

reasonable health care. So we went for the hospital. That was a political struggle, too. Fortunately we had Kenny [Kenneth] Hahn, who was the county supervisor for that area, who was a real benefactor of the community and understood. We were able to get the vote of the [Los Angeles] County Board of Supervisors at one point, but then he went on vacation and they turned it around. So he flew back and succeeded-- We finally got the bond set up for that hospital.

CONNORS: So that's how it was funded? Through bond issues?

SCHRADE: Yeah. And one of the nice things about it was that it's built on the Palm Lane housing development where Ted once lived. That housing development had been torn down, and that was the site of the hospital. And here again Jack Conway, with his concepts of the long pull, was able, through Doug [Douglas] Fraser, to get UAW Chrysler SUB money, Supplementary Unemployment Benefit fund money, to buy property all around that hospital so that auxiliary groups to the hospital could be built and housing for doctors and nurses and so forth. So that was done through the Watts Labor Community Action Committee. So that committee became a multimillion-dollar operation with all kinds of things going on.

We had the help of Lord Richard Llewellyn Davies. He

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was the town planner who rebuilt Coventry in England, and he was doing town planning. Well, Jack knew about him. So he came in and we got a couple of his associates to come in and begin doing a broader plan of how Watts ought to be developed so we had some idea in the long range. one day we were at the Palm Lane development talking about the hospital, and Kenny Hahn came with his aide and his photographer and greeted Lord Richard Llewellyn Davies. He said, "This is the first time we've ever had a real lord in Watts." You know, good relationships build up around that kind of building, and we were a big part of that. I think it's one of the things that the UAW should have been doing all around the country.

One of the criticisms of Walter was that ^{out} ~~ought~~ yes, he was ^{ought} on the marches in Washington and going to the South, but Detroit did not have his commitment, although he was responsible for a major housing development in the slum areas deep in the center of Detroit called the Gratiot-Orleans Project, where a lot of old houses were torn down. But again, what happened was the powers that be in the city built upper-middle-class housing and did not provide the kind of housing for poor people who had been displaced by that operation. The other problem that Walter had was that the regional directors in that area, most of them, were fairly conservative, and he was in a way stymied

by that, that he was not going to be able to get into a real Detroit operation without their full support. He couldn't rely on that.

CONNORS: There was a voice in the labor movement--and there still is, I think--that's involved in this question of community union-type activity, that the reason a union can exist in a shop or some kind of service area is because you can withhold labor and you can negotiate a definite contract and you have something to go on. Something like this in a community, it begins to lose its-- What contract do you have to base yourself on and develop from that? That's one of the big criticisms.

SCHRADE: It was a political and it's a moral contract. Watkins was a master strategist this way, beyond anything that I'd seen in our union except maybe for Reuther and Conway. He would have an organization of people who were involved in the program and being serviced by the program. And one of the things he did was organize the mothers, generally unmarried, a lot of older people, senior citizens, and provided services for them, centers where they could go. The first housing was for senior citizens. Food, organization of food for senior citizens, recreational activities, and so forth. Encampments took people out to the beaches and took people-- We went up to Camp Roberts once in 1966, the year after, with about 4,000

young people to try to get them out of a very tender situation: it could turn violent. We took over the Saugus Ranch, which was an old alcoholic rehab place. We got that from the city. What Ted always used was pressure on the politicians to do this. So he could negotiate with Kenny Hahn, the supervisor, the congressman, Gus Hawkins, Mayor [Sazuel W.] Yorty. He had a good relationship with Mayor Yorty. And Yorty's interest, of course, was to get black support, and Ted would provide that to a certain extent, although he was a real strong supporter of Jerry [Edmund G.] Brown [Jr.], of Robert [F.] Kennedy, of Lyndon Johnson, he could still deal with republicans and conservatives because of the moral question as well as the hope that there would be some political advantage for the conservatives. He dealt with Ronald [W.] Reagan as governor. In fact, he probably got more from Reagan than anybody did. And with [Richard M.] Nixon. He became good friends with one of the Katzenjammer kids.

CONNORS: Erlichman?

SCHRADE: Erlichman. John Erlichman and he became buddies, and he was able to pull stuff out of the Nixon administration, because they did have some interest in community development and dealing with the race question and the possibility of violence, but Ted was able to work with them. Also, I think he did a beautiful job in

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cultivating the Rockefeller Foundation people. He became friends with Laurence ^[S.] Rockefeller and Tom ^[Thomas J.] Watson of IBM, who were on the Rockefeller Foundation Board. He got a lot of money out of there. And through our own union we were able to get Ford Motor Company to put money ^{and farm equ} in there for their agricultural program and that sort of thing.

CONNORS: You said Watkins had done community organizing in the forties--

SCHRADE: Yeah.

CONNORS: Was he out of a Saul Alinsky type of approach like [Cesar] Chavez?

SCHRADE: No, no, no. I don't think there was any kind of training at all. Just his own sense and ability. He was really skilled.

CONNORS: Native wisdom.

SCHRADE: Yeah. So it was a really important development. We were on the scene, and we were able to launch at that point.

CONNORS: When you took those 4,000 kids out in 1966, there was a second uprising, a second riot situation in June of '66. Was that during that time? Do you recall? There was an L.A. policeman who killed a black citizen--

SCHRADE: Yeah, I think-- Yeah, I think so. I'm not quite sure about that.

CONNORS: I don't know if it really blew, but it was a very

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tense situation.

SCHRADE: Very tense again. But we were working with Vice-president Hubert Humphrey at that point to try to get Camp Roberts. Camp Roberts had been pretty well evacuated by the army.

CONNORS: Where is Camp Roberts?

SCHRADE: ^{Yes,} Up near San Luis Obispo, Pismo Beach area. Ted knew about it because he had often ^{taken} his family to Pismo beach and that area for vacations. And I can remember the tenseness of that because Humphrey, as vice president, didn't come through on schedule for approval to use that, and Ted just finally said to Humphrey's agent, "We're on our way. We've got the buses ready and we're going to go, so the approval should be there by the time we get there." So he just forced the issue, and he was good at doing that. He knew the sensitivity of this kind of situation.

I remember there was a drumming out of the last of the troops and a big ceremony going on, flags and flyovers and so forth, and Ted and I, we'd been able, through the [United] Farm Workers' Union, where Ted Watkins and Chavez had built an alliance in supporting one another, through Chavez, we were able to get some surplus vegetables from some big farm, big growers in the San Joaquin Valley. And that did come in by train. We were down at the train depot of Camp Roberts, and all of a sudden, over near the

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barracks where the kids were being lodged a big black column of smoke. [^] So that was pretty chilling. We thought maybe the fires were starting again, and some complaint. We went over, and, fortunately, it was a field of grass, and one of the flares from the flyovers--they were doing red, white, and blue smoke over the field--one of the flares had dropped off a plane into a field, so it was quickly extinguished. It was one of those frightening times. But it really worked. It was a good thing to do to get those kids out of there and get a little different experience.

CONNORS: Well, after the Watts riots were put-down, Pat [Edmund G.] Brown [Sr.] appointed a commission to investigate this whole thing.

SCHRADE: What's the guy's name? John--?

CONNORS: John McCone.

SCHRADE: John McCone, yeah.

CONNORS: And they came up with all kinds of recommendations about jobs, housing, schools. Was the Labor Community Action Committee sort of called in on this whole thing?

SCHRADE: Yeah, yeah.

CONNORS: Were they active in that?

SCHRADE: Yeah, and testified and talked about-- And I testified before McCone, too, and the commission. We also

had an urban coalition going on at that point that with Martin Stone, who was head of Monogram Industries, in order to try to build union management, government groups together to deal with the riot question and the question of poverty, which was really the base of it all. But typical of commission reports, not much is done about them.

My experience with McCone was that when I testified about community organization as a way to implement job creation and housing and health facilities and so forth, he got very angry about this. I didn't really think he would understand, anyway. He had been head of the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] and coming from a whole different experience in business and so forth. I tried to persuade him that people really had to deal with these problems themselves and government had to open up to that kind of thing. So he stood up and got very angry and started shaking his finger at me saying, "I'm going to report you " But Walter Reuther. The answer here is job training, ^{and job} ^{creation} ^{too.} ~~creation, and~~ That's what he's for." And I said, "Walter's for what were doing. In fact, he told me that he'd like to do this in eighty cities in the country" when we convinced him to put another staff member in charge of the East Los Angeles community union. So we had this session where he got angry, and I said, "Look, Walter understands what we're trying to do, and I wish you would." But he was just very

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angry.

I think it has to do with this whole question of democracy and self-determination, that people in the elite don't see people in poor communities able to do these kinds of things, first of all. "They are inferior in their concept and perception, and so we've got to do to them and for them what they need." So I think the fundamental disagreement was one of the things that hampered us a lot.

And I think the commission that Johnson set up-- Let's see, the governor of Illinois--

CONNORS: [Otto] Kerner.

SCHRADE: Kerner, Governor Kerner headed a commission. I testified there again about community organization and self-determination and empowerment and so forth in order to really deal with these problems. I didn't have the same problem with Kerner because he just accepted what I was saying, and there is some reference to that in the Kerner report. But here, again, because of Johnson's involvement in the war in Vietnam and his intense interest in dealing with that, the War on Poverty suffered and he wouldn't even accept the Kerner report. He sort of turned his back on his commission.

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

TAPE NUMBER: VIII, SIDE TWO

MARCH 1, 1990

CONNORS: What happened to the East Los Angeles Labor Community Action Group?

SCHRADE: Well, that got started in a little different way and a little bit later. We organized again the same way with people from our locals who lived in the area and with the same group of unions involved in sponsoring it.

CONNORS: Now, what were those unions? If we could name some of those unions?

SCHRADE: Yeah, I'm going to have a difficult time doing that. But I know the Longshore union [International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union].

CONNORS: The Warehouse and Longshoremen, or the IOA.

SCHRADE: The IOA isn't out here is it? ILWU, anyway.

CONNORS: Okay.

SCHRADE: Yeah. Longshore union and the Packinghouse Workers union [United Packinghouse, Food, and Allied Workers], Amalgamated Clothing Workers [of America] union, sometimes the [International Brotherhood of] Teamsters, I believe, and the [United] Steelworkers [of America]--

CONNORS: UE [United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers Union] or IUE [International Union of Electrical Workers]?

SCHRADE: I don't think so.

CONNORS: They didn't have much of a presence here anyway.

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SCHRADE: No. The UE does, but I'm not sure. I'd have to go back to the records.

CONNORS: But I just wanted to see. So, in other words, some of the old CIO--

SCHRADE: Yeah, some of the old CIO unions, yeah. We were able to bring some pressure on the Building Trades [Council] to resolve building trade union questions when the Watts Labor Community Action Committee got into housing and to building to hospital and that sort of thing, building up these enterprises around the community. In fact, I'm sort of relating what's happening in East Europe now and the merging of socialism with the market economy. I think some of that was going on in the Watts community union kind of thing, that we were building corporate enterprises which have a lot of protection under law because of the corporations in this country, that we were setting up enterprise units in order to build permanent institutions in Watts. Where were we?

CONNORS: Well, the East Los Angeles group. Then we got off on talking. I want to also get back to a bit more on that building trades issue, maybe a little later on, but let's-- So it had a different sort of origin?

SCHRADE: Yeah. And here again, since we had been able to get Ted Watkins onto the staff of the union, I used one of my staff quota-- We had a staff quota in each region of the

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union, and I had a vacancy, so I persuaded Walter to agree--because he made the final appointments--to agree to put Ted Watkins on the staff to do this full time. The other two ideas I talked about, the idea of people deciding in the community, building permanent institutions, the third idea was that the leadership of the group ought to be independent from federal, state, county, city programs and foundations; that salaries and benefits ought to come from us or the community and not from these programs, to maintain a certain independence. Because once you got involved in a War on Poverty program, the long arm of Washington or L.A. or Sacramento was on you. So Ted became a full international union representative on our staff and therefore had a lot of independence and power in the community to deal with the other, the governmental and private, institutions which were giving support.

So I asked Walter, when we toured Watts one time and also East Los Angeles with our fledgling group there, I told him, I said there was a guy who was on our staff in Washington, Estaban Torres, who I'd like to ask to come back to work on the program. And he said, "Well, Estaban's working for my brother Victor [Reuther]." He said, "I can't do anything about that." And I said, "Well, I've already talked to Ed and to Victor, and if it's okay with you, they'll consider making this move." Estaban was a

little reluctant. I talked to his wife [Marci Torres] about it one time on the phone, about his coming back. I said to her, "Marci" I said, "I remember at one point that I had to get more involved in the community. I just couldn't be director of the union; I had to be out in the community. Now we're doing these things which are quite important. And I joined MAPA, the Mexican-American Political Association, to show my good faith, and now we've got these great programs, and Ed's the answer to the East Los Angeles community." And so she said, "Okay, Paul." We finally got him to come back to Los Angeles. He was working in the international affairs department with Victor Reuther as the director, and he was on the Latin American desk.

So Estaban came back and really put an organization together. It became less of a community-based operation like the Watts Labor Community Action Committee, building services and doing things on housing and health care and so forth, and became more of a question of creating enterprises and building and creating jobs. I pretty much lost track of it after a while because Estaban left. I don't know if it was before I left the regional directors position. Let's see, what did he do? I was not as close to that organization. It was finally taken over from Torres by another group, and it did become just kind of a

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commercial enterprise organization, not within the concept of a community organization that the Watts Labor Community Action Committee became. He wound up in the [James E.] Carter administration. They wanted him in ^{an assistant} the secretary of state position, but there was an objection from [Leonard F.] Woodcock and also from Meany. I think mainly from Woodcock, because ^{Torres} he was close to Victor, and Woodcock had quite a bit of influence with the Carter administration. Then wound up as a Carter representative delegate to UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization] in Paris. Then he came back into the community and ran for Congress, ^{and} he's now a member of Congress. From shop steward at Chrysler Local 230 into the Congress, which is a rare and good thing that happens to people from unions.

CONNORS: There was a Building Trades issue that was coming up in a lot of cities at this time, where the Building Trades were targeted as being racist and exclusive in their apprenticeship programs. And the AFL-CIO did respond to try to develop a kind of an affirmative action program there. Was this part of the issue in Watts?

SCHRADE: I don't have too many memories about that. I know that we did work with Watkins and Bill Bassett in the Building Trades in order to get clearance for people in the Watts Labor Community Action Committee to do construction

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CONNORS: How about the county fed [Los Angeles County AFL-CIO]? What were your relations with the county fed, county--?

SCHRADE: Bill Bassett was very, very good on this. He was the secretary at the time.

CONNORS: Okay, yeah.

SCHRADE: But I know there was some conflict, but generally they got resolved. Watkins was very good at negotiating these things because he was interested in building groups that could do housing and so forth, because there are a lot of skills in Watts, people who are not in the Building Trades but did a lot of the stuff on their own or were working in construction before and did a lot of rehab on their own houses. So part of the program that Ted developed was to take houses out of the [Los Angeles International] Airport area, there were a lot of houses being moved out of that area either to be destroyed or moved to some other area. So we were able to work through the various government bureaucracies to get those houses moved to Watts--they were very good houses--and also out of the path of the Century Freeway, which was going right through Watts. So a lot of those houses were moved by the Watts Labor Community Action Committee and reset on new foundations in Watts. Then through the total concept thing

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that Jack Conway and Ted and others worked out, they built up little neighborhoods with garden maintenance and guards, sort of enclosed communities with these very nice houses from the Westchester area, Inglewood area. And the financing, then, became part of the welfare system, so that welfare payments paid rent, but in terms of, some of the houses, people would get ownership of the house after twenty or thirty years. They also built some apartment houses for senior citizens.

CONNORS: So they had a whole mortgaging sort of an arm.

SCHRADE: Yeah. Really, yeah.

CONNORS: A home finance kind of arm. How many people were working for the organization?

SCHRADE: I don't know. Hundreds at a lot of times, because they built up their own credit union--

CONNORS: Fabulous.

SCHRADE: --they had ^{built} ~~their own~~ shopping centers, all kinds of services, job training going on, a couple of gas stations where we used War on Poverty money to train people as mechanics and as service station attendants. I remember Ted telling me at one time, he said he was in a Rockefeller Foundation board meeting, and Laurence Rockefeller at one point asked him-- He was talking about these gas stations and training programs and about making some money out of the gas stations. So Rockefeller asked him what gas

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stations these are. He said, "Mobil." He said, "Oh, those are ours!" [laughter] He was delighted by this idea. [laughter] And at one point, Rockefeller said to Tom Watson, "You know, I was out talking to my secretary the other day and I saw she was using a typewriter with an IBM [International Business Machines] logo on it." He said, "I didn't know you made small things like that." Watson said, "Yeah, we made several million dollars last year on that little item."

CONNORS: Speaking of housing--and this is prior, now, to the Watts rebellion and what may have fueled the anger of those people--Proposition 14 was floated there in 1964, which was seeking to nullify the fair housing act, the California Fair Housing Act, the Rumford Fair Housing Act, I think it was called.

SCHRADE: Yeah. Byron Rumford was the assemblyman who sponsored that.

CONNORS: Do you recall that that proposition activity was there? It seemed like a white backlash kind of a--

SCHRADE: Yeah, it was another form of rejection people in the community felt. But there were so many of those things, you know, so many problems like that.

CONNORS: It's hard to pick out one item.

SCHRADE: Yeah. One item is a trigger.

CONNORS: Yeah.

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SCHRADE: Obviously, there are serious grievances in that community. People don't do that sort of thing. They don't become violent and destructive unless there are strong feelings of rejection, of being abandoned, of not having what America promises. Generation after generation of this in black and other minority communities is just too much at times. people just rebel. And there were signs of that. I was studying a lot of that stuff during that period. The number of fires is one of the indicators. It's like an earthquake sensitivity measurement. The number of fires in a community often determines whether there are problems in that community or whether there's going to be rebellion in that community. Some started studying that along with the number of confrontations with police. The people just get fed up with the way they're treated by the police. You can begin to see the moment that a rebellion can occur.

CONNORS: King's assassination set off riots in many cities, but not in Watts.

SCHRADE: But that was '68. They had already had a rebellion, and I think it was just-- People understood that it's not going to pay.

CONNORS: Well, can you connect the activity of the Community Labor Action Committee to act to forestall that kind of thing?

SCHRADE: Possibly, yeah. Possibly, because Watkins was

against that sort of thing, but he also had programs that would lead to eliminate the need for rebellion. So it was sort of a very balanced approach to problems and goals of the community.

CONNORS: What about relations with other civil rights groups such as NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People]? Were they supportive?

SCHRADE: I guess in a way. They were not directly involved in this. We actually had the United Civil Rights Committee, which brought together groups in the civil rights community: CORE [Congress of Racial Equality] and SNCC [Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee] and NAACP, Watts Labor Community Action Committee. We held our meetings in-- We had moved into different offices during that period and were trying to sell the building at San Pedro [Street], and Manchester [Avenue], which was right in Central Los Angeles. So that became the headquarters for the United Civil Rights Committee. We finally turned that building over to Ted and gave it to him, because it was a good building in a prime location. So we had this kind of coordination going on, and the Urban Coalition which brought together kind of liberal, business, political, labor, and leaders.

CONNORS: When was the United Civil Rights Committee formed?

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SCHRADE: Let's see. Probably after the rebellion, yeah.

Arnez Pataket and J. H. Brookins were prime leaders in that along with Dr. Hudson and some other black leaders in the community.

CONNORS: Okay. Speaking of CORE, I know in some of the research I did on [UAW] Local 887 when I was interviewing Red [William C.] Aston, we talked a little bit about some picketing that CORE was doing at North American Rockwell for the noncompliance, I guess, with affirmative-action-type demands.

SCHRADE: Do you remember the year?

CONNORS: It was still in the sixties, I believe. But they were targeting the union, too, as being part of the other side.

SCHRADE: Yeah. Yeah, because North American Rockwell, now Rockwell, formerly North American Aviation, was not really stepping up the affirmative action program. I got into a conflict with the president of the local over that because--

CONNORS: Was that Lacayo?

SCHRADE: Yeah, Lacayo, Henry Lacayo. We had received information from the EEOC [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission], giving a total breakdown. They had done a study of Rockwell, North American Rockwell, and we had been able to get the documents on this. I don't know if they

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were bootlegged to us or what, but we felt this really gave us a handle on dealing with North American Rockwell on the affirmative action program. So I gave this to Lacayo and we had a meeting about it with Bill [William] Beckham from Reuther's office, and I remember ^{J. Levy} Abe Levy was there. We were in Lacayo's office at the local and suggested to him that here we had all this information; now we could really deal with this. Because Rockwell was fudging on it's figures on who was minority and how many were in such and such a job. But it clearly indicated that the good jobs, the higher paying jobs, the promotions were not going to blacks and Latinos, and it gave us all this ammunition. Hank finally blew up at me. He said, "You're trying to destroy me." I said, "What do you mean trying to destroy you? You've got support for this kind of thing in the local, and the international is certainly supporting you on this one." "No," he said, "if ^S get into this kind of program, I'm going to be destroyed politically in this local. That's what you're going to do to me." Well, when I was leaving, he really screamed at me going down the hallway from his office, saying, "I've had enough of this. I'm resigning as chair of your caucus." He was chairman of my regional political caucus. So I think he was operating on two levels. First of all, he wanted to be regional director and was going to try to unseat me, and he

was using this issue as [a way of] doing it.

CONNORS: Looking for a break.

SCHRADE: Yeah. And I don't think he was really serious about affirmative action, anyway, because he often said, "I'm not going out and join^{ing} the Mexican-American Political Association." He said, "I've made it on my own. Besides, I'm Nicaraguan." So this created a real problem for me in the union politically, and also that we weren't able to now launch a challenge on Rockwell, North American Rockwell at the time, in dealing with affirmative action programs. And that became a political war between us.

Understandably, with that kind of attitude, CORE would pick at both the union and the corporation, and I think that's a part of a good strategy, that a union, even if it's performing appropriately in affirmative action, the pressure has got to be kept on, because any white leadership or other kind of leadership has all kinds of other responsibilities, so the pressure has to be kept on in terms of winning these goals. The union should be under that kind of pressure until they perform adequately, satisfactorily.

CONNORS: Did you have any dealings at all with some of the more radical black organizations like the Panthers [Black Panther Party], the [black] Muslims [Nation of Islam]?
SNCC became more radical as time went on.

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SCHRADE: No. I don't remember whether SNCC was really that well organized out here. CORE was. No, I really had serious questions about the kind of threats that the Black Panther party was laying down on the community, and oftentimes I saw liberals moving over in that direction as kind of an acceptance of everything the Black Panthers stood for without challenging them on some of this. And I don't think you can just do that. We also brought Black Panther party representatives in--we were at UC [University of California] San Diego for summer school--and representatives of the Brown Berets from the Latino community, an equally militant organization, to discuss these things with the people in the summer school. And they were really good sessions because people got really good exchanges going on with people screaming at one another, but an understanding coming out of that. I know a lot of people admitted afterwards that they got very angry in that session, but that kind of confrontation with the reality of the black community and the Latino community and what these people felt and how serious they were about what they were doing was good to get a dialogue going, and people thought it was a good idea to do that. But I didn't really have much relationship, any relationship, with the Black Panther Party or the Brown Berets.

CONNORS: I think when they started up with more of a

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steady stream of Maoist rhetoric, they probably lumped unions in with the imperialists, as the rhetoric goes. So I suppose that would have been their appreciation of-- Also, it seems to me that back in Detroit there was some activity with either the Panthers or a radical black organization in Detroit that was a splinter break-off from the UAW, or tried to-- Maybe I should look that up and see what that was about. I think it was DRUM. That might have been the group.

SCHRADE: Yeah, there were groups within the UAW that started called DRUM, Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement, ELRUM [Eldon Revolutionary Union Movement]-- They were different depending on the plant and the local.

CONNORS: But you saw none of that activity out here?

SCHRADE: No, no.

CONNORS: And I know also that the Progressive Labor Party was going to the factories at that point.

SCHRADE: Yeah, I think there was more of a sectarian left operating in Detroit and had been for years. There was some here, but it didn't develop into that kind of an operation.

CONNORS: This is another "where were you when it happened" question; when King was assassinated, where were you at the time? When did you hear about it?

SCHRADE: I don't know. That's one I don't remember. I

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remember it happening and the tension here, because cities were going up in flames and--

CONNORS: Yeah. What were your thoughts on who did it and why?

SCHRADE: Well, you know, it's one of those long mysteries that hasn't-- There's been some recent information. Let's see, BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation] did a study and a program on this last year or so, and there's one man in it who is now telling BBC he knew much more about James Earl Ray and his operation and may have connected with him, so that's developing. There's a friend of mine, Phil Melanson, at Southwest Massachusetts University who recently did a book on the Secret Service and it's politics, and had recently done a book on the Martin Luther King assassination, where he raises all the questions about who was involved with James Earl Ray. So it's one of those mysteries that's still unsolved. Melanson just told me that the BBC had gotten a better statement from this one person who may have that connection. So to me, assassinations are an open question because the hatred of J. Edgar Hoover and a lot of whites in this country for King and what he was doing--

CONNORS: Well, as you mentioned when you were marching, that kind of spitting and the profanities people were screaming, I mean, it must have been incredible to actually

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have to face those people without returning the favor, as it were. Just "what kind of people are you?"

SCHRADE: Yeah. And what people were going through, the vicious assault on the marchers in Selma a year or so before. And we begin to see more and more through the documentaries Eyes on the Prize I and II the kind of assaults and battery on people that were going on from law enforcement as well as the racists in this country. Then the tension between Stokely Carmichael and Malcolm X and King, with King having his nonviolent strategy, which worked better than the Black Panther strategy or the Carmichael strategy or the Malcolm X strategy. But again being very sympathetic if somebody-- You know, the right to self-defense and the right to retaliate is a very strong motivation, and to accept that takes a lot of courage to withstand that. I don't know. It's a tough thing. Violent revolution has achieved certain gains for the human race over the years. So it's a thing in your mind. Should you get into a violent-- My own sense, my own brain tells me that it doesn't work, that the [Mohandas] Ghandi movement worked, the King movement was working, the Chavez movement works a lot better, yet none of them have worked that effectively. That's always the problem. You make some gain, but there's so much yet undone.

CONNORS: I have a summary question on this whole matter of

civil rights or civil rights and community union activity, which I'm not sure exactly how to phrase, but it has to do with your awareness at the time. Were you seeing and conceiving of a new unionism personally? Because you were entering into realms that unions hadn't been. We talked last time about social unionism versus business unionism, and, certainly, this was in the area of social unionism, but even in a new key, almost, to what social unionism had been prior to that. New issues, new tactics, employing tactics from the [Saul] Alinsky side, for instance. Were you playing it by ear, as it were? Or were you sitting down and saying, "Okay, this is our strategy; this is the big picture?"

SCHRADE: No, I don't think I had ever had the concept of a grand strategy except to-- I think it was Mao who said that marching through the institutions and making them more democratic, corporations, unions more democratic, particularly communities more democratic.

But this did come to mind when Stanley Sheinbaum, an old friend-- He was at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions--a great political leader in our community. And he, as an educator, was in a meeting with educators with Governor Ronald Reagan once, and he came back during the late sixties and said, "The governor wanted to know what you were doing because he'd heard so much

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about the UAW being involved with the farm workers union, the East Los Angeles Community union, and the Watts Labor Community Action Committee." I didn't know he was that aware of anything, or today, but he did ask Scheinbaum that question. He said, "What's Schrade trying to do, take over California?" Well, you know, that was a pretty good idea, and I felt that that was a good idea when I was with Watkins and Chavez in Delano [California] and in Watts, saying, "We're building a movement that's community-based and union-based, and we ought to continue doing these kinds of things."

But I think my most important influence was Walter Reuther and the people around him like Conway and Sexton, that social unionism was enough of a concept to work with, and to apply this to the community was, in a way new, but it had been done before.

CONNORS: Did Walter use that term social unionism?

SCHRADE: Yeah, he did. Sure. He was very reluctant to use the word socialism even though he considered himself a socialist. I know he got very uncomfortable. One time when we were having a summer school, he was on the program with Upton Sinclair. This wispy, little old man with a squeaky voice was talking about socialism, we needed socialism in America, and Walter got very uncomfortable about that because he was always under attack, and he tried

to move on a course that provided the greatest kind of coalition for political action that he could, and he felt that that was not a good word, not well received by most of the people he tried to work with. But social unionism was in his language, and social justice was always there. Economic and social justice were always in his speeches. And I think working with those concepts during the sixties was good. But we all got turned off in the seventies.

CONNORS: Well, in the last part of our discussion for today, I wanted to jump back a bit and change the topic only slightly. We're still talking about social issues and the social movement. You mentioned that in '64 you had some contact with the Free Speech Movement that was happening in Berkeley, and I thought we could finish off this with some recap of what your involvement of that, or what your appreciation of that was.

SCHRADE: Well, the person, again, who recruited me was Anne Draper, who worked with Leonard Levy, active in a lot of things in California. She convinced me that there was a need for unions expressing their support for the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley. It was important to be involved in that kind of political movement, and I agreed. So I went to one of the rallies and debates going on about the Free Speech Movement.

CONNORS: At Berkeley?

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