mrs. Hurst. [laughter]

SCHRADE: She became Mrs. Hurst.

Q, can you recall her full name? Cecilia Hurst?

CONNORS: Which also brings up another question here.

There were other people coming up and beginning to be groomed, as it were, for leadership, and I guess Jack Hurst was in that position--

SCHRADE: Yeah, Jack was--

CONNORS: Although, was he older than you?

SCHRADE: Yeah. He was older than I, and he was also one of the leaders of the opposition group; before the strike he was in opposition. In order to unify the strike leadership, I appointed him strike chairman, a job he did most effectively and really served a very important political purpose at that point in bringing the local together behind the strike. As a result of that, he joined our caucus^u afterwards and became vice president. And when I went to the regional staff for the international union, he automatically became president for the balance of the term and then was elected a number of times after that.

CONNORS: How about Hank [Henry] Lacayo? Was he on the scene at that point?

SCHRADE: He was new then and was active in the strike and became an ally of Jack's and vice president under Jack Hurst.

CONNORS: I had some questions about education and community service. I think you covered that a little there with the Kaiser Permanents--

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SCHRADE: One really good experience we had ~~in~~ when Conway came in with Reuther was that they helped us set up and education, training, organizing campaign and brought really wonderful staff people out of Detroit: Brendan Sexton, who was the education director, Ralph Showalter, who was in the education department, Joe Tuma in the organizing department. What we did was we formalized this to a point where we were getting people off work once a week, the incumbent stewards and bargaining committee persons, but we were also inviting people in who wanted to help organize or who were recruitable as local leaders. So we were expanding our leadership group that way. And we were able to get a high school. I got a sort of a temporary teacher's credential which was available. So we had use of the Hawthorne High School classrooms, and we brought people together in a classroom setting. Like Art Carstens, Sexton was into a really participatory kind of educational thing-- no big lectures: [#] had films, discussed the films, stopped the film, talked about it and this kind of thing, and getting into really-- So people were being drawn into the process and drawn out. So we really built a strong leadership during that period going into the '54 negotiations.

CONNORS: Well, with your relations with the-- Was it the Industrial Relations Institute at UCLA?

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SCHRADE: Yeah, there's a labor section of it and there's a corporate structure, too.

CONNORS: What year did you connect with them? Was it early on?

SCHRADE: Early on, yeah.

CONNORS: And who over there did you speak to other than Carstens? I know Aaron, Ben [Benjamin] Aaron was connected to that.

SCHRADE: Ben Aaron was there, Lee Bamberger was there--

CONNORS: ⁿ Bernstein was there at the time.

SCHRADE: Irving ⁿ Bernstein, yeah, a hell of a good guy. And a guy named Ed Warren--

CONNORS: Ed Warren, yeah. Edgar Warren who had been with the Federal Mediation Service.

SCHRADE: Yeah. We didn't have too much to do with Warren because Carstens was such a star. He was such a wonderful person to work with and helped us a lot.

CONNORS: And other unions, other locals, I assume would be working with the Industrial Relations Institute--

SCHRADE: Yeah, sure. But I think we had a much closer affinity with them and used them more and didn't feel that we were being used by them. And that often happens with academic groups, that there we're sort of subjects for study and-- But Art wasn't that way. He was just a great human being, a good educator.

So where are we?

Connors
SCHRADE: Well, we're at the time when you're leaving the local, you're leaving the presidency and going on as assistant regional director, which is a whole other chapter in the internal politics of the UAW, I guess.

SCHRADE: Yeah. And since we were deeply involved in regional politics as well, we were, at the same time, organizing for the '55 convantion. We've talked about the '53 convention. I believe I mentioned back there that because of certain of O'Halleran's activities and behavior, Reuther, when I confronted him about this, he had asked me why we supported this guy each time, and I told him--

CONNORS: That's right, that's right. You spoke about that. You said, "Because you tell us to." [laughter]

SCHRADE: I said, "Because you endorse him every convention." And he got somewhat angry at that point, but it was the right thing to do. And at the end of the convention--and I had served as grievance [committee] chair of that convention and had done my duty--he called me and Dick Cartwright, who was vice president of our local at the time from the Downey division, and told me, about O'Halleran, he said, "I will never ask you to endorse that S.O.B. again." He said, "I don't want this known, but act accordingly." So we had license to go out and move.

So after the strike and as soon as we got things in

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order in the local and got the '54 contract settled in a good way--we didn't sit until then, but we were organizing--we had a break with Rex ~~Maynard~~ ^{Max Maynard}, who had been our candidate before, and Clarence Stinson. They were not getting along as well. So we were building a little more broadly in the region. Some people wanted me to run for regional director at that point, but I felt that I had local union experience but had never really worked on a staff, had never really been involved in that, so I backed away from it. Then we finally wound up with Charles Bioletti as the candidate. He was president of the Lincoln-Mercury local in Pico Rivera, 923, and had been our candidate in 1949 in what Reuther termed the Rainbow Coalition, because the old left was involved in that with us in '49. And, as I reported before, we got talked into abstaining and not letting him become the director in '49, which alienated a lot of the people in the region. But we had reestablished ourselves. Bioletti looked good to us: the president of a local, he'd been on the staff before, had been involved in the anti-Reuther group, but that had moderated itself over that period, over the early fifties. So we decided to go with him, and he was elected without too much of a problem, even though Allard was in the wings but couldn't really mount much of a campaign. And our supporting Bioletti at that point kind of undercut

the Allard effort.

CONNORS: So Allard didn't come to you and say, "I didn't we talk about this before?"

SCHRADE: No.

CONNORS: Because I know, at that point, you didn't commit to him, but--

SCHRADE: I didn't commit to him. Besides, he and his crew were attacking us and trying to cut us down, so he had no basis for coming to me to ask for support. Although, John is a wonderful guy and a good leader and would have been a great regional director. But I think he had his time in the late forties and just didn't quite make it. And I think his working with the Livingston-Kircher-Russo thing put him in a position where he didn't have the kind of solid base around the region that he needed. One of his stories is how he really was able to get along with Reuther, although he's part of that "the boss's boy" campaign against Reuther back in the forties. But in the 1950 negotiations at Chrysler, John was on the national committee and was doing an effective job on the committee, and that was with a long strike--I think 105-¹²/₁-day strike against Chrysler. That was where the first retirement program was established. The company funded actuarially sound, which was our demand. And John said that during one recess he and Reuther shared a bed to take naps during

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negotiations. He says, "I've even slept with Walter Reuther, you know, showing how close we are." But John was the kind of person who could get along with a lot of people and had a big influence, but it was just not his time. So we elected Bioletti.

CONNORS: And were you then appointed as assistant? He tapped you for that?

SCHRADE: Yes, he asked me to do that. The problem with the Bioletti election was immediate. The night we were celebrating his election--and we felt very good about this, because O'Halleran had been not doing his job as director, and there were certain problems that should not happen in that kind of administration--Bioletti and his wife and I and Jack and Laverne Conway and Otha Brown, who was Walter's secretary and black--and that's important in this--and Joe Tuma were in the hotel, some dancing going on, having dinner, and so forth. And all of a sudden, Charlie got this kind of weird look on his face and began saying some things that just didn't make any sense. So Jack and I got him out of the dinner group and talked to him on the side. He was really delusionary. He said, "You people have elected me to this position only to get me." A real paranoid situation.

2/19/53

Q name?
Joseph

TAPE NUMBER: IV, SIDE TWO

SEPTEMBER 21, 1989

CONNORS: All right. We were talking about Bioletti's kind of paranoia that was becoming--

SCHRADE: It was pretty serious. We just couldn't connect with this guy. And his position that we elected him to "just to get him" didn't make any sense at all because I had stepped back for him, and I felt for good reason in terms of my own lack of experience. One of the things he accused Conway of, he said, "You asked me to dance with Otha. You're testing me whether I'll dance with a black person or not." And Jack just said, "That wasn't my reason at all. We just helped you get elected. We want you as the director. We worked this out, and you're just challenging our integrity at this point." We just couldn't get through to him. He was just gone. And Jack and I got very drunk that night with Doug Fraser and we just said, "Jesus Christ, what the fuck have we done? [laughter]."

The next day, hung over, I drove into Detroit to meet Bioletti there to go meet with Reuther on staff, with changes in staff, because that's usually what happens when a new director comes in. We had this meeting set with him at solidarity house. I met Charlie; we were at the same hotel. We had breakfast together. And he seemed to be okay, but still very concerned, very suspicious. So we

Full name?
Douglas

Q. Is this an official institution?
A. Yes.
UAW
Meth H2

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walk up to the doors of the solidarity house and he said, "I'm not going ⁱⁿ there." I said, "We've got this meeting." He said, "You've got people in there. You're going to beat me up." I said, "Charlie--" I tried to persuade him, but I found out over the years that it's ^{so} difficult to persuade anybody who's in that state. It was just very sad.

We finally got him to go in, and we had a meeting with Reuther and talked staff and so forth, but it was just agonizing at that point, because the future of the region was at stake and-- But after a while he seemed to level off. And I felt part of the problem was even though I did my best to work with him, that he didn't trust me as the assistant. He said that I was in there, and the next time around, two years, in the '57 convention, he'd be unhorsed and so forth. And talking with some of the old-timers in the union, trying to analyze his problem, I concluded that Bioletti's major problem was that he had been vicious in his attacks on Reuther and the family during the '45, '46 period when he was part of the [George] Addes-[Roland J.] Thomas-[Richard] Leonard relating to Dick Leonard--

CONNORS: Oh, I see. Okay.

SCHRADE: He was part of that group and was particularly-- He felt this was the reason that he couldn't be the director in '49, that Reuther was so opposed him because of

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that experience and didn't realize that people mellow and time solves problems. He just was not willing to accept acceptance, even though Reuther was that kind of person. He brought in opposition people. He encouraged opposition people to get in and continue. So it just became more and more unbearable for me to be in that position where he didn't really trust me. I was able to go around and do my work, and he was off ill some of the time, so I had to be there in his behalf. But it got to a point where, along about--let's see, this was the '55, '56 period--by 1957, I'd had it. And when [Leonard T.] Woodcock, who was now in charge of the Aircraft Department, out of the blue asked me if I would go to work for him, I agreed to do that. In fact--the memory's not clear here--but at some point, I left the assistant director's position, went to the aircraft staff in the region--

CONNORS: Oh, I see.

SCHRADE: --to deal with North American Aviation and some of the aircraft locals, being the resident national staff member for--

CONNORS: Okay. So you were an international rep out here.

SCHRADE: Yeah.

CONNORS: Okay.

SCHRADE: And even that didn't give Bioletti the confidence, because I was still around and working with

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locals. So by '57, at the convention, Woodcock said, "Why don't you move to Detroit?" Well, I'd been friendly with Lee Bamberger, who was now in Detroit, and that was an attraction. Getting out of the region was an attraction because my own work was suffering, and I thought the region was suffering because of this inability of Bioletti to work this thing out. So I agreed. Then very close on, I think we were at the airport, and Walter and May Reuther were there, and Walter said, "I understand you've agreed with Woodcock to come to Detroit." I said, "Yeah." He said, "God, if I'd known you'd ever leave California, I would have asked you to come on my staff." And he said, "What are you doing this for?" And I said, "The Bioletti problem and certain other things are going on, and I just think that it's better for everybody if I get the hell out of there." And he said, "Well, let's talk about that sometime." So that was sort of a sequential thing in terms of my position on the staff.

CONNORS: But going back to that point where you were tapped for the assistantship, by that point had it been agreed in the Blue Slate that your time was up and that you were to move on or something? Or were you of two minds about that, of continuing as president of the local or going onto regional staff?

SCHRADE: No, I felt it was time for me to do that. I'd

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done my job, and I felt that staying in a particular office for a long time was not a good idea. Jack Hurst had become vice president, very strong, good leader, and I felt that we had come through this long build up into the '52 wage struggle, the strike, and then got things really worked out in terms of the relationship with the corporation and building a strong membership, good contract, that it was time to do something else. So I agreed to go, and the slate agreed that it was good timing.

CONNORS: You mentioned that you were organizing for the '55 convention. I was reading old issues of Solidarity, and I guess every convention is the biggest and best convention that's always the line of assessment that you hear. But this one was particularly-- I don't know if it was an anniversary for UAW or not, but I know that at that point they launched the Guaranteed Annual Wage idea.

SCHRADE: Uh-huh. [affirmative]

CONNORS: Could you talk about what that was? Was that successful? That was an innovation, I believe, at the time.

SCHRADE: Yeah.

CONNORS: And I don't think any other-- I don't think steelworkers were pushing for that sort of thing.

SCHRADE: No, no. it had to do with the insecurity in the automobile industry with model shutdowns for weeks at a

time and instability. here's where Reuther was an innovator for a while and backed up a person like Jack Conway and Nat Weinberg, who was head of the research department and was set up as a special projects department. These kinds of ideas were developed and then advanced and tested. What came out of this, though was something different from the original concept, and that was the Supplement Unemployment Benefit.

CONNORS: Okay. Interesting.

SCHRADE: It was created in that way, which meant that during the model changeover, people were getting 90, 95 percent of their pay. It kind of resolves the problem of unstable income by providing a full year's income that way, or close to it. It wasn't exactly what they had in mind because a salary concept was in there, too, that you had a straight salary like anybody else and not on the hour-to-hour basis, on a rental basis, as most workers are in this country.

CONNORS: Well, did that make it more palatable to the companies to negotiate then, if it were on as a supplemental--?

SCHRADE: Yeah. The companies finally came around to that. It was very difficult because there were questions to resolve on state law, too, whether a company could do that, supplementing unemployment compensation benefits.

That finally got worked out, as well, through many state legislatures. I think Michigan was the model, because that's where the ~~the~~ had some political power and was able to get the change there.

CONNORS: What's also going on in this period is the Kohler [Company] strike, and I know that that made constant news, and that was a kind of a galvanizing event within the--

SCHRADE: The whole union.

CONNORS: The whole union, yeah.

SCHRADE: That was an eight-year struggle.

CONNORS: Here you are now. I guess you're regional director and, during this time, moving over to the other steps. Was there ^{any} regional efforts to drum up support for the Kohler boycott and to keep it--?

SCHRADE: Oh, yeah. The Kohler boycott was on everybody's agenda in the UAW and became a very effective approach to dealing with that strike. [Emil] Mezey was in charge. He was the secretary treasurer, but that was a department where he negotiated. And he was a tenacious bastard and really worked at it. And I think that's why we were ultimately successful with Kohler. We had a great slogan at that period on Kohler, which makes bathroom fixtures and everything else, of course: ^{the} "Piss on Kohler but not his products." [laughter]

CONNORS: Also in 1955--we spoke about this last time--~~the~~

the merger of the AFL [American Federation of Labor] and CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations] took place. You talked about just what the general attitude was, which was, "Well, we may as well do it. I think it's a good thing," etc. Did you go to the convention, the merger convention?

SCHRADE: Yeah, I was there. We had a lot of good social activity because everything had been prepared in advance. The convention itself was a formality, although a very important one, because it did bring together these two great organizations, the CIO and the AFL. And it sort of fit our agenda here as well, because we had been working very closely with the ¹⁴Machinists union, which was part of the AFL, and brought us closer together within the merged organization, because it played such a strong role here in the aircraft industry, along with us. But again, it seemed to be that the timing was good, and it worked for a long time. There were processes set up for resolving jurisdictional questions and so forth. Reuther saw this as a way to bring the full power of labor into the organizing efforts, although, over time, that didn't prove out to be the case. Although here in Los Angeles we did have a joint organizing effort where unions contributed to the staff and we worked together on a particular drive a particular union. So we had several unions working on those kinds of things.

CONNORS: Did that take place through the county fed [Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO]?

SCHRADE: Through the county federation, yeah.

CONNORS: And the organization department at AFL-CIO?

SCHRADE: Yeah. National AFL-CIO as well as the county feds.

CONNORS: Well, you know, there's always talk about Reuther having gotten the short end of the stick by not becoming president of the AFL-CIO, that Meany finessed the whole thing. And the other point of view is that Reuther is in charge of one of the most active and progressive unions. Why the hell does he want to get out of that and sort of manage this other thing? That what he did was rational by not fighting for any kind of other position.

SCHRADE: Yeah, I was not really privy to his own personal ambition at this point. He couldn't have expected to be president of the AFL-CIO with George Meany as-- They outnumbered us in terms of membership. The AFL is much larger than the CIO. And the conservative unions in the AFL were not going to stand for Reuther becoming the president. Reuther was satisfied with becoming head of the Industrial Union Department, which meant the CIO bloc was in one department, and then he was on the executive council and could operate there. I think he overestimated the influence that he could wield within the executive council,

particularly with the CIO bloc. That sort of fragmented over time, anyway, and was not his bloc. These little historical facts sometimes illustrate larger situations. In a book done by the radio director for the AFL, he mentions that when the merger was about to take place, he asked Meany about how to play this thing with Reuther--I can get you the quote, but it's something like this--Meany said, "Oh, don't worry about him. We've got that redhead exactly where we want him." On the other hand, I went back to the hotel with Reuther's secretary to meet him and Jack Conway there, and when Reuther came into the hotel room, he said, "Well, we've got the Industrial Union Department, we've got a ^{power} bloc. Now we can really go to work and change this organization." And here are these two guys, their own concept of the situation was so different. Reuther thought he had some power, and Meany knew he had it. So if we'd know that at the time, these two positions, we would not have merged. It seemed to be much more harmonious and much more movement for solidarity than was really there.

Although, on the other hand, the competition, I think, between the CIO and the AFL was important in the politics and the organizing activities. Competition isn't a bad thing all the time. It could have happened even in this context. But Reuther's main objective on organizing was sabotaged by Meany's policy, and that was that when the

internationals got together, the international unions got together to talk about an organizing program, any one international union could veto the program. So it gave that power to even the conservative unions. So the organizing effort really never did get off the ground, and that was one of his criticisms when we finally left the AFL-CIO back in 1968.

CONNORS: I've never seen this written, but it's almost like the attitude with Meany and some others was, "Well, you just don't want that many workers organized in this country. I mean, you want a lot so that you do have political clout, but you don't want too many." And it's almost like they consciously curtailed efforts to organize. I've never seen that documented in any way, but if you look at the overall development, it almost becomes something to think about, anyway.

SCHRADE: Yeah, the effort isn't as deep and broad as it should be. In fact, as we pointed out, one of my criticisms of the AFL-CIO was foreign policy. The AFL-CIO spends more money to support right-wing dictatorships overseas than it does on organizing here. And part of that is, it may not be a question of consciously or reluctantly organizing more workers, but this idea that we are the junior partner of capital, because that's the Meany-[Lane] Kirkland, now Kirkland, philosophy overseas, that

capitalism works in the United States, therefore we should be supporting anything close to capitalism in other countries, and that there's this sort of troika of business, labor, and capital that has to work together to run a country. And that puts us with a small percentage of membership and a very minor position in that troika. I don't know if that's an ideological question which leads to consciously or unconsciously not getting into this kind of mass organizing that should be going on. I don't know.

The best thing that I think that's happened recently is that the AFL-CIO has this associate member idea, which doesn't seem to be producing much at this point, except some economic benefits in terms of credit cards and so forth, but it could actually lead to organizing the people that are unorganized as well as those who've been in unions that are now in unorganized shops in order to build not only an organizing effort to build unions but to build unions through community organizations as well. And I hope that that's where they're going, and I certainly would support something like that.

It's 1955.

CONNORS: 'Fifty-five, '56. Well, then, when you moved to international staff, you stayed in Southern California, right? Or did you go to Detroit at that point?

SCHRADE: I was, yeah.