

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Anti-War Movement at YSU During the 1960s

Personal Experience

O. H. 1366

THOMAS A. SHIPKA

Interviewed

by

Matthew T. Butts

on

October 9, 1990

THOMAS A. SHIPKA

Thomas A. Shipka was born on February 17, 1943 in Youngstown, Ohio, the son of Albert J. and Anne Shipka. He attended Youngstown Ursuline High School, graduating in 1961. Following high school, Dr. Shipka continued his education by enrolling at John Carroll University, where he was granted a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1966. He immediately began his graduate studies at Boston College, achieving his Ph.D. in 1969.

While growing up, Dr. Shipka became very interested in the labor movement due to his father's involvement in the AFL-CIO. He became particularly engrossed with the growth of organized labor within the steel industry in Youngstown. Shipka's interest in the labor movement also played an instrumental role in the unionization of the faculty at Youngstown State University in the early 1970's.

Following his completion of his Ph.D., Dr. Shipka returned to Youngstown to serve as an Assistant Professor in the Philosophy and Religious Studies Department at Youngstown State University. Upon his arrival at Youngstown State, Dr. Shipka became active in the Vietnam War protests at the University. He was instrumental in helping to organize the Peace Moratorium of 1969, and other important events on campus.

Presently, Dr. Shipka is Chairperson of the Philosophy and Religious Studies Department at Youngstown State. He is married to the former Katherine Kane. They reside at 115 Upland Avenue, Youngstown, Ohio, with their two children, Anne Louise and Andrew.

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INTERVIEWEE: THOMAS A. SHIPKA  
INTERVIEWER: Matthew T. Butts  
SUBJECT: labor unions, Republic Steel, Al Shipka  
DATE: October 9, 1990

B: This is an interview with Dr. Thomas A. Shipka, for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on the Anti-War Movement at YSU During the 1960s, by Matthew T. Butts, at DeBartolo Hall at Youngstown State University on October 9, 1990.

Tell me a little bit about where you were born and what it was like growing up there.

S: I was born in Youngstown, Ohio, in 1943. My family resided in Campbell. I grew up in Campbell. I grew up during a prosperous period, economically, in our community. It was basically a time of full employment and economic prosperity. The dominant industry was steel. My father was a steelworker. I have a strong recollection of the primacy of steel in local industry. In fact, Campbell was named after one of the former presidents of the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company. Beyond that, I don't think that growing up in my era was particularly hard. I had generally good schools and teachers. The economic prosperity meant that we always had food, except for a couple of lengthy strikes in the steel industry. There was never a time when we were at the point of bankruptcy or in need of public assistance. So all things considered, I think my childhood was a happy one.

B: Could you tell me something about your family from your childhood to present? A little bit about your parents, your brothers and sisters, children now.

S: My parents were Al and Anne Shipka. My parents attended Campbell Memorial High School. They married very young.

I have an older brother, Bob, who is in his middle fifties. I had a sister, Patricia, who died at the age of fourteen from trichinosis. I have a younger sister, Kathleen. So there were four children in the family.

My mother was a housewife. She was plagued by mental illness all of her adult life and was institutionalized six times, primarily in Woodside Receiving Hospital. She was a schizophrenic. As a sophomore in high school, I was given permission as a science project to study her particular illness.

My father was an outstanding athlete as a young man. He had to defer his college education when he grew up because his family needed him at home to work. He helped support the family. His younger brother was more or less picked to go to college from his group.

My father eventually became a steelworker and became instrumental in establishing the United Steelworkers of America as the collective bargaining representative of the workers in the Youngstown Sheet and Tube where he worked. He later became a grievance officer and president of local union 2163, United Steelworkers of America, which was very, very large. I believe at its peak, it had more than 8,000 members. He rose from local union president to member of the full time staff of the United Steelworkers of America and during the twenty or more years that he was on staff he did a lot of exciting things.

He formed a political action committee, which brought the labor movement into politics for the first time in this valley. He headed that political action committee for many, many years along with James P. Griffin, who was director of District 26 of the United Steelworkers of America and my father's boss and friend. My father also was in charge of organizing the unorganized for the United Steelworkers of America, District 26. Literally, tens of thousands of the unorganized were brought into the ranks of the organized through his efforts over about a quarter of a century. He also became president of the greater Youngstown AFL-CIO Council and a significant force in the Ohio AFL-CIO. His career--the courage, the conviction that I saw had a significant influence on me.

B: Tell me a little bit about your education and employment experience.

S: I was educated at Sacred Heart Elementary School on Jackson Street on the East Side of Youngstown. Then at Ursuline High School, class of 1961. I finished grade school in 1957 and high school, in 1961. Both of those institutions are Catholic schools and they were controlled in those days, by Catholic Priests and Sisters. Very few of my teachers were lay teachers. That, of course, has changed considerably. There are very few religious left to teach in the Catholic Schools.

My general education was solid, although I was an underachiever. I had a lot of interests outside of school; a strong interest in sports and music. So, especially in high school, I really didn't apply myself much to studies after my sophomore year. I think in my sophomore year, I was first in a class of 336 and I think I finished 80th. Essentially, I went on sabbatical for about two and a half years.

I had a lot of wonderful teachers as I look back. Probably the most important and impressive was Sister Winifred, a slightly built woman, who died about five years ago. She taught senior English and was one of the few teachers in my career who was able to challenge me personally to work for a change. She would make me teach entire classes on topics such as the Renaissance. I look back on her influence as pivotal. My English teachers were especially effective. I think my command of language, especially written, is largely the result of their persistence about spelling and grammar. I came away from my elementary and secondary education, I think, pretty well prepared for later life.

I then went to John Carroll University, where my uncle and my brother had gone prior to me, and after one year, I left John Carroll to enter a Roman Catholic Seminary in Cincinnati, which I stayed at for two years. I spent one year at St. Gregory's Seminary and one year at Mt. St. Mary's Seminary. Collectively, they were called the Athenaeum of Ohio. I decided early on in my seminary experience that the seminary and I were not made for each other but nevertheless, stayed for two long years and then returned to John Carroll University, where I finished my degree in about a year and a half. I finished my course work at Christmas time in 1965 and then got my degree officially in 1966, in June.

I was a better student in college than I was in the latter part of high school, although I still was not a bookworm or a hard worker in my studies. I graduated, I think, fourteenth in a class of four hundred and

some, with a major in Philosophy and minors in English and History, as I recall. My intention was to pursue the law. I was actually in a Pre-law program, but it turned out that the quickest way out of college when I returned from the seminary was a philosophy major because of all the philosophy I had had in the seminary. In the seminary, by the way, all of my philosophy lectures were in Latin and our textbooks were in Latin. In any case, taking the shortcut, I declared a philosophy major and did well enough that a number of my philosophy professors insisted that I take the Graduate Record Exam in philosophy, and not just the Law School Admission Test.

Having been a poor student in high school, I did not qualify for scholarships in college. This required my family to finance my college education. I decided to make graduate school as painless as possible economically for my family. Although I was offered scholarships to Georgetown and Ohio State, they did not carry with them any stipends or any other allowances financially, except tuition. Having done so well on the graduate record exam in philosophy, I applied to a number of philosophy graduate programs and was given very, very attractive offers from a half a dozen schools. Boston College had then instituted a doctorate in philosophy and because I had been to a Jesuit University already, that seemed like the next logical step.

Since the Boston College offer was the best of the lot, I chose to go to Boston College. About this point in my life, I really began to be a lot more serious about my studies than I was when I was younger. I entered Boston College in September of 1966. In exactly three years, August of 1969, I had completed all of the requirements for my doctorate and had been granted my doctorate at Summer Commencement. Although it took me five years to do my undergraduate degree, I did all of my graduate work in three years. Boston College provided a very fine education. It gave me the opportunity to teach every semester, where I learned a lot about teaching and how to deal with college students. I came away from Boston College with a very good feeling about that institution. When I left Boston College, I was married and had a child. That was one of the catalysts for me to finish as quickly as possible. I completed the program first out of my group of twelve in the class. I think the next person in the twelve to finish was two or two and a half years later. It may be that I got the first doctorate in philosophy that Boston College conferred. I'm not sure. I believe that's the case but I'd have to check it. When I left, I applied for jobs. The market was still favorable from a job seeker's point of view. I was able to get four or five

offers, including a post-doctoral appointment at Florida State University.

Since my wife and I were from Youngstown, and our parents were here, and our parents were not in good health, we decided to come back home at least for a while so that our child could meet the grandparents and spend time. As it turned out, although I had offers subsequently, we decided to stay. So I've been at Youngstown now since 1969.

B: Describe for me what the Youngstown Community was like in the late 1950's and throughout the 1960's.

S: Well, through much of the 1960's I was away. So my perceptions of Youngstown were largely dependent on brief visits, letters, phone conversations with folks here. The 1950's, of course, I remember well. I remember Youngstown as a community that had a love for sports, especially at the high school level. I remember steel as the dominant industry so that it seemed as if everyone you knew had some connection with the steel industry. I remember it as a time of heavy pollution. We lived in Campbell, not far from a string of blast furnaces. If you washed your car or your porch on a given day, the next morning you'd go out and you could see a reddish layer had descended upon it. At night, you could drive through Campbell on Wilson Avenue. It was like driving through a thick red fog. This was, of course, the pollution from the steel mills.

I remember that time as a time when Youngstown was in the news frequently, especially in the early 1960's with bombings. We were written up in one magazine as "Murder Town, USA" because of the significant number of bombings by racketeers of racketeers. I remember Youngstown as having Judge Henderson as Mayor for a time and seemingly going through a house cleaning in terms of cleaning out the gambling dens, the so called Jungle Inn, which was out near Applegate Road where it intersects State Route 62 on the East Side of Youngstown. I remember Chief Allen, the chief of police who had developed a nationwide reputation as a rackets buster.

I became embroiled in music through the 1950's and so much of my life surrounded drums and participation in three or four bands. In fact, I was serious about music as a career until my father explained that music would not be my career. He explained that I would be going to college. Of course, I'm deeply in his debt for having assisted me in that decision.

I remember ethnicity as a strong factor in the community. All of the immigrant groups, particularly associ-

ated with churches, retained their customs, the Slavs the Croatian, the Irish and the Germans, the Lithuanians and the Ukrainians, and seemingly dozens of others. My own ethnic heritage was Ukrainian on my mother's side and Lithuanian on my father's. I can remember going with my grandmother to the Ukrainian Church on Rayen Avenue, and often we walked although it was some three and a half or four miles one way. I remember going with my grandfather to the Lithuanian Church on Shehy Street on the East side. Often times, we walked back and forth to mass. So the ethnic parishes were still an important part of the fabric of the community in the 1950's.

B: When did you first become interested in the labor movement?

S: I had followed my father's career. I had spent time with him on the picket lines when there were strikes. I had spoken with him extensively, frequently late at night, when he came from work, about what he was doing, who he was organizing, what strike he was attending to, who the principal players in a particular round of negotiations were, what the significant objectives of organized labor in the country were. As I grew up, labor was as much a part of my household as sports would be in Mickey Mantle's household or Carl Yestremski's. So I was tuned into labor and I guess I was convinced psychologically and philosophically of the legitimacy of organized labor and its mission in America, from the time when I was ten or so.

I had never set for myself, however, any personal mission as an organizer or as a labor leader. In fact, I more or less wanted to avoid the lifestyle of my own father; my father had become a workaholic. He was seldom home; it was meeting after meeting, strike after strike, crisis after crisis. Sometimes there was picket line violence. He was often in the newscast as a heavy. He was arrested more than once. He was sued after a fight that grew out of a disagreement over a labor situation. I simply did not want the turmoil and the stress that I saw surrounding his life. Although I respected labor and I respected the strategy of fighting fire with fire that my father and his contemporaries employed, I didn't really want to emulate him in so far as his lifestyle, his tactics, and such things were concerned.

When I came to Youngstown State, the last thing in my mind was to take up the cause of the faculty. I was basically a shy person, I had just completed a challenging doctoral program in three years, I had a family to take care of, I was anxious to be productive and to earn my tenure, and so I wasn't looking for any type of



personal involvement in labor.

Soon after I was here in 1969, several facts became plain. Two people were fired, Bill Hunt in the Political Science department and Bhagwati Poddar, in the Sociology Department. From what I could gather, both, particularly Bhagwati Poddar, were excellent teachers. Bhagwati Poddar was a published scholar. There did not seem to me to be just cause for their dismissals. As that was happening, more and more comparative information became available which showed the relative condition of this faculty with other faculties in the state system of higher education in Ohio. The data showed that the Youngstown faculty were paid the lowest and were required to work the most. We taught more hours, more classes than did any of the other faculties with the possible exception of Central State. We had lower salaries than any of the other faculties by rank and as a general average than did any of the other faculties with the possible exception of Central State.

Now with all of that, two other things became apparent. One is that the faculty had very little say so about the governance of the institution. We had no significant input into the formation of academic policy. There was no senate at the time. There was just talk about forming one. When it was formed, eventually it was dominated by administrators. Over half the members were administrators and the president of the university sat as president of the senate, which created a strong disincentive for anyone to speak up and raise any issues that would antagonize the president. Beyond that, from 1969 to 1971, YSU experienced a decline in enrollment. The president at the time, Albert Pugsley, took this as a mandate to retrench. So, despite the fact that two hundred plus new faculty had just come on board, he then scared the devil out of us by calling a general faculty meeting and announcing that the enrollment picture was bleak and that he contemplated retrenchment. At this time, half or more of the instruction at YSU was done by limited service faculty. So those of us who were in the full time faculty wondered why any full time faculty should have to be laid off if indeed there was a need for layoffs. We were skeptical as to whether there was a need for layoffs. So the threat of losing our jobs, the low pay, the lack of participation in governance, heavy works loads, the apparently unjust and illegitimate firings, all of this converged to convince me that there was a need for this faculty to consolidate, to collaborate, to organize.

A key player in all this was Bhagwati Poddar. He convinced me that I personally had to take up the

challenge of organizing the faculty. He convinced me that I had the mix of talents and skills to take on the task and that I should not simply sit on the sidelines and watch history, that I should be a maker of it. So in early 1970, I made a personal decision that I would put my job on the line and throw myself into the movement to try to organize our faculty, to secure collective bargaining rights and eventually a labor agreement to cover the faculty.

The organizing committee which I chaired, included many people who are still here at the university. We interviewed prospective bargaining agents, the National Education Association, the Teamsters, the American Federation of Teachers, the American Association of University Professors, the Service Employees Union, and perhaps one or two others. Eventually we settled on the National Education Association and its state affiliate, the Ohio Education Association as the best choice, given our situation. So we formed a chapter of the NEA-OEA here on campus in Spring of 1970.

I became editor of its newsletter and one of its officers, and then within a year, I was president of the organization, and headed up the drive to persuade the Board of Trustees to grant us an election or outright recognition as a bargaining agent for the faculty. So my involvement started in early 1970 heavily and continued heavily until 1986 when I left the full time faculty to take the position of chair of the department of Philosophy and Religious studies.

B: You made reference to some recollections of strikes in your childhood. Which strikes stand out in your mind the most? What about them?

S: I believe there was a strike in 1959 which was a very very long strike in the steel industry. The fight may have been for pensions but I'm not certain of that. It seemed to me that the situation got desperate for the typical steelworker. There simply were not strike benefits to make it possible to sustain the lifestyle that people were accustomed to. Virtually everyone had to turn to credit--extensive, heavy credit to make ends meet. Fortunately, many of the store owners, shopkeepers, market owners permitted people to draw on credit. I remember people going to work doing things that they normally would not do. Steel workers cutting grass, painting, doing all sorts of odd jobs, whatever was available to try to earn extra income.

Seems to me that the president of the steelworkers at the time was David McDonald. I remember a great deal of bitterness among the people that I heard from friends of my father's, who felt that his personal

behavior during the strike was unfortunate. He was written about as being on the night club circuit in New York City, enjoying himself in the presence of Zsa Zsa Gabor and other luminaries. This hardly seemed to send the right message to the steelworkers, many of whom were struggling to make ends meet to keep their families going, and to avoid foreclosure of their mortgages and repossession of their cars and so forth. I remember that strike.

I remember a strike at WKBN radio and TV on the South Side of Youngstown. NABET, one of the unions representing employees there, had gone on strike and sought the assistance of the Greater Youngstown AFL-CIO council which my father chaired. I remember that the sheriff had been called to the picket line. His name was Paul Langley. He had been supported by labor and my father persuaded him to leave, at least to remove himself from the immediate vicinity of the picket line. Unfortunately, picket line violence ensued. I had been told that there was a one to one confrontation between my father and Mr. Warren P. Williamson, the owner of the station. My father was a man about six feet two, two hundred eighty pounds, a strong strapping bull of a man and Mr. Williamson was no match. So he suffered injuries from that. Stu Erwin, one of the announcers and TV personalities was also injured. I remember that strike.

The third strike I remember well was the strike at the Vindicator. The Vindicator staff went on strike, I believe, in 1963. It could have started in 1962. Until that time, it was the longest strike in North American newspaper history. There, again, the newspaper guild which represented most of the employees, and the other unions, sought the assistance of the Greater Youngstown AFL-CIO, which my father headed. So as time passed, my father became a sort of chief architect of the strike strategy. An unfortunate part of the strike was that several Vindicator trucks were torched.

One of the most remarkable parts of the strike was that the strikers established their own competitor newspaper called the Steel Valley News. They were able to persuade investors to buy a press and to take a risk on a strike newspaper. This strike newspaper became so successful, that by the time the strike was over, the circulation of this paper was very high, many of the advertisers had switched from the Vindicator to the Steel Valley News, and most of the workers on the paper were earning three and four times what they had earned at the Vindicator for the simple reason that everyone was paid the same wage. So copy people and delivery people got paid the same wages as editors.

As a result of the success of the Steel Valley News during the strike, there was an effort to make the paper a permanent part of the community, a permanent second paper that would be a competitor to the Vindicator. An international staff representative of the newspaper guild Robert Brunner and the president of the Newspaper guild Fred Carney were selected to be the two people that would head up the new paper. This newspaper guild staff rep from Boston, as I recall, was to leave his post, at least temporarily, as a staff person and go on full time in the new paper.

As I understand it from my father, the whole plan broke down when these two principals made what the investors saw as outlandish demands for salary and perks in the first few years. The investors felt that everyone had to tighten his or her belt for awhile until the paper was stable. But these two fellows felt that they were taking a significant loss in leaving their positions, loss in money, certainly a loss in security, and taking great risk. They demanded substantial salaries. The principals investing in the Steel Valley News were not prepared to grant that and the entire scheme fell apart. So, I remember that strike well.

I remember the strikers getting together at a union hall up on Belmont Avenue for Thanksgiving and for Christmas with their families. Turkeys and hams were handed out.

I remember the problem which my father had trying to figure out what to do with all of the profits of the paper--how they would be used so that there wasn't suspicion cast upon the leaders.

B: What things do you think most affected labor in the 1960's? What issues?

S: Do you speak about labor in our region or nationally?

B: In our region.

S: I think the biggest problem that this community had was lack of diversification. We were a one industry town. The steel industry wanted it that way. They wanted a monopoly on the labor. They did not want competitor organizations draining away the labor and driving up wages. At the same time that we were a one industry town, we were a one industry town where that industry was failing to modernize. We would, of course, reap the dividends of that negligence later on.

I remember the 1960s as a time when labor was still strong. Jim Griffin, Director of District 26, United Steelworkers of America, was a person who was respected

at the highest levels of industry. He was a person who could sit down with leading industrialists and work out a deal. When GF Business equipment or Commercial Shearing had a strike or a near strike, Jim Griffin could sit down with the principals and work out a settlement.

It was a time when labor asserted itself in the community in the United Way. United Way had collected contributions via dues deductions from working men and women. But labor had never been given any official role in boards and committees of the United Way. So labor took the posture that the price of contributions was participation, and labor became widely represented in the various layers of committees and boards in the United Way agencies.

I think, as I look back on that era, that we've gone from a time when labor was, perhaps, a dominant, powerful, institution in the community to where it seems now almost docile and a minor player in economic affairs of the community. Steelworkers were, by far, the largest in numbers and the largest in influence and today, that certainly wouldn't be the case. The auto workers, the educators, or other groups would certainly take precedence over the steelworkers. Even building trades would probably take precedence over the steelworkers.

B: What caused the shut down of Youngstown Sheet and Tube?

S: I don't think there is any one single factor. Many will say the wages were too high. That may be the case but the economists I've talked to don't seem to feel as though that was a significant contributing factor.

Folks that I've talked to, inside the steel industry and outside the steel industry, believe that the Sheet and Tube did not modernize sufficiently. I think that has to be cited as a major contributing factor to its demise. They say labor-management relations weren't what they should have been and that's probably true, although they were not catastrophic. As you got in to the 1960's and later on the 1970's, labor relations improved a lot. For instance, on environmental issues, whether you agree with it or not, labor and management worked in close collaboration to try to protect the steel industry against the Environmental Protection Agency, and other agencies of government, wanting to clean up the Mahoning River.

If I could cite a single factor that I consider to be the main reason for the demise of the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company, it would be the decision of the stockholders of the company to sell their stock to the Lykes corporation. I believe that if the Sheet and

Tube had stayed a locally owned company, and not sold out to Lykes, that it could have taken steps to modernize, to streamline itself, and to remain competitive on a national and international steel market. I can remember stockholders convening and calling press conferences and urging their fellow stockholders not to agree to the bid, not to agree to sell. They predicted quite plainly and clearly that if they did sell, that we would probably lose this company.

I think one of the reasons that Sheet and Tube was a real catch for the Lykes Steamship Company was that it had tremendous cash assets. I don't know exactly how many millions in cash assets it had, but going way back, to say 1950, I can remember a figure of 26 million dollars in cash assets, over and above all the mines that it owned, all of the ore ships, all of the coal companies and so on. The Youngstown Sheet and Tube company, through its history, was one of the most solvent companies in this part of the country. What had happened, as I understand it was that a struggling steamship company, struggling financially, coveted the assets, cash and otherwise, of the Sheet and Tube. There was a tremendous attraction. So Lykes put together an offer that people just couldn't resist. An offer that was probably paid off out of the assets of the company that was taken over. So, if I have to say one factor, I think it would be the foolish, misguided decision of the principal stockholders who lived in our area to sell their stock.

B: Do you think there is anything the unions in the area could have done to prevent the collapse of Sheet and Tube?

S: It's difficult to say. Labor in our area had never proclaimed interest in a worker-owned experiment, so far as I recall, during the 1940's or 1950's or 1960's. So I'm not optimistic that a worker owned proposal would have been floated. One thing I'm convinced of is that when the decision was made to close down the Sheet and Tube, we did not any longer have competent, aggressive, respected leadership in District 26. We had a decent fellow, Frank Lesiganich, who had won not because he was Frank Lesiganich, but because he was in the right place at the right time. There was a strong vote to oust Jim Griffin rather than to elect Frank Lesiganich.

Say what you will about Jim Griffin, and about my father--they were doers. They were tremendously confident in their ability to solve problems and to achieve goals. Had they been active in the steel industry at that time, had they still been in their positions, healthy, able to respond, I'm sure that a strenuous

effort would have been mounted to try to salvage the company. My father had a flare for the dramatic. He died in 1975 and the shutdown came later. I can easily visualize my father loading up a couple of hundred buses with steelworkers, transporting them to New Orleans and occupying the headquarters of the Lykes Corporation, carrying out public demonstrations for weeks and months if necessary, to bring public attention to the problem. Perhaps those types of theatrical maneuvers would not have worked. The only thing I'm saying is that I believe that the old leadership, more aggressive, more ambitious, more confident, more risk-taking, would have tried much more enthusiastically than was the case.

B: Do you think the false, economic stimulus of the Vietnam War put into the country's economy had an impact of prolonging the inevitable in Youngstown?

S: I think you raise a good point. I was born in 1943 and so I did not observe the steel industry in the First World War. I did not observe it in the Second World War. I do recall the Korean War. I am told by friends of mine, both in labor and in management, and from the rank and file that war was a mixed blessing because the government operated on a cost plus arrangement with the steel industries. They, Youngstown Sheet & Tube, Republic, U.S. Steel, as I understand, had virtually carte blanche. They could charge whatever they damn well pleased for their steel during the war and the government would pay it. This encouraged bad management practices.

One friend of mine in labor says it encouraged feather-bedding. He cited the names of managers that actually hired on extra workers that were not needed to inflate the cost of the production of the steel. So, in a way, it was not just Vietnam that contributed a false sense of security to our community. I think it was all the wars. We got lazy and we got fat through the wars. We were being paid for our steel whether it was done through state of the art technology or the old fashioned steel production methods. So, although war put people to work, brought income to families, reduced unemployment levels, it still was as much a curse as it was a blessing in terms of the long term survivability of our steel industry.

B: I was talking to Ed Mann today. I interviewed him earlier. He was active in the anti-war movement. Was there any link between labor and the anti-war movement in this community?

S: I came here in 1969 out of graduate school, returning

to the community after a hiatus of about eight years. During the 1961 to 1969 period, I had been back only briefly for summers to work or for short visits from college or seminary. So I don't want to speak to you much about the early 1960's and the very early stages of the Vietnam War. When I came back in 1969, there was a significant show of anti-war sentiment from organized labor here. I can remember going to the October Moratorium in 1969. Dr. Budge from English and I from Philosophy and Religion were the chaperones for groups of Youngstown people, mainly students at YSU, who went to participate in the Moratorium in October via chartered buses. It seems to me that the cost of those buses was picked up by organized labor. I can remember as the seventies wore on, that significant numbers of labor leaders, my father included, took more and more active and vocal opposition to the war. I do not remember a national posture among labor leaders of open opposition. I did not see that. But at least in this valley, the people that I knew in labor were at the rallies. They called the talk shows, and many of them invested their money to send their members to rallies or demonstrations.

B: What do you think were the most noteworthy tactics labor used to achieve its goals?

S: You mean here in Youngstown?

B: Here in Youngstown, probably Northeastern Ohio would be a...

S: Well, first and foremost, collective bargaining. Negotiating master agreements to cover entire industries or to cover occupational groups or to cover people employed by a single employer. Collective bargaining, first and foremost. Then I think political action. Attending to the interests of working men and women in the legislatures. Seeking to influence votes. Proposing legislation. Countering right to work legislation. Establishing the minimum wage, establishing the eight hour work day. Establishing protection for pensions. Doing significant work in the area of public universal education. You can go on and on with civil rights, later on, affirmative action.

I think political action has been, along with collective bargaining, the main successful tactic that labor has used to achieve its ends. Where labor has failed is in educating its own constituencies. I think there has been a significant failure among labor organizations of all types to inculcate in their members an understanding of the rationale of unions, goals of unions, the sacrifices required to build strong unions, and all the rest that goes along with organizations and



their persistence through time. There must be education within an organization. Education, by labor of labor, was done poorly.

B: Do you think there was much corruption in the unions in the 1960s or in the 1970s at the national level? Do you think it was more in the bureaucracy or at the grass roots level?

S: Wherever you have human beings, you are going to have at least a little corruption. That's true in banking, it's true in education, it's true in government, it's true in labor. So I'm sure every union, sooner or later, will have a degree of corruption. In a sense, organizations, labor included, are like people. You've got good and bad and in between ones. Probably, at the national level, the one union that stands out that's historically and consistently as the most corrupt would be the teamsters, principally because of their ties with organized crime.

The teamsters have not been a democratic organization; it is controlled from the top down, not bottom up. They have been an organization that has slept with the major figures in organized crime. Jimmy Hoffa represents the epitome of all of that. Once you get past that, I think it's a spotty issue. It's hard to indict entire unions after you leave the Teamsters. Even within the teamsters, there are many fine locals and many fine labor leaders and certainly tens and tens of thousands of fine persons who are members. I don't think you find any other national union or international union that you could say is corrupt on a scale as the Teamsters.

B: Would there be anything you like to add at this time?

S: Only that as I look back on the history of the labor movement on this campus, I am disappointed that it has received so little attention. I hope that in the next ten to twenty years serious students of labor take time to research the labor movement on this campus because people who participated first-hand in it are still alive and are an important source of information and opinion about the developments. This campus was the first campus among the state system to unionize. It was followed by Kent and the University of Cincinnati. It was the pioneer and it is now organized beyond the faculty to the classified staff, to the professional non-teaching staff, and to the police officers. So everyone who is legally organizable under state law is organized.

One other interesting facet of this movement is that the Youngstown faculty got itself organized without the

benefit of a law that entitled the workers to a union, thanks to the creativity, the courage, the skill of the dozen or so leaders that were the nucleus of the faculty union from 1970 to the middle and late 1970s. So, I think there is a lot for labor to learn, there is a lot for people to learn about labor from studying the movement on this campus, and I'm amazed that of all the students that come through here, so few seem to be anxious or willing to study the labor movement on this particular campus.

Overlooking the labor movement on this campus is like overlooking a locale where the steel industry first organized an entire region. We were the first higher education union in the state of Ohio with the exception of Ashland College that was a private institution that had an entitlement to unionize under the law. The Ashland faculty soon gave up on its union and dismantled it. So I guess what I am saying is that one thing I hope in the next ten to twenty years is that the masters level students here or elsewhere take up the study of the development of the labor movement on this campus.

B: Well, thank you very much.

S: You're quite welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW