

off in terms of money and support and so forth. It was a very cruel thing to do because we did a lot of good there, we provided ideas and strategy and support, and we still could have been helpful. But that kind of segregating people and blocking people from helping is really wrong. Anyway, I really didn't keep track of them that much except what I read in the newspapers. I'd occasionally see Chavez or Huerta or other people from the union. But during the '88 period, I did get involved in a support system around Chavez's fast, first of all, because he was endangering his life again and had to stop at one point, and secondly, because the farm workers movement needed this kind of attention, because a lot of people get lazy in terms of farm worker organizing and other movements, as well. They're just sort of around for a while, but in the long pull, they don't last, and you need long-distance runners in these efforts. And I insisted the Kennedys getting in there, too; I worked with them on that, a little advice and logistical support, and then went up with a group by bus to Delano to be a participant there. I also tried to get [Michael S.] Dukakis in there, but Dukakis was one of those liberal Democrats who wouldn't touch the issue. And I pulled out all my political strings on the ^{with} ~~mat~~ to get Dukakis in there. Then we also negotiated for his son, his wife, a telegram, a telephone call, some way of indicating

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his support, but we got turned down. Other people were making this effort, too. And I was told by one of the offices of the farm workers that the reason for it was that he didn't think it would help him politically in the state. Well, he was wrong about that. And Tony Coelho, a member of Congress from that area, also was against him going in there, because Coelho was doing this corporate Democratic Party coalition work and probably getting money from the growers into his campaign and into the Democratic party, which was his strategy: deal with the corporations. "We got the votes, you're not going to get the house away from us, we've got the committees, give us your money." It became that crass and that cold, and the farm workers movement suffered because of it and so did Dukakis. I don't think the farm workers union was that strong in '88, but they still had strong appeal in liberal groups, among farm workers who voted around the state, and for Dukakis to ignore that was a serious political error on his part.

CONNORS: How do you see the farm workers future as a union?

SCHRADE: Bleak, because it's a difficult movement to keep going. It takes a lot of money and attention and people. Rank-and-file farm workers are poor, still mistreated, they're isolated, their jobs are on a temporary basis on

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and off the farms, so you have a floating group of people. And I just don't know the answer anymore right now. You can get another movement started. It's difficult to regenerate that because people get tired and apathetic. Democrat majorities in state legislature are important, a Democratic governor is important. My dream back in the sixties was that we have a statewide vote, that the legislature would just say, "Look, this is a particularly difficult situation for union organizing and people deserve unions, it's a way to deal with problems, it's not really bad for employers to have unions, we've had good experience that way in this country." That you'd just have a statewide vote at some point, and people vote whether they want a union to represent them or not. And the union becomes a state union, not sanctioned necessarily by the state--it's an independent organization--but some sort of democratic process take place with everybody involved at one time rather than a hit or miss, ranch by ranch, farm by farm, group by group, this season that season-- I just think it's practically impossible to do it the way it's been going.

CONNORS: Who did you approach on this?

SCHRADE: I've talked to Chavez about it from time to time, but it's never been a proposition before. I talked to Pat Brown about it at one point. Poor Pat, he failed the farm

workers union at a critical moment, although he's wonderful. As I was telling you about his support for the vote to relieve DiGiorgio with a sweetheart agreement with the Teamsters. That vote he helped set up, where the farm workers' union won the vote and finally got a contract. But he wouldn't appear in Sacramento at the end of that march. There was one great moment when Bill Kircher and I were together talking to him. It was a memorial day weekend and Pat had taken his family to Palm Springs [California]--he was at Frank Sinatra's house. And his first grandchild was there. So when Bill Kircher said to him, "Yes, you said to me that this is your opportunity to see your first grandchild on this weekend, but you did go up to"--I think it was--"Livermore [California], your weekend at Livermore on this new accelerator program, you broke that." And he said, "I think this is more important. In fact, it's ^{not} ~~so~~ important to your granddaughter ^{now but} ~~that~~ she should not be reading in the history books when she gets into elementary school that you were defeated for office because you failed to appear for the farm workers rally in Sacramento where they asked you to attend." And sure enough, Pat was defeated, in part because of his failure to really give leadership in this area, even though the Farm Workers union supported him in his efforts. But [Ronald W.] Reagan defeated him that

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year. And often times after that Pat would say, "You and Chavez killed me that year." You know, "Come on, Pat." [laughter] He would be kidding about it, but I think he was partly serious that we were not making the best effort possible in his reelection campaign. But we did. He didn't make the best effort. He never learned that lesson, I guess.

CONNORS: As a leader, has--?

SCHRADE: But I think, back to that, that was typical Kircher, too. That was a really coldblooded shot on Pat. it was a valid one to make, but Kircher was really good at doing things like that. Of course, I didn't hear his side of the conversation, but I'm sure Pat suffered, because Pat would really be depressed over having heard something like that.

CONNORS: As a leader, Chavez was very effective and very visible for a very long period of time.

SCHRADE: Uh-huh. [affirmative]

CONNORS: Was he eclipsed? Or, once the farm workers' movement became a union, was he more or less overcome with just the basic task, the bureaucratic task of the presidency of the union?

SCHRADE: No, I don't think those things really decide the movement. I think events around him, the external things, were much more important. Because in '68, death of King,

death of Kennedy, the War on Poverty going down the tubes because of Johnson's war in Vietnam, that whole thing diverted a lot of people's attention away from the farm workers' movement. And then Reuther got into a confrontation with Meany, we left the AFL-CIO. Reuther's attention, which was a prime mover in helping the farm workers, was diverted, as well. I just think events overtook him and superceded the farm workers' movement. And with Nixon in the White House, that hurt the farm workers. With Reagan in the governor's position, that hurt the farm workers. I just think politically, socially, the climate and events just put the farm workers' movement on the back burner and strengthened the resolve of the growers, because they were politically more potent with the change in leadership of the state at that point.

CONNORS: With the upper hand.

SCHRADE: Yeah. We were leaving the sixties where social-political movements could develop this way. But a lot of it you can just lay it at the door of the war in Vietnam because it destroyed the War on Poverty, it destroyed Johnson, and we just lost the leadership out there.

It was fortunate, though, that Chavez wasn't assassinated during that period, because that was sort of the-- You know, Kennedy, King, Malcolm X, Chavez, all the really great guys out there were knocked off. And it was

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soon after that we found there was a contract out on Chavez's life by some of the growers. There's a guy, one of the informants of the Treasury Department, Food, Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms group, who spilled his guts about being involved in that. We did a whole media thing at point. But that was '72, I think. But during that period, this sort of thing was going on. And Chavez's life was always in danger.

CONNORS: Well, that must take a toll on a person.

SCHRADE: Yeah, yeah.

CONNORS: You know, you're constantly in the limelight. You must want--

SCHRADE: And in danger.

CONNORS: Yeah, yeah.

SCHRADE: And then, after the fast in '68, he went downhill. That's another part of it. It wasn't just the events and the political climate, but he was on his back, he was in bed for nine months after the '68 fast where Kennedy appeared and we appeared with our support in March of '68. Then, for nine months, he was out of commission pretty much, under extreme pain, ^{only} going to meetings on Friday evenings.

CONNORS: So that fast ruined his health.

SCHRADE: Ruined his health, yeah. Because he had back injuries from his farm labor work earlier, and what

happened was the fact destroyed a lot of his muscle structure, and vitamin deficiency was a big problem. That's where Ted Kennedy came in with great service along with Marian Moses, who was his nurse at that point--now a doctor and doing a lot of the pesticide stuff. She came up with the idea of getting Dr. Janet [G.] Tr^asvell out, who was the Kennedy back doctor. She dealt with Ted's back problem when he was injured in a plane crash with Jack Kennedy. Probably saved Jack Kennedy's life because surgery was just killing him. She finally got him into therapy, physical therapy, and the rocking chair, and all this sort of thing.

✓ Well, ~~Ted~~ ^{Jack} Conway and I were in Delano in '69 when this was going on, and Marian said to me, "Can you get to Ted Kennedy to see if you can get Tr^asvell out here. We're also going through some other channels to get her out." So Conway and I went to Washington that night--Jack was living there; I was still in L.A. I remember Jack called Ted at home, and the next morning Ted said, "Janet will be out there in two weeks." I picked her up. She was a wonderful woman, sort of an Eleanor Roosevelt type; a big, boney woman with lots of energy and excitement. I drove her to Delano and she spent about three or four days with him, analyzing him, met with his doctor and nurse and so forth.

Finally, there was one particular moment in this when

she assembled the executive board of the farm workers union around this bed where he had been lying for so long in great pain, and she had this muscle map of his back showing where all the stress was and the pain was coming from. The muscle spasms were all colored in. She explained to the board what the problem was and how it was going to be resolved, and she said, "We're going to start right now." She gave Chavez a copy of a medical journal. She said, "I want you to put this under your right butt and I want you to turn over", because he was in this fetal position. It was the only position where he had some relief from the pain. He said, "No! Being on my back that way is the worst possible thing. It's the greatest pain." She said, "No, trust me." So he rolled over this and bang, total pain gone. The way she explained it was that everybody is built asymmetrical, and he's more asymmetrical, off-balance, in his bone, muscle structure than anybody else. That was Jack Kennedy's problem, too. And so, you've got to make adjustments in your body, which was putting a pad in the shorts, or sitting on a pad in a chair, releveling his shoes, and he said, "I don't want to go around with thick soles." She said, "No, we'll put some of it in one shoe and some of it on the other heel so--"

CONNORS: Yeah, it's a compensation.

SCHRADE: Yeah, this compensation of the body structure.

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And, God, this guy began functioning pretty much after that. Then she did swimming pool stuff with him, ~~the bar of the swimming pools around Delano indoors.~~ And there was this seventy-five year old woman lying on the side of the pool with Chavez telling him what motions to go through.

So that recovery was really important during that period, and that's when he got back into the Coachella strike and the march to ^{Calxico} Coachella. But again, I think essentially the political-social climate was so bad, became and started getting bad during that period, that the farm workers movement went downhill, and his own injury also added to that. But I think mainly the political climate.

CONNORS: Well, we're almost out of tape here.

SCHRADE: Good! [laughter]

CONNORS: I think that was a pretty thorough discussion of the farm workers. maybe next time we can talk about some of the Watts uprising activity and the Labor Community Action Committee. Is that the correct name for that?

SCHRADE: Watts Labor Community Action Committee. Yeah, one of the other things in the political thing was when King came out against the war, that began damaging the civil rights movement, because those people who were not really against the war then relieved themselves of support for the civil rights movement. That I think happened to Chavez, too, because his support of Robert Kennedy and his

getting involved in the antiwar movement was really confrontational, particularly with George Meany, where they were getting a lot of support for organizing but not for that kind of politics. So that was all part of the political equation that was going on there.

CONNORS: It's true. The strands of these movements all come together and--

SCHRADE: Yeah. It's okay for King to be for voting rights and for public accommodation rights, but challenging the war, as did Chavez then, too, it became unacceptable to some of the power elite.

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MARCH 1, 1990

CONNORS: I'd like to start talking this time about the UAW [United Auto Workers] and the civil rights movement, your experience of various aspects of what happened from 1963, the march on Washington, through the Watts uprising and some of the aftermath of that. First off, Walter [P.] Reuther was a prominent figure in the March on Washington in 1963, and a few others of the labor movement were there. I was wondering if it was a decision on the part of say the AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations] Executive Council not to support it or-- What were the politics there? I know you may not have been there, but you may have.

SCHRADE: I was there.

CONNORS: You were there.

SCHRADE: Yes. We helped organize the march. Walter had a very close relationship with Martin Luther King [Jr.], and I believe I mentioned this once before that I first met King in Walter's office in ~~either '58 or~~ '59 when they began doing strategy together. And Walter's association with Jack [John F.] Kennedy also helped Martin Luther King make that connection, and he was helpful in developing the Kennedys into allies rather than kind of neutral parties as they were early on. But the march, in terms of AFL-CIO

*Saw photo
at MLK
Center
in Atlanta*

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involvement George Meany had this concept that any kind of street demonstration was a communist idea, forgetting all the revolutionary activities of the labor movement and Americans in the earliest days in trying to deal with political and economic problems. Walter reported to us on the board that Meany would make statements like, "Well, there will be riots, there will be blood in the streets if we do this." And he even carried this over into one of our efforts to build a rally of workers on unemployment to demand jobs. So the official policy was not to get involved, although the UAW and other unions were there, but a small number in comparison to the total. So the march was a wonderful thing. It really brought together a number of groups, African-Americans as well as whites who really wanted to deal with problems of race and economic rights. So it was a real success, and I think it demonstrated to the Kennedy administration that there was a real power developing behind the civil rights movement. There was a meeting afterwards which ~~some of the trade union leaders~~ ^{Reuther} along with King and other civil rights leaders attended with Kennedy in the White House. And Walter set that up. That was the kind of thing he was able to do, to bring people together to ~~sort of mediate~~ ^{negotiate} with the powers so that the ~~goals of the~~ ^{goals of the} civil rights movement got recognition and support.

CONNORS: At that march in 1963, August '63, King was not

that initially visible in that thing. I understand that he was not supposed to have been one of the major forces. He happened to happen, but he gave a speech which went down in history. But there were others who seem to have been overshadowed like A. Philip Randolph, Bayard Rustin, and some of these people. Was that something on King's part that was a movement towards on his own part? Not a power grab, but some way to bring himself out in distinction from some of the others in the coalition?

SCHRADE: Well, most of the other black leaders were attached to institutions rather than the civil rights movement. They were participants in the movement, but King was out there leading, and obviously the most eloquent and commanding person in giving leadership. So I think it was a kind of a natural development of King beyond just the speech. It was a great speech, but he had to be in that position to make that speech. So I think people recognized that this was where the real leadership was coming from.

CONNORS: In organizing for that march, what groups did you deal with? Or did the UAW--?

SCHRADE: Well, we mainly tried to get people out of the UAW there, from Detroit and from Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, and we had a large group of people. We organized buses and trains to get there so that we'd have enough people there to make it a real demonstration along with the

other civil rights groups and unions doing the same thing, church groups. Churches were always involved in this.

CONNORS: As the church groups were involved, one thing we didn't talk about last week regarding the farm workers was some of the--

SCHRADE: And the antiwar movement.

CONNORS: The UAW stuck with the events of the civil rights movement throughout that period. I know Walter was at Selma [Alabama], for the march to Montgomery. Were you involved in that, too?

SCHRADE: Well, that was not the march to Montgomery. King asked Walter to come down because there was to be a major event at the Brown Chapel in Selma, which was still behind barricades with the sheriff and the local police surrounding the place. And imminent was a federal court decision which would allow marching in Selma, because there had been a ban by the powers that be in Alabama. I went down for that. I had to be in Texas for a UAW meeting, so I flew over the night before and drove down with a staff member of the UAW in Birmingham. We were to meet Walter; he was coming in on a chartered plane. And I was scared that night ~~because it was~~ John Barnett who was the ^{staff} rep. ^{President UAW} As soon as we left the Birmingham airport where he picked me up he said, "Look, you've got UAW materials with you and identification, and if we get stopped in any small

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town, we are in trouble." And he pulled a .38 out of his glove compartment, an extra box of shells, and he said, "be prepared." He said, "Keep your seat belts on, because if a sheriff starts chasing us in one of these small towns, I'm going to run. I'm going to drive and get away because we just can't handle that kind of confrontation these days." So, Jesus, you know! [laughter] Nothing really happened that night, but it was very tense.

Then we got to a hotel, and he lied to the hotel that we were from the media in Birmingham and not from the UAW just to get a room and not be tagged. So we went out in the countryside, a small airport, to pick up Walter, and he knew where Walter was going to be staying early in the day before the demonstration. So we were there to pick him up with a couple of other people from Detroit. So we sat in the countryside out there with these pick-up trucks with shotguns in them going by all the time, and we were just parked there, you know, dressed well, and obviously could have been targets, but nothing like that really happened. So Walter's plans came in. We ^{drove} ~~got him delivered~~ to a house, some residence in Selma, and we waited until we went over to the Brown Chapel.

Then there was singing and praying, and out on the barricades, the sheriff was there and all the law enforcement people--we were singing at them. Finally, the

court order came through, and we broke through the barricades and marched downtown. Walter and some church leaders and Martin Luther King were up at the head. My experience there was interesting because I was with Jack Edwards, who was the first black member of the UAW International Executive Board, and May Reuther, and May was in between us. And here a black guy marching with a white woman, we got all kinds of profanity and people spitting towards us and this sort of thing and jeering us. It was again a very tense situation. And we were holding up traffic, and that made people very angry as we marched through. But there was enough police protection at that point, and there was no real events.

So it was a good day, very tense. Walter was there and spoke from the steps of the federal courthouse as did King and a couple of other people. Again, it was one of these comings together of the labor movement and the civil rights movement, which I thought was very essential.

CONNORS: Would that have been in 1965?

SCHRADE: 'Sixty-five, yeah. Sounds right.

CONNORS: April of '65, I think. I have an article from UAW Solidarity here, April of '65, and it's called "Selma: Anvil of Freedom." I guess it covers this meeting that you're talking about.

CONNORS: Soon after this Selma march, if that was the one

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in April of '65--

SCHRADE: Sounds right.

CONNORS: --Watts exploded in what is called the uprising.

SCHRADE: By the way, ~~that~~^{it} was also the night that president Lyndon [B.] Johnson spoke to the joint session of Congress. And I remember leaving Selma in a car after the very stressful day. One woman in Selma said, "Thank you for coming down. It was wonderful" and so forth. And I remember saying to her, "You've got to live here with this shit going on. You've got the tough time." And really, Johnson's speech, when he wound up saying "we shall overcome" brought tears to my eyes, because there was some hope. The fact that things happened in such a good way in Selma that day, and then with Johnson coming through with a strong civil rights message, which then took me back to the 1960 convention where Johnson, in trying to mediate the problems with the Kennedy supporters, came out forthrightly with a strong civil rights message in support of the most liberal Democratic platform on civil rights in the history of the party. And his experience with Kennedy and now with the civil rights movement led him to doing something about civil rights legislation. So it was a joyous time in a very important way.

CONNORS: In going to Selma and-- How was that whole thing organized? Did you know beforehand who the contact person

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was to meet? Or was there a center for where it was all happening and you would go and report and say, "I'm here"?

SCHRADE: Well, John Barnett knew. He was the resident rep for the union in Birmingham. So, when I found out Walter was going and that I could work out my schedule and checked it out with Walter, I wanted to join him there. I contacted Barnett, and Barnett picked me up, and he knew where Walter was coming in, the hayfield he landed in, and knew what family-- We stayed with a black family during the morning after Walter got in, because it was quite early when he got in, until we went to Brown Chapel. So Barnett really coordinated all that.

CONNORS: What about the other unions present? I know that by this time the AFL-CIO was pretty much coming around to being public and outspoken in it's support for civil rights.

SCHRADE: I don't remember if there were other trade union people there that day.

CONNORS: I know um, Jimmy [James B.] Carey from IUE [International Union of Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers]--

SCHRADE: He was not there.

CONNORS: He was not there.

SCHRADE: No. I don't think any prominent--

CONNORS: Somebody like Don Slaiman from AFL-CIO?

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SCHRADE: No, I don't remember. It was mostly church people and Walter and King that day. I remember there was a picture on a Life magazine cover showing-- I think an archbishop from the Greek Orthodox church was there with Walter and King on the steps of the court.

CONNORS: In this UAW Solidarity article, there's a picture of Walter and Martin Luther King, [Ralph] Abernathy, and the Greek Orthodox leader.

SCHRADE: Yeah. That's the day.

CONNORS: And then it was only a short time later that Watts blew up. What was your response to that? Just to get some of the context, it was a hot night and a guy was arrested and people started to--

SCHRADE: Rebel against mistreatment by the police, which is a constant thing even today. Well, in events like that you always know where you were. And we were at UC [University of California] Santa Barbara UAW summer school with a couple of hundred local union people who were on our annual summer school retreat. Actually, we were assembled at the Fund for the Republic Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions with [Robert] Hutchins, because he always invited us over there when we were at UC Santa Barbara. I always told him that we felt welcome there because the money that the Ford Foundation had given them was out of the sweat and blood of Ford workers, and he

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enjoyed that idea. So we would get into discussions about the condition of the UAW and the labor movement.

And I remember Ted Watkins was with us at that school. We had already organized what we hoped would be a community union in Watts, and Ted was one of the people who was giving leadership. Ted had been a committeeman at the UAW Ford local uh, in Pico Rivera, Local 923, and a very militant, good representative for the union. And he was also a community activist in Watts from the late forties, and he lived in the Palm Lane housing development, which is now the site of the Martin Luther King [Jr. General] Hospital, where he organized street meetings and to make demands and win concessions from the powers that be. So he was a natural for leadership in what became the Watts Labor Community Action Committee. So when the Watts riots or, as we usually say, rebellion, broke out we had an organization in place. So Ted left the summer school in Santa Barbara with some of the people from the Watts area to go back home because they knew their families were in jeopardy and their houses and so forth. And in doing that we arranged for a communications system so that we were in touch with them all through this period because ^{there was} ~~it was~~ a very tight security around there. The [National] Guard was called out and law enforcement was there and everything, because it was a widespread ^{conflagration} ~~conflagration~~ around central L.A. for

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several days. So we were on the scene through our representatives there, and it was one way we could keep in touch with what was going on.

In fact, the mattress that Monica and I are now sleeping on was a product of that event, because Senial Ostrow, a great benefactor in town--he died a few years ago--helped start the free clinic, medical clinic for indigents. He was at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions that day. He was one of the supporters, financial supporters there and always participated with Hutchins in his discussions. So Senial asked me, he said, "Paul, I've got a factory in that area, a mattress factory. Would you check to see if it's going to be burned or if it's been burned, because we've got no communication. It's been evacuated, and we don't know." And I said, "Well, I'll do better than that. I'll let them know it's a friendly place." So I got word to Watkins, and Watkins said no, it hadn't been burned and that they would do anything they could, ~~which~~ I didn't know if they were able to or not, but it wasn't burned out. So I saw Senial months later and I said, "Senial, I need a mattress." He said, "I'll give you one at cost." [laughter] So that's the mattress we still have.

CONNORS: Twenty-five years later. What were the origins of the Labor Community Action Committee? That was

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established prior to the riot?

SCHRADE: Yeah, in 1964, although we started developing the idea in '63. Well, one of the things about the civil rights movement is that I felt that it was important that we be out in the national movement and identified with King and others. But civil rights start at home. What are you doing in your own local situation? We had discussions with a lot of the black union leadership about this, among them Ted Watkins. I think the first thing that triggered in our heads here that we could be doing something about economic rights questions, about entitlements, about empowerment, was to build organization in the poor sections of the black community and the Latino community.

There was a memorandum--I'll have to find that someday--written by Brendan Sexton and Ralph Showalter and Mike Sværdoff. Brendan and Ralph were in the education department in the UAW, and Brendan was always a very important person in my life because he was full of ideas and a wonderful man. Mike Sværdoff finally went to the Ford Foundation, was a funder of a lot of community programs. He came out of the UAW in Connecticut. And this memorandum talked about building community organization through unions. And the concept as I understood it was that we could organize in factories and build structure and win power, win benefits, economic benefits, and so forth,

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why couldn't this concept work in the community? There were some people at UCLA who had just done a study on poverty, so we sort of selected a particular area, Watts and East Los Angeles as the two areas. Let's see, Paul Bullock was involved in that and Red Sperling, both at UCLA. Paul's not with us anymore. Sperling, I think, went to the Teamsters union.

CONNORS: Paul Bullock, in '67, had the [UCLA] Institute for Industrial Relations put out a study of his called Fighting Poverty, The View from Watts. It was a summation.

SCHRADE: It was an immense study on all the conditions: education, health care, income, and so forth that came out of UCLA. And that sort of gave us a data base for working, although poverty is poverty, and the people who know it best are the people in the community. So we thought that building with the people in the community was a way to deal with these questions. So we finally wound up with about eleven unions in our group as a trade union support for a community union, and I was chair of that group. What we did was canvas the unions.

CONNORS: Was that eleven locals? Or eleven internationals?

SCHRADE: Internationals, yeah, yeah. We canvassed our membership and union leadership for those persons who lived in East L.A. and lived in Watts to work as a nucleus of

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organization. It's a typical union organizing kind of thing; you go after the people who are interested and had some skills. We had a lot of good people working in the UAW and these other unions in Watts, although most of the people came from the UAW because Ted was a natural leader and had these contacts, and we were giving it official support.

CONNORS: Is Ted still around?

SCHRADE: Oh, yeah. He's still head of the Watts Labor Community Action Committee. (Ted died October 25, 1993)

So we had a very small group going in 1964. But in '65, the advantage of having a group like that was that the Johnson administration, the OEO [Office of Economic Opportunity] War on Poverty group were looking for groups like this in order to deal with the economic ^{and} social questions that came out of the Watts rebellion. So we got into a lot of the strategy meetings. Jack Conway, at that point, was either with the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO or with OEO; he did both jobs, and I'm not sure of the particular dates. So we were able to get programs moving back into the OEO, into foundations, with his help in designing our tactics and so forth. So a lot of money began to flow through the Watts Labor Community Action Committee.

Early on, we had two ideas that were I thought most

important, and that is that the trade union group was an advisory group and did not have any control over where the money went or what happened. We got into a real conflict with Paul Bullock over this because typical academic--maybe not typical but what I thought was typical--is try to maintain control over the funding and the grants and so forth as their responsibility. And I sharply disagreed with them and won that struggle within our committee, that, no, we were there to be friends and to be supporters, but we're not going to take control like every other outside group had done in the past. That the people in the community ought to have control over their own destinies and over the resources. So we won that battle, and I think that was a good idea.

The second good idea that we had--and I think Jack Conway was mainly responsible for this--was that we would not just run money through our organization and spend it the way it was supposed to be spent, but we would try to build structure that would be lasting so that the foundation^s and the government War on Poverty funds would be used to build the organization. And that succeeded, and I think that's why the Watts Community Labor Action Committee exists today where a lot of War on Poverty groups just went through the money, which was the way it was supposed to be done. But I don't think the government involved in this

wanted institutions built.

CONNORS: Within government, there were differences of opinion on this whole community empowerment, community action idea.

SCHRADE: Uh-huh. [affirmative]

CONNORS: Like, the Labor Department, Willard Wirtz, was not really hot on this kind of building these kinds of groups, because he thought and others thought that, hell, you've got the Democratic party and you've got structures and institutions that are supporting you there--

SCHRADE: Run by the liberal elite.

CONNORS: Right. These groups come along that seem to be in opposition. "We can't give them the money." But in this case it was--

SCHRADE: Well, you know, that goes against the liberal notion, which I don't think is believed by most liberals who are elitist--and most are elitist--and that is that there ought to be self determination. I mean, it's talked about, but this is really what we were trying to organize. And I think our trade union experience gave us that concept to work with, and that is that people ought to decide their lives. The thing that was wrong in the poor communities was that they were constantly being dominated by county welfare, the police, by their own political leaders, and not given a chance to really develop and

grow. That can only happen through democratic institutions, and that's what we were trying to do and tried to build. And it works. The Watts Labor Community Action Committee still plays a very important role in Watts. It's just too bad that other groups didn't expand so that there was more development this way in the poor communities, because Watts Labor Community Action Committee is not that big and is not that comprehensive. But it's been a mighty good organization and survived a lot of the assaults on it, because there are always questions on the use of the money, who's doing what, and so forth, but they survived every investigation and built a very strong community out of it.

Take a look at the Martin Luther King hospital. I remember one of our first strategy sessions with some of the liberals from the Democratic Party who were wanting to do something in Watts, and we from the labor movement, we thought maybe housing programs would employ the most people in the community and provide homes fairly quickly. And Ted disagreed with us. He said, "No, we need a hospital." He said one of the greatest problems is getting to the county hospital [Los Angeles County-University of Southern California Medical Center] ~~is~~ just east of the civic center. A lot of people don't have cars, it takes two bus transfers to get there, and people just are not getting

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