

against any kind of demonstration. Another kind of sabotage operation. So he was out there taking good positions publicly but undercutting at the same time, so it was a really treacherous operation during that period in personal political terms. But in terms of a general approach to the union, in a way he tried to emulate Reuther early on to give people some sense of security that the union was going to continue on a more progressive course as with Reuther. But that changed very quickly after the transition.

CONNORS: Well, let's jump over to how you got involved with the ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union].

SCHRADE: One other thing on environmental stuff here during the sixties. We became the base of operation for Ellen Stern Harris, who was really a good name in environmental problems and also in public television. She's a very strong advocate of more public participation in television and served on the board of the Metropolitan Water District and was a person who gave a lot of leadership. Well, she ^{was} based in our office for a long time. And we used our office that way. Any community groups that wanted to start, we had mimeograph machines, phones, office space for them just to get them going. And she gives us a lot of credit for that even though it was a minimal contribution on our part, but at least it gave her

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a start in her movement.

CONNORS: Well, you already mentioned in one of the earlier interviews having joined the ACLU in the fifties.

SCHRADE: Early fifties. Yeah, probably '50, '51.

CONNORS: During that period, what was your association with the ACLU? You obviously followed what they did.

SCHRADE: Yeah, it wasn't very close. I was a member but not active in the organization. We often consulted them on cases we had. Let's see, the guy who was executive legal director for a long time was one of our attorneys. His name slips me. He's dead now. I see his face, bearded and all. Wirin, Al [Abraham Lincoln] Wirin was one of the firm of attorneys, so we had a connection that way. So we sort of oriented ourselves to civil liberties concern^s in the workplace at that point, but nothing very directly inside the ACLU. Mostly working with them on our own problems.

CONNORS: Because the ACLU is-- I don't know if it's ever had a very good relationship to organized labor. I think organized labor has probably been a little leery of what ACLU has--

SCHRADE: A little bit leery? It's always a "communist organization." I was even attacked inside the UAW as being a communist because I was a member of the ACLU. Yeah, a couple of us were active at the time.

CONNORS: Was that just an innuendo kind of thing? Or was

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that a public--?

SCHRADE: No, direct. "You've got to be a communist to be a member of the ACLU." That was happening in my own union. And it continued. I mean, that general slur on the ACLU was always there within the AFL-CIO hierarchy, even though many union members and union officers were members over the last thirty, forty years. The ACLU got started in Los Angeles during a strike in San Pedro with the help of Upton Sinclair, where strikers gathered in a public park and each started reading the Bill of Rights, and they kept getting arrested and filled up the L.A. jails. And finally, Upton Sinclair said, "Look, we need a civil liberties union in Los Angeles", and that's when it got started in 1924 as a result of that strike action.

CONNORS: I guess there must be more to labor's reluctance to be associated with the ACLU. There must be more to it than sort of the old cold war [Jay] Lovestone attitude. It might be because the ACLU was very hardline on supporting basic freedoms which unions were not necessarily--

SCHRADE: Yeah, and there were a number of things over that period. The ACLU didn't support the Wagner Act, for instance. It thought it would make workers in unions too dependent on the government, which is an idea whose time came during the Reagan years. Even Lane Kirkland said we shouldn't recognize the NLRA [National Labor Relations Act]

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anymore because it's so against unions and constricts us. So the ACLU was probably right during that period to have that kind of legislation. But it seemed right at the time, and it was part of the whole New Deal concept of balancing out the forces, but the forces never did get balanced out. Labor has always been on the bad end of the stick. So the ACLU may have alienated people in the labor movement as a result of that. That was in the thirties, so I don't remember that period. I wasn't there.

But the general reluctance of the AFL-CIO to work in coalition over the years has been part of the problem as well. The ACLU has taken up union democracy cases, which the leadership of the AFL-CIO and a lot of its unions don't like very much because it challenges the leadership on democratic questions. And that's still a problem. Even when the Landrum-Griffin Act was passed with very important rights for union members, the labor movement really took bad positions on that. And during the Nixon period when a commission headed by David Cole came up with adding new ^{memberships} rights, the labor movement opposed it because they thought there was enough democracy. But that's typical of the leadership of any institution. "It's too much democracy" is the general position. And that's one other problem the ACLU presents. But that's changing.

CONNORS: That's changing, you say?

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SCHRADE: That's changing.

CONNORS: Do you have anything to do with that change?

SCHRADE: Well, part of my searching for different areas where I could be creative-- When I was defeated for office in '72 in the UAW, I went back to work in the factory and had a lot of time to think and even to read, because I was often isolated, exiled out into non-jobs just so I wouldn't get involved in union politics. This was the result of the local ^{and} ~~in~~ ^R Region working with the management to do that. And one of the things I came up with was this idea that the ACLU could begin doing some worker's rights projects. In the mid-seventies, I was recruited to be the executive director of the Southern California ACLU, and I turned it down on the basis that I didn't want to get back into another bureaucracy and have all the attendant problems. I just wasn't ready for that and didn't know if I ever wanted to do that again, because I had a good life in the UAW, and when I was defeated, there was not really much chance of returning, and I just turned it down. Fortunately, they were also recruiting Ramona Ripston, who is one of the finest executive directors we've ever had, and I've known a lot of them around the country. She's really great and has served very well. I worked with her, and I became a member of the board. My assignment was not just doing general civil liberties stuff, which I did

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participate in on the board, but I began a worker's rights project with her support and the help of Carol Sobel and Reese Lloyd, who was an attorney on the staff. We put together a group of workers, union officials, labor lawyers and began worker's rights projects.

CONNORS: Who were the union officials? Local people?

SCHRADE: ^{Union} Local people, generally. Occasionally, there was ~~the~~ ^{Walter Szymanski} He'll never forgive me for not remembering. He's not active anymore, but he's the head of the IUE [International Union of Electrical and Electronics Workers] here in California.

CONNORS: ~~Gee, I should know who that is.~~

SCHRADE: He's now in Orange County so he can't really attend meetings much. He's based there. And the president of the Greyhound local-- Jim ^{Cushing-Murray} ~~He's got a double name. Not~~ Cameron. ~~My memory is going.~~

CONNORS: ~~We can track these down for the transcript.~~

SCHRADE: Yeah. Head of the Greyhound local, and Bob Berghoff, who was the president of [UAW] Local 148. So we had a good mix of rank-and-file guys. And the big case that really took off for us was seven guys who got fired by Crown Zellerbach [Corporation], in the warehouse, fired because they had written a letter to the mayor and to the [Los Angeles] Board of Education complaining that Crown Zellerbach had gotten an honor award for its civil rights

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activities, which constituted touring of young Third-World kids through the warehouse, probably to show them what their future was, ~~in~~ in management, but as warehouse persons. These seven guys, all black, said, "Look, it's been decided that Crown Zellerbach has violated the Civil Rights Act in various state ^{and} ~~legislation~~ ^{laws} and is guilty of racism. So they got fired for writing that letter. Well, we took it on as a free speech issue and worked with the union and a union attorney on it and went into arbitration, piggybacked a free speech brief along with that, and they were reinstated with most of their back pay. Then we took ^{it to} ~~on~~ in court and got all of their back pay. Well, as a result of the publicity on this thing--the Wall Street Journal and the L.A. Times picked it up because it was a really important case, Maxine Waters grabbed a hold of it and she said, "What can I do?" We got her to write a whistle-blower bill. This was a case of whistle-blowing, a free speech issue, as well as being unfair discharge. So we got that bill through and got [Governor George] Deukmejian to sign it. It was very simple: you can report illegal activities and talk about them and not get fired for it. So that gave us sort of a core of achievement at that point.

Then we got into all kinds of other issues. We got into wrongful termination, arbitration, drug testing,

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secrecy and spying, spying by employers in the workplace. So for the last several years, we've been building with the unions on certain issues. In my own situation at Rockwell [International Corporation], the union officers were going along with a new application for medical benefits which on the bottom said, "My records--personal, family, and all records of our medical situation--are now available to the employer as well as to the insurance company." Well, the insurance company needed it on a confidential basis to determine benefits, but all of this information was now going to flow to the employer. So the union officers were going to go along with this. It was already in the process.

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CONNORS: Agreement on the part of the union.

SCHRADE: We finally broke it.

CONNORS: Yeah.

SCHRADE: Because we recruited outside among other unions, and I started campaigning in the shop. This is one of the reasons why I got confined later, because with my job going around the shop, I could talk to union officers and members of the bargaining committee who were kind of isolated in the factory from the union hall. So I could campaign in the shop among membership. I finally got petitions going saying we don't want our family medical information given to the corporation to be used for all kinds of reasons, as they would use it. So we built a campaign in the shop, and the union finally reversed itself on it and stopped it. We went to Sacramento, through our ^{ACLU} lobbyists, then, and got a change in the law which would restrict this information as far as the employers were concerned. So it was that kind of using the resource of the union and the ACLU to carry on trade union activity. People began to understand that this was a good idea. The ACLU had its important resources, not only in legislative work, but in having experts on the law and on civil liberties questions, and relating it to the workplace. It finally wound up in the mid-eighties where

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we held a joint conference on worker's rights with the Los Angeles County Federation [of Labor] and Orange County, Riverside [County], San Bernardino County. We had, in fact, two joint conferences working through the labor section of the Industrial Relations Institute at UCLA and putting conferences together. We had very good turnout and very good conferences as a result.

We did the first major work against urine testing as a civil liberties question and how to bargain on it, how to arbitrate it, because unions were forced into the position of urine testing because it was a negotiable question. It got unions to force bargaining on that, and unions did this on their own, too. But getting into that area made unions accomplices to what we considered violations of civil liberties. But it's the kind of concessions you have to make because of the NLRA and the requirement of unions to bargain to conclusions on these questions. But anyway, we did the educational thing and got a lot of really good work done that way. We brought in the experts from the urine testing labs and doctors to talk about all of this. And at one point, Bill Robertson, who was sometimes pressured by the extreme right of the AFL-CIO, opened up at the conference and talked about his own problem with alcoholism as it related to other drugs and how he had to fight hard and talked about the civil liberties questions involved.

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So as he went by me to leave, he said, "Paul, send me an application of the ACLU. I've got to join." So it was that kind of working together on particular issues and getting some understanding.

The president of the Retail Clerks [International Association] local in Santa Monica has been our biggest organizer. He has won more prizes than anybody else in signing up members in the ACLU. And we get ads in the journals from unions now, too, as our fund-raising goes on. The worker's rights committee got money from the UAW from its CAP [Community Action Program] Council, so we have had use of some of the union funds in supporting the work we're doing. So there's a better relationship going on.

Finally, ~~what's occurred is that~~ we had a struggle to get recognition of worker's rights questions, civil liberties in the workplace questions, in the national ACLU, for which the board's quite conservative. There are a lot of funders on the national board who have got ties with corporations and so forth, which is legitimate in itself, but they maintain a fairly antiunion, antiworker kind of position. And in the '85 national conference, we pushed our position, which we had been able to get through the state AFL-CIO, and that is there ought to be legislation on the books giving people without unions the right to due process from the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the

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by employers

right to due process on cases of wrongful termination.
This is a major ~~break~~ ^{National and State} by the AFL-CIO ~~and the state~~, because these people generally thought that this is something unions offer, it shouldn't be a matter of law because then people wouldn't join unions. That argument can be countered in many ways, but the labor movement bought it. But the ^{National} ACLU was reluctant to buy it. We brought Ed Asner in to make ~~the~~ ^{the} major speech, although they cancelled him out from the national at one point when they saw the text of his speech which we'd put together with him. But they finally let him speak, and we were able to get a resolution through on due process on wrongful termination. There was a big fight ~~over~~ ^{for} months in the national board on it, and it was passed by a vote of thirty to twenty-seven, ~~or something like that~~. So that was the beginning.

Then we ^{passed} ~~did~~ the urine testing ^{law} ~~thing~~ through the national ACLU, which was a little easier. So now, the last year and a half, there's been a national task force on civil liberties in the workplace set up by the national ACLU, so we've got really good staff people ^{working with} ~~and some work~~ people from around the country ~~who are operating~~ in all areas on spying in the workplace, drug testing, due process on wrongful termination. We're working with the CWA [Communication Workers of America] on employer spying because that's a big problem for telephone operators and

with other unions because it's a big problem for registration clerks for the airlines and the other areas. So several of these issues are now being promoted.

One of the interesting things now is that there's a special executive subcommittee set up to study whether we ought to join the labor movement on the question of legislation against strike breakers who can take over jobs. There's no defined policy on this in the ACLU, but as a result of our due process policy and other things we've been doing, the staff of the organization has said we ought to get into this area. So now it's a question of getting the national leadership to go on this question. We'll know in the next couple of months. This again ties us back into the labor movement because it would be one way saying "we are with you" on these kind of questions.

The ultimate, I think, is that we join the labor movement on a movement for labor law reforms so the NLRA gets put into a position where it's easier to organize, ~~where~~ there are so many restrictions against it under the American economic and political system. And here again, the ACLU can provide the civil liberties component of that. The labor movement is strongly based on the first amendment: ^{the} the right to associate, the right to petition, the right to speak out. So I see this as kind of a joining of forces that can be very beneficial to workers in this

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country.

CONNORS: With labor law reform, the last attempt at that, I think, was about 1978--

SCHRADE: Yeah, under [President James E.] Carter.

CONNORS: Under Carter, which--

SCHRADE: It wasn't--

CONNORS: It came to naught.

SCHRADE: Yeah. Well, Carter was really bad on that and gave us token support, but no real support. That was--

CONNORS: Yeah, he took the endorsement of labor very happily and gave nothing. Would this effort at labor law reform be pretty much along the same lines as that 1978-- I don't really remember the details of '78.

SCHRADE: I don't know. I think it's probably a different approach based on the experience of the Reagan and now the [George] Bush years of ~~this really antilabor~~, the worst kind of antilabor politics in this country, worse than any other industrial ^{nation} ~~relations~~ in the world. I think that's the value of Pat Sexton's book. She articulates all this--

CONNORS: We should just cite the name of this book. Is it out yet? Or is it forthcoming?

SCHRADE: No, it's forthcoming.

CONNORS: It's The War on Labor: American Conservatism, Power and Repression, by Pat Sexton.

SCHRADE: Yeah. I think that the Kirkland position is--

*Patricia
Lynn
Sexton*

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The NLRA is really so antiworker, antiunion, and I think they'll probably take another look at it. Of course, it means organizing in the politics of the country to get there again, which means a Democratic president who would give us more support than Jimmy Carter did, and it means Democratic Party that's not so wedded to the corporate interest as it is now in the Congress. That, again, means the labor movement's got to organize a lot of people coalitions, which it's more apt to do now, starting with the ACLU and women's rights groups and environmental groups and so forth and building a political coalition in the country. It also means reaching out to people without unions, and that's one of the values of our going on this issue of wrongful termination. It would give workers who don't have that available to them under union contract, who don't have unions, not just the right to due process when they're wrongfully terminated, but it would give people security knowing they had that. So it ^a affects nearly two-thirds of the workforce in this country. And I think if labor was out in the front on that, we could pick up a lot more support for labor-endorsed candidates as we go for economic democracy and labor law reforms and other issues.

CONNORS: So do you see that as sort of your strategy in the next, whatever, ten, twenty years to be working in this kind of area?

SCHRADE: Sure, yeah. I think there are the good signs that this becomes part of a general strategy, too.

CONNORS: Yeah. That's what my next question was, yeah. It's interesting, too, because, say, the ACLU can say things and do things that the institutionalized labor movement can't, even though it might want to, or some people in it might want to. And it's the same thing with the environmental groups, that can say and do things. And if you can keep that communication going, it's sort of a de facto organization even though it has its separate structures and personalities.

SCHRADE: Sure. So we got national ACLU people now meeting with international union presidents about these particular issues, so we're gradually getting to a point where the relationship is building ~~up~~ because the common interest is there. There may not be common interest with particular unions on the union democracy question, but the labor movement's got to understand that, that we're a principled organization, and we'll carry on those kind of activities, as well. It may not be "politically correct" within that union, but it has to be done, as well.

CONNORS: In the ACLU politics, have you perceived or experienced anything like what you perceived and experienced in the bureaucracy of the UAW? The kind of jockeying for position, pushing people out, the natural

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kind of faction stuff that goes on in an organization?

SCHRADE: Yeah.

CONNORS: But is it the same--?

SCHRADE: We had some of that in the seventies. I began as a member of the board and a supporter of Ramona Ripston's. There was a situation internally which undermined her position, and I was part of a mediation committee to work that out. It didn't work. Finally, I said, "Look, this is a political question inside this organization. I've got my experiences as a UAW organizer and politico. We just ought to be caucusing on this and being sure that everybody is informed on what the internal problems are so we can decide these questions in board meetings." And we were able, through a fairly intense struggle, to win out ^{for} to support Ramona's position as executive director. Generally, that's dissipated.

From time to time there are serious problems over ideological or principle questions. We've gone, with some strong reservations, to limit the first amendment on cases that have come up on the campus, where we say that it's more than a free speech question where people are being racially assaulted, near violently so, or sexually. So we've said that that kind of speech is so destructive that we're willing to condition the first amendment. So there's strong arguments about that, but they become arguments over

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those kinds of principle questions, and there's not so much factionalism or bureaucratic stuff going on.

One of the good things about the ACLU board in Southern Cal is it's always been the most progressive group. I think the involvement with the entertainment industry, the fact that it's away from the national office and therefore has to be more creative to stay alive, that it generally follows the politics of the liberal community--

- It's been a really great institution out here, so you don't have a lot of bureaucratic problems. The other thing is that the ACLU here is on record of integrating its board, so we have a quota system set up on race, on sexual orientation, sex--at least half women are on the board--so it gives us a more democratic balance, and I think that helps reduce the bureaucratic problems, because I think we've got a much more democratic board, a very active one.

CONNORS: What's Ramona Ripston's background?

SCHRADE: Well, she came out of left politics, she worked for the New York ACLU, was recruited by the late George Slaff, who was one of the greats of the ACLU in California and worked on labor cases himself back in New York, New Jersey, back in the thirties, and he got her to come out here. She took a year, a year and a half off, to work for People for the American Way, then came back. So she's been with the ACLU here about twenty years now. So that's her

~~It~~
background: / twenty years in the ACLU here.

CONNORS: Well, I'm trying to think of a segue to talking a bit about Danilo.

SCHRADE: That's my new work.

CONNORS: That's your new work, and I'd like to talk about that, because you just got back from Sicily, having met him there and visited with him. First of all, who is he? Let's get some of that down.

SCHRADE: Well, the purpose of being in Sicily was a food, wine, and historical sights tour.

CONNORS: No, no, don't say that! [laughter]

SCHRADE: It's part of my retirement activities--

CONNORS: That's right. Well, you deserve it.

SCHRADE: Cooking good food, which is part of my background in Saratoga with Sicilians in our town, loving Italian food. So I have been going to a cooking teacher, and part of his work is to tour people around certain regions. So I came across Dolci's name in a cookbook, The History of Food in Sicily, by Mary Taylor Simeti, who went there to work with him in 1961. Well, it triggered all kinds of memories because I started reading his stuff back in the fifties and it had some influence on me in terms of farm worker organizing and community organizing, which we did in Watts and East L.A. He was organizing poor people in Sicily who were much more devastated because of the war and because of

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poverty generally in Sicily. He was an architect who went into progressive organizing activities.

CONNORS: So that's his background? He was an architect?

SCHRADE: Yeah, from Northern Italy.

CONNORS: So he didn't come out of any of the Italian Communist Party activity or socialist activity?

SCHRADE: No. Generally, the Communist Party opposed what he was doing because he was sort of upstaging them and the unions, as well. The [Roman Catholic] Church was against him because they thought he was a communist, so he got it both ways. And the Mafia was opposed to him.

The dramatic thing that occurred, that got him his first media attention, was that he organized a group of unemployed in the mid-fifties and went out and repaired roads that needed repairing for years. Typically, the government moved in, despite the fact the constitution of Italy has a right to a job clause, and they arrested everybody, including Dolci. So they were in jail over doing volunteer work repairing public roads. So he used a lot of Ghandi techniques in organizing. He did fasting and demonstrations and marches under great difficulty, because the Sicilian culture says, "This is your destiny"--el destino--"you're poor because that's your destiny." There's another slogan for years in Sicily that "the man who works alone wins" *PU* which goes against the whole idea of

collective action. So he had to fight that sort of thing and educate people that "yes, your destiny can change; yes, you can work together; yes, you can win by working together, where you're losing, anyway." So he was able to organize.

His first big project was to organize building of dams which the government had promised. Heavy rains of the river all ran off into the three seas around Sicily, and ~~people~~ ^{winter} were just poor. A lot of their food was being imported from the mainland ~~where~~ ^{It could be grown} ^{in Sicily} if they had irrigation. So he had to educate people into this kind of activity, to go out and do this. There were a lot of difficulties with the Mafia on this because they wanted to control, and, typically, any institution like the Mafia, like the church, likes to keep people poor and dependent, and they didn't want farms ~~coming up~~ in western Sicily. So there was a big struggle over that. Anyway, they did get dams built in certain sections, and in the mid-fifties there were many farmers who were producing good crops, putting their own ^{co-ops} coops together where they'd been in dire poverty before. And in those kind of communities, the Mafia moved out, because they didn't have the kind of direct control because people had their own economic security at that point and protection as a result of it. So, in a way, that was very helpful. The disappointing

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thing is to go and see one of the dams now with hardly any water in it, the ~~one~~ one at Giotto near Partinico, which we visited after meeting Dolci. And the reason for that ~~is~~ ^{is} that a lot of the water was sold off to Palermo [Sicily] and there haven't been any rain for three or four years, and that's disappointing in itself.

Well, I followed Dolci a long time during this sixties, seventies. He did come to meet with [Cesar] Chavez a couple of times up at Delano [California], and Chavez really respected him a lot, too. Dolci was a nominee for a Nobel Peace Prize at one point. So, in a way, he was a great fictional character, because I had never met him. I had read a lot of stuff and read Jerre Mangione's book called A Passion for Sicilians about Dolci, which he wrote in the sixties and did a new chapter for ^{it} in the mid-eighties. I talked to Mangione before I went because this became as interesting to me as the food of Sicily and the Greek and Roman ~~and~~ Norman ruins. So I decided I would try to meet ^{him} I wrote him a letter. I wrote Mary Taylor Simeti a letter, as well, since she had some experience with Dolci, and I was interested in her history of Sicily, too.

So when we got to Sicily and went on the Bugialli food, historical sights tour, I called Dolci. I got his phone number from Mangione, who had been in contact with

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