

SCHRADE: At Berkeley, yeah. And her husband, Hal Draper, a great scholar who wrote a book on Marx and democracy, which is a very, very good way to approach Marx. Although I don't consider myself a Marxist scholar, I thought Draper's work was very good. He was a wonderful debater about the issues of the Free Speech Movement. I made a statement there of support for the Free Speech Movement saying that in a way universities ^{had} become like factories with a management and domination and control of the student body, and the students really had to have democratic organization to be able to deal with the management of the university. There's this immense bureaucracy, particularly at the University of California with tens of thousands of students who are there. And that they also had to deal with the faculty and build alliances with the faculty. I made this analogy between a factory and the university, which was well received. I then went over and talked with [Robert] Hutchins and Scheinbaum at the Center to find out if there was any way that we could intellectualize about this and come up with any kind of a strategy about student organization. And Hutchins was pretty much against it because he felt that student bodies were temporary, that it was very difficult to keep a student organization that could put this kind of pressure, that it had to be more of a movement ~~by movement~~ kind of thing, particular student

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bodies raising these issues, that you really couldn't build a student organization that had any real permanence to it.

CONNORS: Well, at this time, the SDS [Students for a Democratic Society] did exist, although in '64, I think they were still fairly connected to the League for Industrial Democracy and not as public as they became. But I guess, by '65 and '66, they were becoming much more visible and vocal. Did you have any dealings with the SDS? I don't know-- They did have a chapter at UCLA, I know, but I think they were probably more active in other cities.

SCHRADE: Let's see, memory, memory. Were they involved in the People's Park?

CONNORS: SDS? I don't know. I don't know if they were.

SCHRADE: I don't know if it was-- It was beyond SDS at that point, I think. I knew some of the people in the SDS and--

CONNORS: Well, I guess I'm asking about the student movement as it was developing. It's hard--

SCHRADE: No, my main contact was that occasionally I would move in with student groups and faculty groups on the campuses on antiwar rallies, at Cal[ifornia] State [University] Northridge, USC [University of Southern California], UCLA, ^{UC} Berkeley, ~~the University of San Francisco~~ ^{UC Riverside}. But it was mainly those kind of rallies.

48371

Obviously, I was one of the few trade union leaders involved in the antiwar movement, so I was invited to do things. But as far as a continuing relationship with SDS, no. Probably the first contact I had was through Barry Bluestone and Linda Reuther, who were at University of Michigan, who had built a group called ERAP which became SDS. I went over to Ann Arbor a couple of times on my way into board meetings and sat down and talked to them about involvement of the trade union movement as an adviser, although they seemed to be doing very well. Then there was support for the SDS early on through Reuther. I think he gave them a grant, probably because of Barry Bluestone and Linda, his daughter, who were involved in it.

CONNORS: And that may have been at the time when SDS had not taken such a radical turn. In my experience of it-- this was later--but there was confusion as to are we antiwar? Are we student rights on campus? Are we community oriented? And no one was able to bring that together as a general program. You got active around certain issues that happened to pop up, and maybe that was a good thing. But ERAP was community oriented.

SCHRADE: Right, which is where [Tom] Hayden went, ultimately, in New Jersey. Well, I would think it's pretty difficult to build a student movement in these various arenas and try to cover both campus and community and the

95392

antiwar movement.

CONNORS: Did you catch a lot of flack for your support for a Free Speech Movement in the region?

SCHRADE: Oh, some. Yeah, some. But I always felt that the position I held in the union was-- First of all, you have some idea of doing things that were politically safe but also spending some of your political capital.

Otherwise, what's the difference between you and another bureaucrat in the organization? I think I went beyond that in the antiwar movement, because I really got a lot of problems from local union leaders on that and on the International Executive Board, particularly with Walter Reuther. But it was such a moment in our history that I just felt that it was a go-for-broke situation. There was no easy way to be against the war and also be part of the team. It's one of those questions of conscience that you have to face and struggle with and agonize over, as I did from time to time. And I got faced-- For instance, Red Aston, he lost a son in Vietnam, and to be confronted by that in my local union at a membership meeting was very difficult.

CONNORS: Boy, I'd say.

SCHRADE: And Jerry Whipple, who was my successor, also lost a son there. How do you explain that what you are doing is better than continuing to support that struggle?

That was always difficult to reconcile.

CONNORS: Just to finish this off-- This would be a good place to end in order to maybe have a more thorough discussion of the antiwar period. But the UAW for a long time early on, were in support of-- I have here UAW Solidarity, November '65, which says UAW backs U.S. policy of unconditional negotiations, economic aid to Vietnamese. So this was a position established by the convention and the whole thing. Was it--?

SCHRADE: Was that '64 or '65 or '66?

CONNORS: That was '65.

SCHRADE: 'Sixty-five. Was the convention in '65?

CONNORS: Well, I don't know if this was established by convention. I mean, I say that in general, that this position would have been ratified through convention, I suppose, be it, probably, '64.

SCHRADE: Well, the negotiation position was not good enough. That was something that you couldn't get Johnson to agree with. I think the margin of difference was that a few of us felt that you had to be out in the movement, and Reuther was not there and would not participate because he wanted to maintain this relationship with Johnson, which I think I discussed before, haven't I?

CONNORS: No, I guess we haven't really--

SCHRADE: That's a whole other thing.

SI 374

CONNORS: Reuther and Johnson. Well, we can talk about that next time in the event that we haven't already.

SCHRADE: Yeah. So the conflict was-- I said in the 1966 board meeting at the convention, when we were running the same kind of resolution, I said, "Well, you're for all the good things and against all the bad things, but you're not really saying that you're against the Johnson policy, which is to continue the war. That's what we have to do, and we have to take action to do that. We have to mobilize in this country to stop the war." That was really the margin of difference. I don't think I've ever explained it to myself that way, but I think it's apparent that Reuther was really against what was happening and would take public positions which were not antagonistic towards Johnson because he wanted to keep this relationship with Johnson.

CONNORS: Well, we're out of tape here, so let's leave it at that and then next time take it up with Reuther and Johnson.

SCHRADE: Reuther and Johnson.

CONNORS: We'll give ourselves some time to think about this.

SCHRADE: And me. [laughter]

TAPE NUMBER: IX, SIDE ONE

APRIL 19, 1990

CONNORS: Well, last time we left it that we would get into some of the relationship between Walter [P.] Reuther and Lyndon [B.] Johnson. And I think that it would be good to sort of get more into the UAW [United Auto Workers] response to the Vietnam war and then your own decisions you made along the route there. So in getting into the whole Johnson thing, I'd like to start with [John F.] Kennedy's assassination. The ascension of Lyndon Johnson to the presidency. Well, first off, how did you respond to Kennedy's assassination? Was it an unbelievable sort of event? Because, at that time, we didn't do that sort of thing.

SCHRADE: Yeah. You know, you always remember where you were at that point. We were getting phone calls from Pat Greathouse who was coming out for a staff meeting here in California with us in the UAW. Kennedy had been shot, and then we got the word that he was dead. It was a real shocker. We just broke up the staff meeting and Greathouse cancelled out, of course. It was one of those dark periods where I just focused on the television set watching the events and trying to make sense out of what occurred, see if there's anything more than just his assassination or

1376

whether it was going to be more widespread, because that was always a possibility because of the conflict situations we were in: ⁺⁺ Vietnam, Cuba, and so forth. So it was one of those devastating experiences. It was very difficult to recover from. And then Johnson took hold. You could see the friction of the Kennedy family beginning immediately over all the arrangements and the succession and so forth. You could tell the agony of the Kennedy family, because they had been through this kind of tragedy before with a brother and a sister, and this had major world impact and ^{or} affected all of us.

But in terms of Reuther's relationship with Johnson, I think there were a few other things that occurred that are important. In 1959, I think mainly through the intervention of Hubert [H.] Humphrey, because he and Reuther were very close, along with a lot of social democratic leadership around the Scandinavian countries and so forth, that Walter joined a coalition with Johnson and Humphrey. Humphrey began it by starting to team with Johnson in the senate when Johnson was majority leader. And I was really upset by that because I saw Johnson continuing to be against civil rights legislation, against liberal legislation, representing the worst kind of politics from the South and in the Senate. And I actually submitted my resignation as administrative assistant at

2377

that point. I withdrew it after I talked with Walter about it, but that's when Walter first began having a relationship with Johnson.

Another thing occurred in the early sixties where Roy [Reuther] took on Bobby Baker, because Johnson, as Senate majority leader, was not cooperating on our long-term fight against Rule 22 in the Senate, which was the cloture rule which allowed filibusters to occur and denied the majority in the Senate a right to legislate. At that point, Bobby Baker and Lyndon Johnson teamed up on Roy to try to destroy Roy, because Roy was more the political activist, the political organizer of the Reuther brothers. ~~I think that was probably '60-- Let's see. I guess it was when Johnson was vice president rather than still majority leader.~~ So here we wind up with a guy who's really not that good on civil rights legislation, and so going into the '60 convention--we've been over that--we had the problem of Lyndon Johnson who finally then came out for a strong civil rights bill. So the relationship was there, and sometimes a very difficult one.

But when Johnson became president, he was reaching out to the people who were important to the Kennedy struggle. So in the Kennedy administration, Walter was one of them, as well as George Meany. So there was an effort by Walter to get involved with Johnson, particularly on economic and

political questions, because Walter was a real go-getter, he was pushing programs all the time, and Johnson would sit down and listen to him and occasionally agree.

There's one major program that Walter had where he thought the automobile industry ought to really go for a small car. He came up with a program where the three major companies would collaborate and there'd be an arrangement so the anti-trust laws wouldn't apply, which would put the American automobile industry in a position of competing with the Japanese and German small cars. And Johnson said, "Well, if [Robert] McNamara will agree to it-- He's from the automobile industry. I don't understand these things." So Walter went to McNamara and McNamara turned him down on it saying the industry would never agree to that sort of thing, even though they collaborated on parts and systems, anyway. But as Henry Ford said, "~~many~~ cars, ^{mini} many profits," and that was I think the major determination why the industry didn't really get into small cars. It was so damaging to the industry in the long run.

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So there were all kinds of things going with Johnson. But I think that Walter's major effort was in the civil rights area where Johnson really did produce, not just on voting rights and public accommodations legislation but also with the War on Poverty, which ^a affected a lot of minority groups and the working poor in this country. So

379

there was a lot of collaboration going on between Johnson and Reuther at the time. And Jack Conway became really a major part of this, formally as key administrative assistant to Reuther, ^{then} in the Kennedy administration, then on the OEO [Office of Economic Opportunity] working on War on Poverty questions. So there was a lot of good work going on there, as well as some disagreement over the past. But I think when Johnson took over that Reuther saw another opportunity of really working with the president of the United States as he did with Jack Kennedy and as he did with [Harry S] Truman and [Franklin D.] Roosevelt. He always felt that was very important, and it was in many ways.

CONNORS: Do you recall the 1964 Democratic convention?

SCHRADE: I was a delegate to it, but I wasn't able to attend because of work here in the UAW. And I wasn't involved in the whole Mississippi effort which, again, was one of Reuther's major efforts to help Johnson, where a lot of liberals disagreed because there was an attempt at compromise there with the black delegation and the all-white segregationist delegation, and Johnson wanted that put in order. So he actually forced Walter and Hubert Humphrey to get into that, and it was really a test for Hubert whether he was going to be the vice president or not, because Lyndon Johnson was playing one of his little

treacherous games again with Eugene McCarthy and setting him off against Hubert Humphrey. And I think the fact that they stilled the Mississippi thing--in, I thought, a bad way--but it was settled.

CONNORS: Let's just describe that, first of all. The Freedom Democrats wanted voting--

SCHRADE: Voting rights in the convention.

CONNORS: And the old guard--

SCHRADE: Old guard, white segregationists--

CONNORS: Claimed their right to represent the state.

SCHRADE: Yeah. ~~I think~~ Aaron Henry was one of the guys who was in the Freedom ^{Democrats delegation.} group. ~~I think~~ the final effort to compromise was to seat two of the Freedom ^{= Democrats} delegation with ~~no~~ ^{in the gallery} voting rights but not to unseat the white segregationists. That failed, and that's where ~~I think~~ Joe Rauh, who ^{was} ~~had been~~ the UAW's general counsel, was playing a leading role along with a lot of great liberals. So there was a real failure there in the '64 convention.

CONNORS: Joe Rauh, in later life, recalled that Walter was pretty heavy-handed with him saying, "Okay, Joe, I've got to do this, you've got to do this, let's compromise this way."

SCHRADE: Yeah.

CONNORS: Oh, was Rauh counsel for UAW at that time?

SCHRADE: ~~I don't know if he still was.~~ ^{Yes, he} He was in

Washington and-- I'm not sure.

CONNORS: What was his background?

SCHRADE: Joe was a really good labor lawyer. I think he worked someplace with the War Labor Board, the NLRB, too. Strong liberal community, very important in the Americans for Democratic Action, which was where Walter was, too, for a long time in the fifties and sixties. In fact, they helped put it together along with-- Part of the Herbert Lehman, Eleanor Roosevelt, Arthur Schlesinger [Jr.] group that Walter associated with in liberal politics. But Walter was a hard-driving guy. He would make a decision that this had to happen, and he was going to do this for Lyndon Johnson or whomever, and would drive everybody to that goal. So we were often tested on those kind of questions on how far we wanted to go with him on that. And Joe refused. Joe was a real hard guy, too, and wouldn't go along all the time.

CONNORS: Well, after that convention, of course, Johnson emerged as the obvious candidate, as did [Barry M.] Goldwater for the Republicans. How did that shape up in California?

SCHRADE: Well, I think ^{California} it's one of the only times ~~we~~ voted for a Democrat. Johnson really had a great victory in '64, and, as I've always pointed out in my Vietnam speeches against what were doing there, Johnson was elected

as a peace candidate because he promised that none of our sons were going to die in Vietnam. So he ran as a peace candidate, as did Richard [M.] Nixon in 1968. So when they say the people are really for the war, yet the two candidates during that period, Johnson and Nixon, both ran on peace platforms. So the American people were really voting not for the war but for peace. It's one of the ways to demonstrate that the people really weren't behind Johnson and Nixon. So Johnson became president with a big victory. I think he got ⁸⁰eighty percent of the labor vote nationwide, which is outstanding because it takes, I've always figured, two-thirds of the union members voting for a Democrat to win. That's been true of Kennedy; it was true of Roosevelt. So if the union membership is below that two-thirds line, the Democrat's not going to win. It takes that.

CONNORS: When the war was escalated in '65, the UAW came out basically in support of the escalation with some qualifications saying that "we think that we need a negotiated settlement here, but unconditional" because I think the Vietnamese were saying we would go to the negotiation table under certain conditions, etc. So it was tantamount to support for Johnson's policies, and as time went on, dissent started to develop within the UAW, and I think we've mentioned some of this before. But in reading

one of the biographies of [Walter P.] Reuther, I think it was [William J.] Eaton and [Frank] Cormier, it said that when you started to speak out more openly against the war that Reuther called you on the carpet and gave you hell, I guess. Was that the case? Did he personally tell you to tone down your--?

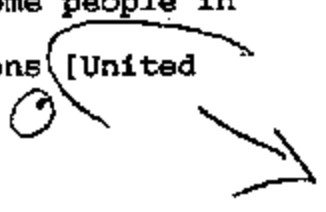
SCHRADE: Yes. Emil Mazey and I were the two most articulate and forceful in opposing the war starting in '65. We were doing this mainly inside the board. I tried to support my position by constantly talking to the leadership and the membership of the local unions in California about my position and trying to persuade people, and I felt that I was not getting through enough, but there was major support for my position. Some of my political challengers began using it against me. Mazey came out a few times to advocate an end to the war and was very helpful that way. So he and I were the first two on the board, and so we had a real good alliance at that point.

But we needed it, because Walter was very hardlined about this. His whole philosophy includes pacifism; he's a pacifist, against war, he knows and has raised the questions against war throughout his whole life. But I felt that he was so embedded in the liberal establishment and particularly in his relationship with Lyndon Johnson that he could only go so far. So it appeared that he was

for the war even though he had these reservations and would make proposals about negotiations and so forth. So in 1966, the International Executive Board resolution on the war was that kind of a resolution. I can remember one of the things I said: ^{pk} "Well, we're against all the bad things and we're for some good things in the resolution, but we're still not taking a position against what we're doing in Vietnam." Walter really got very angry with that. And I was the only vote against that resolution; Mazey didn't join me on that. This was in Long Beach. It was the first time the UAW had held a convention in California, and I was the host for the convention. And it was an agonizing kind of decision for me to make, because I was really confronting Walter on a very important position, but I felt I had to do.

So I think really the first time that Walter called me on the carpet was-- Because we had these discussions in the board, and I knew what his position was and he knew mine. it was in 1967 after the big march in San Francisco to Kezar Stadium. It was a wonderful experience because people were really turning out against the war at that point, and there was a lot of labor support there, certain unions: ^{fe} United Electrical Workers, [International] Longshore[men's and] Warehousemen's] Union, some people in the Maritime unions, and some of the craft unions [United

10 385



[U. S.] Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America] Guys

from the Carpenters union were showing up for this sort of thing. So there was some labor base against the war, even though it was very narrow at that point, at least among those who were out there. So after that speech, because it got carried a lot on national television, I was one of the few union people, particularly from the UAW, but from the so-called liberal section of the labor movement, who was out against the war. So we had a discussion in the board meeting. Walter was showing his displeasure with what I was doing and so forth and finally said, "I want to see you in my office after the board meeting." This was quite late at night. So we sat down. And it wasn't his so much giving me hell but trying to counsel me about it, because I knew in his heart and his mind he was against what was happening there but was trapped in this political position. And he asked Leonard [F.] Woodcock to join us in the meeting, mainly because Leonard and I were fairly good friends at that point and Leonard had a lot of responsibilities here in California with GM [General Motors Corporation], had major GM locals and aerospace locals, and Leonard was in charge of both those departments. And I said, "Why Leonard?" I said, "Why not Emil Mazey? Emil's my ally in this. Leonard's the intellectual spiritual leader of the hawks on the International Executive

41 386

Board." And he said, "Well, let's not worry about that. Let's just have a conversation about it. ☺"

So we went into it, and it was really a good conversation about it, about my position and his position. He was critical saying, "Well, you people should be doing it this way and should be organizing this," and I said, "Well, that's why you should be out there. I mean, you can do these kind of things. You can give it ^{leadership.} And he would be quiet at that point because he knew I was right, and he just couldn't get there. So then his argument became, "Well, I've got responsibility for the membership of this organization as the president and you have as the regional director, and you're getting too far ahead of the membership." Well, my argument at that point was that the workers in this country were going against the war more than the general population because their kids, ^{and} ~~or~~ young workers, were going and making the sacrifice in Vietnam and not the kids of the elite. He couldn't quite agree with that. Then I produced the Harlan Hahn study, a scholar over at UC Riverside, who showed in the referenda on the Vietnam war which were being held in a lot of cities in the United States, that working-class districts were more against the war than other districts. But that wasn't convincing ^{enough for Walter.}

He really got down to the nitty-gritty at one point

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and said, "Well, we need Lyndon Johnson in our negotiations with the big three auto companies." So this was early '67 and we were going into negotiations in the fall. I said, "Well, that doesn't make any sense to me. Lyndon Johnson has already come out against our cost of living allowances⁽¹⁾ which were producing a lot because of the inflation during the war period, "and he's refused to go along with any kind of restrictions on auto prices. So we're in this kind of contradictory position. He's against us on both issues." Well, that was the year that we did compromise on cost of living allowances. It was the first of the concessions that the UAW ever made, and we put a cap on the cost of living allowances, a maximum of eight cents a year, no more than that. So we really lost out as a result of that. We signed what was termed the "never-never letter"⁽²⁾ which was that we would never negotiate any more increases in benefits for UAW members already retired who had been getting increases up to that point on the first pensions in 1950. So we lost out with Lyndon Johnson on the very issue that Walter was raising with me as his major trump card in the argument that we ought to be not so vigorous in our opposition to the war, maintaining our relationship with Johnson. So I really felt let down through that period by Walter and by Lyndon Johnson who, you know, kept escalating and escalating.

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So the relationship with Johnson continued right up until 1968. Walter never really raised a question about it, even though he had a position somewhat different than Johnson's and was not in the hawkish position of George Meany, who was terrible on this question, where Walter at least expressed some reservations. But when I asked Walter about his conversation with Johnson about this, he said, "I can't talk to him about this. If I raise any kind of questions with him in the meetings I've had with him, he would have either walked out or closed them off." He said, "He will not discuss this question." So I really felt sorry for Walter at that point, because I knew where his heart and mind were on Vietnam, but he was so locked into this position with Johnson that he wouldn't and couldn't move. He could have moved.

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I think the best example is in the David Halberstam book, which I just read again this morning, because I go back to that as kind of my own experience with Walter. I gave Halberstam that story about Walter and his family and the Seder at the Bluestone house. I think it was in 1968 or so. What happened was that Roy and Fania Reuther and Walter and May Reuther traditionally went to the Bluestone home for Seder, which was conducted by Irving, who was a close personal friend of all the Reuthers and also an officer of the union and very close in. And Barry

Bluestone, the son of Zelda and Irving, and Leslie Woodcock were going together at that point and ultimately married and divorced. But they were going together, and they were both active in the antiwar movement at University of Michigan and part of the original SDS [Students for a Democratic Society] group and so forth. So they were carrying on a fairly strong radical line against the war. And they refused to go to the Seder, which they'd always gone to in the past. And finally Irving negotiated an agreement with them that they would come and be able to make a statement on the war and do anything they wanted at that, within reason, I guess. There were some sort of conditions. But they did come. So Harry made a statement about the war and put it front of Walter: "Why can't the UAW take a more active role against the war?" And Leslie also made some statement, as well. So they got into a discussion about this. So Walter finally came down again to that position: "I've got responsibility for the membership and I've got to negotiate for them, and I can't afford this break with Lyndon Johnson." So it wound up with Leslie screaming, "You finally said it! You finally said it! You're willing to negotiate fifty cents an hour more for auto workers and let people--Vietnamese and Americans--die!" And Roy jumped in saying, "That's not what Walter meant" and Leslie saying, "That's exactly what

he meant."

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So that was the kind of thing that was happening in the families but in another way, it was happening within my relationship with Walter, as well. We had this hardline position against the war and he would not budge. It was devastating on all of us, because Walter was a person I admired very much. He was one of the reasons I broke with my career as a biochemist and left the university and went to work and became active in the United Autoworkers union. It was a terrible, terrible time. So I didn't feel that I was so much being given hell but confronting Walter on a very difficult issue and knowing I was right about it and that he would finally come around some day, as he did, and even George Meany did after a long period of time, after calling us agents of Hanoi and all this sort of rot. So it was a very intense, tough period.

CONNORS: Before Walter died, had he come out more strongly against the war?

SCHRADE: Yeah. Well, as soon as Lyndon Johnson was out of the race in March of '68, Walter was free of that commitment and that relationship, so he began doing what he should have done in the first place. And his last statement before he died in the plane crash in, I guess, May of '70, was to attack Richard Nixon for the secret war in Cambodia and Laos.

16391

CONNORS: That's right.

SCHRADE: I remember using that in an antiwar rally at UCLA, saying "I'm dedicating my time here to the memory of Walter Reuther who said so-and-so." It was a wonderful statement but five years late. And I think that's got to be analyzed by historians very closely, the relationship of labor and government, particularly presidents, and what that means and why it's important and what the costs as well as the benefits are of that relationship.

CONNORS: You were talking about Emil Mazey. He set up a group called the National Labor Leadership Assembly for Peace. What was that group? Who was in it?

SCHRADE: There was also a trade union division of SANE, too. Were they the same thing? I don't remember that name.

CONNORS: I don't know about the SANE. I'd be surprised if Emil were--

SCHRADE: Yeah. I think there was a Chicago meeting, as I remember. I didn't go to it. Victor was part of it along with some of the other labor leadership who were against the war. My memory doesn't give me that much about that particular organization, but there was a TUD-SANE group that we were all involved in. We had a chapter out here.

CONNORS: Was Victor more opposed to the war than Walter?

SCHRADE: Yeah, in fact, not as early as Emil and I, but he

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became a public figure in the antiwar movement. In a way, it helped Walter, because people assumed that this was Walter's real position, which it was, but Walter wouldn't articulate it.

I think that one other experience that we had in confronting the liberals in the Democratic Party on the war was at the '68 convention. We had put together a coalition of McGovern delegates, Kennedy delegates, McCarthy delegates, to put together a peace plank and had major support for it. Walter was working with Hubert Humphrey to try to get him to break with the total Johnson line. And at one point, we had a caucus of UAW delegates. There were probably 100, 150 UAW delegates at that '68 Democratic convention in Chicago. And Walter reported that the peace plank was imminent, that he was involved negotiating on behalf of Hubert Humphrey with our coalition, the [Eugene] McCarthy-[George] McGovern-[Robert F.] Kennedy group. And I got up, because I knew he was wrong about that; I just challenged him on it. I said, "This is wrong. This is not my information from our side of this thing. It's not imminent, and it's my prediction it will not occur, because Hubert Humphrey can't break with Lyndon Johnson on this question." And Hubert was in the same position that Walter was in, not being able to break, because Lyndon Johnson probably would have killed Hubert Humphrey politically at

18 393

that convention, or attempted to, if Humphrey had broken with his policy. Or at least Humphrey felt trapped in that position, because he never did bend on it until two weeks before the election in November of '68 when he made that great speech--not so great--but he showed some variation from the Lyndon Johnson policy on Vietnam. And that's where he went up in the polls. But I can remember, after that UAW caucus, when they challenged Walter on that, because I was really challenging his integrity at that point on reporting this, although I felt that difference had to be known, that people should be prepared to come out of that convention without the peace plank. But Victor really climbed my frame outside. He said, "You shouldn't talk to Walter like that in public." I said, "I can't avoid doing that. That's got to be on the record. We've got to know where we stand on this thing. Otherwise, we're flying on the Humphrey-Johnson propaganda. We don't have a peace plank, and I think that what they're doing is just trying to put us in a position where they're going to get away with what they're getting away with without our fighting it as hard as we can." So we wound up in real conflict over that.

But at that point, I had just come out of the hospital after being wounded with Robert Kennedy, and I felt, "Fuck!" You know, I'd laid down my life and my position in

75 294

the union before that on this issue, and I was not just going to go with what they were saying about the peace plank, which didn't come.

CONNORS: What was happening back home here with the people you represented in the region? Were you getting a lot of flack from people? Or were you seeing support developing out here among--?

SCHRADE: Yeah, we had basic support in the region and the staff. The staff for a long time was very critical of what I was doing because they said, "You're getting into political difficulties over this and it's not worth it." And I said, "Well, if anything's worth it, this is. There's no compromise with this question. It's not like bargaining on economic benefits or bargaining on legislation. These are people's lives we're talking about, Vietnamese and Americans." And I said, "We just can't be in a position of not taking a forthright position, doing everything we can." And finally the staff really came around on it, because they began to see it, and they began helping organize. And then, with Johnson out, things became a little different in the UAW.

My political opponents began attacking me, Henry Lacey, particularly, who was chair of my caucus for a long time and president of the local from which I came. We were part of the same political group. But he could see a

30-305

political advantage in this, and he allied himself with Leonard Woodcock, and it became a real political struggle at that point.

CONNORS: You had a public debate with him at 887 on the question of the war, didn't you?

SCHRADE: Yeah, yeah. And one of the worst things that occurred there was that Red Aston, who was a wonderful guy, got up and said his son had died in Vietnam. It was a tough thing to do, because that was not my fault. I told Red, I said, "I'm trying to avoid that for other kids and other fathers, and it's not we who are responsible for what's happening over there."

CONNORS: Well, how did you take it when Johnson made that announcement? You were talking earlier about how you remember where you were. I remember where I was at that point. I was at my brother's place, and I remember watching it that night and saying, "My God--"

SCHRADE: Yeah, I was home watching, too.

CONNORS: So did people see it coming who were more politically involved, politically active?

SCHRADE: I don't think so, although Lyndon Johnson and Lady Bird [Johnson] said at one point they had made the decision in December of '67 not to go.

CONNORS: He made that statement in-- Was that in March or in February of '68? It was early '68.

21396

SCHRADE: When he pulled out?

CONNORS: Yeah.

SCHRADE: Yeah, late March, because I had just gone through this whole thing with Robert Kennedy and the farm workers and joining the Robert Kennedy campaign. My argument against his December decision, so-called decision, was that as part of my problem with Walter, we had a confrontation about my support for Robert Kennedy on the International Executive Board, and Johnson called Walter the second day of that board meeting and demanded that he get me out of the Robert Kennedy ^{Campaign.} ~~thing.~~ So I always question whether that decision was made in December rather than some time in March. And I think, considering Johnson is a master politician, he probably waited until the last minute to see if he could make it. But after the humiliating and surprising strength of McCarthy in the New Hampshire primary and Robert Kennedy getting into the contest, he just couldn't stand the further humiliation of being knocked out by Bob Kennedy. So I think that a decision was being made in March and was finally announced, I think, March 30th or something like that. So I was pleased that it happened, and it really gave us a stronger hand politically in the Robert Kennedy campaign, but it also, in a way, weakened the Robert Kennedy campaign because that issue wasn't there. So it was quite a different political

22 397

equation at that point with Johnson out and the war issue being less of a confrontational thing.

CONNORS: So you had about six months of activity with Bobby Kennedy's campaign.

SCHRADE: About three months. ~~Two months, really.~~ March, April, May, June. March to early June.

CONNORS: Was that mainly focused here in California, preparing for the primary? Or did you travel?

SCHRADE: I didn't know if Bob was going to get in or not, and I kept talking to people, and they said, "Well, he might. He's agonizing over it" as he did with any big decision like this.

And when he came to Delano [California] in mid-March at the end of [Cesar] Chavez's long fast, I met him at the Delano airport and got him over there. We first went over to see Chavez who was very weak and ill from the fast and just nearly out of it, even hallucinating. So we went over to the rally at the park in Delano, and there must have been ten, twelve thousand farm workers there, the biggest farm worker rally in the history of the state and the country. And it became a very wonderful experience because Chavez sort of did respond. He was sitting in a chair and couldn't really stand up. He had to be carried in and was seated with Kennedy. ~~At that point, had, as part of it,~~ It was ~~sort of a giving time~~ ^{time for} to the [United] Farm Workers'

Q
incredible
seems like
group
Peters
Nashville
Planned
G.I. Bill

28
398