

Tape #28 - Code #24B

Tape 1 - Side 1

Recorded 6/15/77

Q: First, I'd like to ask you if you consider yourself a politically active person now?

A: Politically active? No. Never was. Semi-political life, though. I've never been interested in politics, except, that is, except with the labor movement, primarily. And then, of course, in general, citizenship. But, no, I am not.

Q: By general citizenship, you mean voting?

A: Yeah, regular voting, and that sort of thing.

Q: M-hmm.

A: I'm interested in candidates and the issues, but not to become political, in a sense. Never.

Q: You mean in terms of being a candidate yourself...

A: No, no, no.

Q: Were you ever approached to...

A: Oh, many, many, many times. Always turned it down.

Q: I remember you telling me that you had been approached to be Secretary of Labor.

A: Twice, yeah.

Q: At the time of the strike, did you consider yourself politically active?

A: General strike? No. No. I just returned from the first World War, and really got back into the swing of civilian activities, at that time.

Q: M-hmm. Do you feel there's been a political leader in recent years who's spoken to you?

A: Has spoken for me?

Q: Speak the type of things that you want spoken in the political world.

A: Yeah, I think very definitely Roosevelt did, though I think he made a very bad mistake in running after his second term, and definitely after the third one.

Q: Why is that?

A: Well, because I think that it gave him the greatest momentum for the things he advocated,

and then much of it became political and in the process of his political actions, I think he was deterred from the greatest accomplishment he could have made by stepping out.

Q: I see. Has there been anyone since then that you felt, a politician who really had your confidence?

A: Well, yes, yeah. I certainly had confidence in Truman. Very definitely. And, to a degree, in John Kennedy. Not his associates, some of them. But for him, yes. In the early days of his administration, I think he did very well, but I never had the confidence in the inside procedure of his office, as I did with ~~Rex~~ Roosevelt or Truman. I think the Bay of Pigs and that sort of thing is a terrible blunder. The CIA under the observation, uh, leadership of, not leadership really, but observation and use of Bobby Kennedy, was one of the things that the ~~more~~ longer you investigated, the worse it would be, in the minds of the American public. Eisenhower ~~is~~ was a good friend of mine, I enjoyed some of the things he did, but I don't think he was in any sense, a student of economics to the degree it would benefit labor.

Q: And how about recently? Have there been any political figures recently that...

A: No, I () in administration of Johnson or Ford. I feel friendly towards Ford...

Q: How about in the Carter administration, were you?

A: No, I've never had no contact with Carter. I'm in harmony with what he advocates, it's just a matter of whether time will prove that some of the things he advocates are feasible, practical, or politically possible. I don't do much, I've been so terribly busy, that I haven't had the time for political activity.

Q: What do ~~is~~ you think is the most important issue facing the ~~country~~ country, today?

A: Oh, I think very definitely economics. I think there's a tremendous unemployment situation, of course, is number one above everything else. And then, of course, inflation. One revolves around the other. I think there has to be some absolute ~~is~~ control over interest. High interest rates, in my opinion, is ~~disrupting~~ destructive to our progress,

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and I think it's going to advocate a procedure of changing a great part of the American standards of living, such as home construction, and that sort of thing. So that's the outstanding, by far, in my opinion. Unemployment, economics, and inflation.

Q: I'm curious, what would you do, if you were still president today, what would you do about those issues?

A: Well, I would have, four or five years ago when I advocated, I would have froze prices, ~~x~~ wages, interest and everything, and started from a base then, to control it. But that was not done. And in my opinion, it is clear, the situation now, but nobody knows exactly where it's going to end.

Q: What do you like most about this ~~xxxxxx~~ country?

A: Everything. Everything.

Q: Well, that's going to make my next question a little hard to answer, I was going to ask you what you like least about this country.

A: There's nothing that I don't like about this ~~xx~~ country, when I compare it with any other country in the world, and that's the only way you can do it. There are things, of course, ~~that~~ that I would change, if it were within my power to do it, but I've advocated those changes associated with ~~xxxxx~~ labor for the last 60 years. But on the whole, I think this is by far the greatest country in the world, ~~xx~~ in every stage of it's social and economic business life, and so to compare it, there is no comparison, as far as I'm concerned. We can improve our formats, our government, our administrative department of government, but I ~~xxxx~~ don't think we can improve upon the constitutional ~~xxx~~ structure of it.

Q: Is there anything in the news, lately, that made you feel especially good?

A: Lately? No, I don't think so. I think we're starting to pull out of the ~~x~~ unemployment situation, and unless we get further into inflation, high interest rates, etc., I think we'll, it'll be good news. But it'll be a long () yet.

Q: Is there anything in the news that's made you especially mad?

A: No, I don't think so. I think we're involved in political action in parts of the world

that have got to be handled very carefully, that are going to affect our ~~own~~ own business and economic life.

Q: Could you give me something specifically?

A: Well, Africa for one. The Far East, the Russian situation, the Cuban situation, all of them are tied into it.

Q: What great people living ~~today~~ ^{or dead}, do you ~~admire~~ admire the most?

A: Oh, ~~there~~ there are so many of them that I couldn't count them. Can't think of them here at random. But in every phase of our social and economic life, there have been great figures that you cannot help but ~~admire~~ admire. Some, even, that you disagree with on one thing, that you greatly admire in another. Marshall, for instance, and the conduct of the war. Roosevelt ~~very~~ very ~~definitely~~ definitely. Truman. I could name them for the next half hour. Many, many, many.

Q: I'd like to ask you a few things that are mostly ~~attitud~~ attitudes towards human nature.

Would you say that most ~~people~~ people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful?

A: Well, it's in what sense you use that. If ~~the word~~ their word is good, or what do you mean by that?

Q: Well, do you feel that what your basic stance towards people is that you can trust them, ~~including~~ before you know someone, do you believe that you can trust that person, or that you should...

A: I don't think you can trust people until you have an acquaintanceship with them, or do business with them to the point where you can judge that by actual experience. So I think the great, vast army of humanity can be trusted with reasonable degree of success.

Q: Do you think that most of the time people try to be helpful, or that they're looking out for themselves?

A: I think the human equation is there, in most instances, looking out for themselves.

Q: So, would most people try to take advantage of you if they had the choice, or would they try to be fair?

A: It's according to what you're dealing with. Many stages of business, they would take

advantage of you, if they could. And then other areas, still, some people are of tremendous high principle that would not.

Q: Would it be hard to put some sort of amounts on it, what percentage of people you think are of one type, and what percentage of the other?

A: No, I couldn't do that.

Q: Do you think what most young people need most of all is ~~a~~ strict discipline by their parents?

A: Yes, I think discipline is very useful, very very necessary factor. Definitely. Especially in raising children.

Q: Do you think that most people who don't get ahead, don't because they don't have enough will power?

A: Well, not, I don't think so. I think the average American has a reasonable amount of education and good home discipline, and etc., has a start to make ~~xx~~ good in the economic life in the world, but at the ~~x~~ same time I think there's a tremendous number of them that spend the price of it. I don't think education or anything else is a natural factor.

Q: Do you think that will power is a large factor of it?

A: You mean self will power? Definitely. Because will power develops character. That's the number one essential in life.

Q: Do you think a few strong leaders would do more for the country than all the ~~xxxxx~~^{laws} and talks?

A: No, I think we've got to have laws. And I think those leaders planned a place in carrying out law, and paving the way for the initiation of the laws that are needed to meet the conditions as they arise.

Q: There is a saying, "An insult to your honor should not be forgotten." Do you agree with that?

A: () define it. No, I don't think you should ever forget it, no. You may forgive it, but I don't think you can forget it.

Q: How do you feel about the schools and segregation issue in Seattle now?

A: Well, I think that definitely we're making progress, in every stage of segregation. The

avenues of segregation. But I think that it's a natural situation for those that are growing up under the favorable conditions, more favorable conditions, of segregation that they're seeking a fast solution to it, and perhaps the general social structure will assimilate, in some parts of the country. And Seattle, I think, has made great progress.

Q: There's a lot of talk right now about how to handle the, there's a possible ACLU suit against the school board, and that whole issue. How do you feel about the busing issue?

A: I don't believe in compulsory busing, but I do believe that the whole structure upon which our school system was erected, it was neighborhood schools. And then the negro, the black man, was shut out from having equal opportunity to his economic life and other factors, to live in the neighborhoods where the schools were built. So by virtue of that, you created a problem that confronts us now. Now I think with the passage of time and the acceptance of the, a broad field of acceptance of integration, we will be able to establish again the living of the blacks along side of the whites, and inter-relationships in the districts, and areas, and will go along by way of virtue, to stop the problem. But it will take time. Many factors in there. Lots of people that believe 100% in racial acceptance of all kinds. They have money invested in property, and they're () in some of their thinking by the fact of black people moving along side of them, may deteriorate their property values, and those things that should not be considered, are there. The human equation isn't given much thought.

Q: Is that a phrase that started with you, "the human equation?"

A: Yes, because I think the, you're continually confronted with it. You live it every day. Practically everyone you contact is involved.

Q: When I see you thinking about answers, that is, it's something that you always....

A: The human equation you must consider.

Q: How necessary are employers for running businesses? Can workers run businesses without employers?

A: No. No. I believe in a capital system. And I do not believe in either socialism or communism. And under our capital system, it requires employers to handle that portion

of our administrative affairs. Now, I don't mean by that, that confident, qualified labor people either now or in the future, if they develop ability, that they can't go from one division of operation to another. I think top-notch personnel, workmen in companies, over a period of time will develop as individuals, to where they can assume executive duties. And that's all it is.

Q: How about the cooperative industries, where workers own the industry themselves, within capitalist systems, where they own the industry themselves, and they just split up the profits between them. Can they be, can they work?

A: XX I think some of them can work. I think some of them can work, but on the whole I don't think there's a receptive mind to it, for the great, vast majority of people in our country. I think that some countries closer to socialism, like Sweden, fit in, but not under our system, I don't think that they... I think they could be a factor, at times in a temporary sense, to compel capital to conduct itself with more thinking towards the great mass of people.

Q: I was over talking to Bill Griffin last week, and he was telling me his father ran the ~~Mutual~~ Laundry, do you have a...

A: He ran ~~Mutual~~ Laundry.

Q: Is that a cooperative? How does that work?

A: No, ~~Mutual~~ Laundry was conceived in the process of organizing the inside laundry workers and drivers in Seattle against the combine of the great laundry industry. Seattle was one of the outstanding industries. And they couldn't break through the maze of opposition developed by the employers, and they started a laundry, called it the Mutual, went out and got published subscriptions in order to be a competitor in the laundry field. And that was it's start. Then, later it continued on in competition with the others in the laundry industry for many years after the laundry industry was thoroughly organized.

Q: The reason that it was originally...

A: It was conceived as an avenue of organizing, yes.

Q: And did it then work cooperatively? What happened to the profits in that industry?

A: Profits all went back into the business, the same as they do in any others. When it

became a competitive factor, and all the laundries along side of it were all organized, it slowly deteriorated. It wound up going out of business.

Q: Finally, I'd like to ask you if you've read anything about the general strike since it happened?

A: Oh, over the years since 19... oh, yes.

Q: Do you remember some of the things ()?

A: Not specifically. On the whole, I was not in accord at all with the great mass of public information conveyed related to the strike, because I think it was not coming from a thorough knowledge of the actual construction of the whole thing.

Q: Could you tell me a little bit more about that? What were the errors that they were making? You said you weren't in accord.

A: You're asking me the question, if I have read about what they wrote about the strike.

Q: Oh, are you saying that you weren't in accord with the strike, or with how people...

A: No, I was not in accord with the strike. I pointed that out. And I think that very erroneous statements were printed following the strike. And it continued so, because they built on themselves. Much of that stuff becomes news headlines. And then they, that becomes a factor that gets public attention. But basically, the fundamental structure of it was a very simple one. It was an avenue, in my opinion, of direct action, attempting to utilize machinery to accomplish a general strike for the benefit of the boiler makers and so forth, to go on strike, that was tremendously out of all possibility there being able to control, was not in harmony with the solution that could be built to function, and therefore, failed.

Q: What is that wrong impression that you feel has been given from literature that has been written on it?

A: That the area, here, of the labor movement was a tremendously radical area. It was not.

Q: Then...

A: Well, it was a progressive area. I mean the mass of the labor movement. That's why the strike couldn't be a success, because the great majority of labor wasn't going to sub-

scribe to the picture that they were erecting, of how to solve that strike problem. But that didn't stop labor. Labor never deteriorated in it's accomplishment by reason of the general strike. It created an accomplishment that time has proven it to have, by the solidarity of it's soundness in the structure of labor, that the great mass of workers supported.

Q: Did, for instance, one of the things you're referring to that I've read, that it was actually not the leaders of the unions who wanted the general strike, but the rank and file. Do you feel that's not true?

A: Not true at all.

Q: Then it was the leaders who carried it?

A: Absolutely.

Q: Would you say that, like Jimmy Duncan, Anna Luise Strong, people like that?

A: I don't think, I think Jimmy Duncan was associated with it and supported it, but he was not, in any sense, an advocate of the philosophy it represented in the sense that Anna Luise Strong or some of those others.

Q: That's one of the questions I have on the general strike, but, if you can spare a few more minutes, ...

A: Go ahead.

Q: Last night I was talking on the phone with a friend of mine in Santa Barbara, and I told him I was going to interview you, and he studies the sociology of labor and he's been thinking and writing alot about the change in relationship between labor and government. Specifically, the change between labor and the police...

A: Labor and what?

Q: Police. The use of police force over the years. And he asked me if I would ask you if you had anything to say about how, in your career, government changed in it's relation ~~to~~ to labor, and how, in your career, you know, if you've found a difference in politics?

A: Well, of course there's, the progress of labor is the best answer to it. Labor has taken tremendous progress. And you only have to look around you to see it. You go back 25-30 years, which is a brief period of time, and the organization of teachers was unheard of.

Nurses were unheard of. Police were unheard of. Firemen were unheard of. All phases of public, clerical operation. Deputy sheriffs, the auditor's office; everything that you can name. For years, and years, and years there was no organization there, because in my personal opinion, and some of them, like, in the teacher's and nurse's, and some we had, a semi-educated status. Maybe they'd gone to college, whether they graduated from high school, or eligible to go to college. I think they became an environmental situation, where they had a false social position, and they'd look down upon the men and women of labor that worked hard in the grease and the dirt, and everything else, and by virtue of it, the organized structure of that same element, the mechanic, the drivers, and all those people, etc., etc., they started climbing that path of progress in wages, hours, and conditions. And they walked right by this social vision, structure, in the semi-educated and educated strata, with the result that they woke up all of a sudden, that the people that had never gone to college were making far more money than those that did, except when they were engineers or architects, or doctors, where you couldn't gravitate to those position without degrees, and so forth. So all of a sudden they wound up that they better get in the organized field and use the collective strength of their position, regardless of where they were employed, as teachers, or firemen, or policement, or anything else, to have an economic strength to structure their wage scales in harmony with the work they were doing. It's that simple.

Q: And how has the power of government changed in relation to labor? I mean, obviously since the days of Roosevelt, government has been much more favorable towards labor than before, but for instance, I was just reading in connection with the work I'm doing about the P.I. strike here. Many people see that as a turning point in the 30's, because the police were not used to break that strike as they had, as in labor history...

A: Labor was just () for the police to break that strike. There was no way in the world they could break that strike, the police. Unless they created a violation of law, then you could do it, perhaps. That meant then that they'd be cracking heads and shooting people, and that sort of thing, but, and following up the instrumentality of peaceful action and in accordance to the law, there was no way they could break the strike, the

police.

Q: So then you don't agree when some people say that it was because of your close political relationship with () Times, that...

A: No, no.

Q: It was the collective strength of labor that kept the ...

A: Absolutely.

Q: Situation...

A: Absolutely. I don't care who was mayor, it wouldn't have made a bit of difference. I think doors, a position of taking a position, wait a minute here, now, the department is not going to allow any violation coming from either labor or capital. From the Hearst organization or anybody else. You're going to be treated as equally. I can remember a statement he made over television one night, when the men attacked the (). And he said that Seattle P.I. on Sixth and Union is back in their trucks (), night after night after night, for three four five six years. And loading and loading and stopping the free movement of traffic on Sixth Avenue. Now tomorrow morning, that's gonna stop. Unless every merchant in Seattle and Second Avenue or anywhere else can use those streets for the same like purpose, the P.I.'s not gonna do it. So newspapers were getting tremendous favoritism from this. This is political life, same as some instances, labor got it. But the, John Door had nothing to do with winning the strike, no. The strike arose out of the first real test of the guild. It wasn't in the composing room in the mechanical division, or the trucking department, or mailing, or anything else in the newspaper. It was, the strike revolved around the newspaper reporters, and the editorial and so forth. Now that's the first strike that they ever had, that was national in structure at all, and it was based on that, that the tremendous strength of labor in this particular area that had been built to a very high pinnacle of success, had the influence to stop the profit structure of the Hearst organization, the P.I. That's the story.

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Q: Was that, I know that you've been, one of the positions that you're associated with is this insistence that white collar workers also had to be organized. Is that, for you, a very important strike because of the organization of white collar workers?

A: No, no, no. No, no. I subscribed to the position that we can't all be engineers, so we can't all be doctors, or we can't all be attorneys. Or architects. Now in the great mass of 200,000,000 people that comprise our government, you've got to have millions of people that the only opportunity to earn their living is in fields far removed from just these selected ones, where you need a degree, or pass a bar examination, etc., to start. So in that great mass, the overwhelming percentage of the personnel employed to earn their daily living and raise their families. You've got to have organizational structure to get there. What they can get through bar associations, for instance. Or the American Medical Association. Or the great organization of the dentists. Or the Architectural Forum, and so forth. They () a specific skill, and they identify themselves in an organization, they don't call it "labor". But it forms this in-structural procedure. For instance, in the state of Washington, to the best of my knowledge, at least 95 or 98% of all states in the U.S., a lawyer must belong to the Bar Association. Now the Bar Association is not a public organization in the sense that it's an avenue of our government in the state of Washington, or Indiana, or anywhere else. Now, you cannot practice law unless you belong to it. And you can't belong to it if you don't pay your dues. If that isn't a "closed shop", I don't understand "closed shop". The Dental Association, for year and years.....

END OF INTERVIEW.