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**LANE KIRKLAND**

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## INTERVIEW

*Shea: Good afternoon. Today is November 13, 1996, and I am here with Don Kienzle at the George Meany Labor Studies Center to interview my old friend and the former President of the AFL-CIO, Lane Kirkland, who has had a 48 year relationship with the AFL and the AFL-CIO. He is originally from Camden, South Carolina, and was an active member of the [International Organization of] Masters, Mates, and Pilots, and was on the Murmansk route during World War II. Good afternoon, Lane.*

KIRKLAND: Good afternoon.

*Kienzle: Shall we start with something about your personal background, how you got involved in the AFL and the extent of your international activities early on?*

KIRKLAND: Do you have questions or do you just want me to. . .

*Kienzle: Yes, would tell us where you were born and about your education?*

KIRKLAND: I was born in Camden, South Carolina, and I grew up in the South. In 1940 I went to sea in the Merchant Marine as a deck cadet. I was in training to become a ship's mate in a program that was part of the New Deal. Under the Merchant Marine Act of 1936, a program for training ships officers was established and candidates for appointment as cadets were chosen by a national exam, which I took. I was selected, went to cadet training preliminary school in Algiers, Louisiana, and shipped out as a deck cadet on a ship called the "Liberator" operated by Lytton Brothers Steamship Company and that was my beginnings as a seafarer.

I sailed in various capacities. After completing my time in training, the war came and the training time was reduced. I became a third mate, second mate, then chief mate on various ships. I was on about seven different ships, and I came ashore-temporarily I thought at the time-in late 1946. I took a job in Washington at the Naval Hydrographic Office as a nautical scientist. I joined the union, the Masters, Mates, and Pilots Union, in 1942, when I got my first license as a third mate, and I continued to hold membership in that organization when I came ashore. I decided to finish my formal education, and at Georgetown University in the School of Foreign Service, there was a major in international shipping, which I entered, primarily because I thought it might help me keep a job as a ship's captain after the war. I could pay for it by working all day at the Naval Hydrographic Office and go to school at night.

I got into full time work in the AFL more or less by accident. Bill Green came one night to speak to a class that I was a member of at Georgetown, and I told him that I was the only union member that he would find there. He told me to come by and see him after I

graduated, and I did, and he offered me a job on the staff, and I thought I would try it for a little while, and I have been there ever since. I found a home.

*Kienzle: Jim, were you a second dues paying union member at Georgetown?*

*Shea: Yes, I think I was. Lane, when you were sailing, in addition to the Soviet Union and the Murmansk route, what other countries did you visit?*

KIRKLAND: Oh, I did time on different ships on the North Atlantic on convoy runs, and then I was in the Mediterranean campaign, the Sicilian invasion shuttling ammunition between North Africa and Sicily and Italy. And I was on a couple of South American runs. At Guadalcanal, I was the third mate on a ship called the "Jean Lykes," which took a field hospital unit to Guadalcanal sometime in 1943. At the end of the war I was the chief officer of a ship called the "Contest" in the Pacific, a refrigerated cargo ship. We were following the Third Fleet; wherever it was, we were there issuing stores to the ships in the Third Fleet. We bounced around the Pacific from places like Ulithi, Eniwetok, Leyte Gulf, Iwo Jima, the Marianas, and at the end of that trip, which was a long one, I took my master's license exam, and then decided to finish school. I had heard of an opening at the Naval Hydrographic Office in Washington, and I combined that job with going to school at night. My notion at that time was to finish college, get my degree, and go back to sea.

*Shea: Was there any type of training while you were on board? Something like apprenticeship training?*

KIRKLAND: Yes, when I was a deck cadet, I was an apprentice, in effect, preparing to qualify as a ship's officer

*Kienzle: Did you qualify for the G.I. Bill?*

KIRKLAND: No, people in the Merchant Marine had no benefits under the G.I. Bill whatever. We were civilians, and we were pretty much on our own.

*Kienzle: When you first went to work for the AFL-CIO, did you have. . .*

KIRKLAND: I did *not* go to work for the AFL-CIO. I went to work *for the AFL*.

*Kienzle: I'm sorry. The AFL. Did you have any international responsibilities in the early years? Did you do any research which dealt with the International Labor Organization (ILO) or [other international subjects]?*

KIRKLAND: Oh, in the early years I did. I worked with Frank Fenton, who was the Worker's Delegate to the ILO and then with Phil Delaney, who succeeded him, when Frank Fenton died. I worked a good deal with Phil Delaney, helping him prepare some of his interventions at the ILO particularly. I recall sometime during that period there was a great controversy over the so-called "Bricker Amendment," a campaign primarily initiated by the

U.S. Chamber of Commerce against what they called "legislation by treaty," targeting particularly the conventions of the ILO. Senator Bricker was the instrument through which a campaign was started to amend the Constitution to make it impossible to ratify treaties that affected domestic law. This campaign was primarily aimed at the worker rights and worker standards provisions of the ILO conventions [and caused] quite a controversy at the time. I think it was ultimately resolved during the Eisenhower Administration by a tacit agreement of the Eisenhower State Department not to submit any ILO treaties to the Senate for ratification.

*Kienzle: This lasted up until the end of the Reagan Administration, as I recall.*

KIRKLAND: Yes, that's right, when we finally broke the log jam and began to get a few conventions approved, but in order to do that, we had to clear them through an inter-Cabinet committee chaired by the Secretary of Labor and including representatives of the various cabinet departments as well as representatives of the AFL-CIO and the Chamber of Commerce.

*Shea: Was Jim Mitchell the Secretary of Labor at that time?*

KIRKLAND: During the Eisenhower period? Yes.

*Shea: And of course Marty Durkin prior to Mitchell.*

KIRKLAND: Yes.

*Shea: Do you recall contacts with the early labor attachés?*

KIRKLAND: Yes, in the course of time, I guess I knew most of them. I remember Dale Good, Dan Horowitz, and Tom Lane.

*Shea: Sam Berger?*

KIRKLAND: Yes, I met Sam Berger, but I didn't know Sam very well.

*Shea: Ben Stephansky?*

KIRKLAND: Yes, I knew Ben.

*Shea: Lane, could you tell us what was the role to the AFL and later the AFL-CIO in selecting labor attachés?*

KIRKLAND: Well, as I recall, I think in the early days [of the labor attaché program], it was more significant than it is today. In the 1940s and 1950s, I think the AFL particularly had a key role in proposing candidates for those assignments.

*Shea: Yes, actually I was one of them.*

*Kienzle: Did the AFL ever have a veto power over particular candidates for labor positions overseas?*

KIRKLAND: I don't know whether you would call it that, but I think its opinion weighed quite heavily.

*Shea: [Did you have contacts with] the people who were in the Paris Office of the Mutual Security [Agency] like Bois Shishkin?*

KIRKLAND: Yes, when the Marshall Plan was put in effect, there was a Labor Office of the Marshall Plan. As I recall, Boris Shishkin was over there for the Marshall Plan for a time and then Nelson Cruikshank. We had an office in Paris almost immediately following the liberation of Paris, and it has been there ever since. The European office of the AFL and the AFL-CIO was represented for many years by Irving Brown. He was the European Representative. The function of the office was primarily to work with democratic trade union movements in Europe.

*Kienzle: What was Irving Brown's relationship with the leadership back here at the AFL and later the AFL-CIO?*

KIRKLAND: Irving originally went over as a representative of the Free Trade Union Committee, which was a body formed in the 1930s, as I recall, following the rise of Hitler and Mussolini. It was the instrument through which we carried out some anti-Nazi activities. It was formed, as I recall, by George Meany, David Dubinsky, Matty Woll. . .

*Shea: And Luigi Antonini.*

KIRKLAND: Luigi was involved. He was out of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. He was an Italian.

*Shea: Serafino Romauldi was active, too. Wasn't he?*

KIRKLAND: Serafino Romauldi was and he became the Latin American Representative of the AFL. Andy McClellan was the CIO Latin American Representative and later carried out the same role for the AFL-CIO.

*Kienzle: Do you want to describe some of Irving Brown's accomplishments during that early period after World War II and the policy of the AFL?*

KIRKLAND: The policy of the AFL following the war basically was to help the restoration of democratic trade union centers in Europe. We worked in Germany to revive the German trade union movement along democratic lines. We had representatives in the Military

Government. I think that Joe Keenan was attached to the Military Government at that time and was active. Then we had Henry Rutz.

*Shea: Henry Rutz I remember very well. He was of German origin from Milwaukee.*

KIRKLAND: Yes, that's right. And Irving [Brown] was active. We helped to rebuild what became the Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB) [German Trade Union Federation], mainly around survivors of concentration camps, who had a lot of conflicts with some people in the Military Government about the way in which the trade union movement should be reconstituted. There were those who wanted to confine it to local plant level trade union activity, and we were pushing and were instrumental, I think, in helping to recreate a national trade union center, the DGB.

Irving was also active in the struggle in France, when the leading trade union federation, the CGT [Confédération Générale du Travail], was taken over by Stalinists. He worked with Leon Jouhaux, who had been displaced as the head of the CGT, to form a new movement called the Force Ouvrière around Jouhaux. We helped Force Ouvrière and also worked to assure the timely delivery of cargoes of aid and relief to Europe under the Marshall Plan.

During those post-war years we were also engaged in Italy with the democratic sector of the trade union movements in the struggle there.

*Shea: [Guilio] Pastore was there.*

KIRKLAND: Yes. Pastore.

*Kienzle: Were you personally involved at that time in any of the backstopping of those activities? Up to, say, around 1955?*

KIRKLAND: Well, after Frank Fenton's death, Phil Delaney became the International Representative of the AFL. That was sort of a one man job. He was also the Workers' Delegate to the International Labor Organization (ILO). I worked with Phil on ILO matters. My first direct involvement in [international labor] affairs was when I was assigned by George Meany immediately following the merger to represent the AFL-CIO at a meeting of the International Maritime Preparatory Committee that worked on the agenda prior to an ILO conference on maritime affairs. At that time every few years the annual Conference of the ILO would concentrate on maritime issues. That was preceded by a preparatory committee meeting, and I was the AFL-CIO's delegate to a Maritime Preparatory Conference in London in, I think, 1956.

*Kienzle: What were the arrangements for coordinating with the U.S. Government at that time? Did you work closely with the State Department or with labor attachés in preparing for something like that Maritime Conference?*

KIRKLAND: Well, we worked with them of course in the ILO, which is a tripartite body including representatives of business as well as government. Phil, certainly, as the Workers' Delegate, had contacts with the Labor Department and the State Department. As I recall, he worked closely with a fellow in the Labor Department called Ned Persons.

*Shea: Ned Persons and Jim Taylor.*

KIRKLAND: Yes. I forget who the State Department people were that he was in contact with then.

*Shea: Was it Dan Gooft?*

KIRKLAND: It could well have been. Yes, that name rings a bell.

*Shea: Phil was originally from the Molders Union out of the Anacostia Naval Yard.*

KIRKLAND: Yes, he was a molder.

*Shea: Then you had Mike Ross from the CIO side.*

KIRKLAND: Yes, I knew Mike very well. Mike came over with the merger and was the Director of the AFL-CIO Department of International Affairs until his death. Mike was quite a fellow. I used to have a running chess game with Mike. Mike was a great chess player.

*Shea: Wasn't he a native of Scotland? Maybe I'm wrong.*

KIRKLAND: I don't know if he was a Scot. He was certainly from the United Kingdom.

*Kienzle: Could you describe his role in international affairs for the AFL-CIO?*

KIRKLAND: He was the Director of the Department.

*Kienzle: Was he interested in any certain areas of the world or promoting any special kind of agenda?*

KIRKLAND: The International Department grew following the merger as these various "dangling participles" were absorbed within the purview of the Department and supplanted in effect the Free Trade Union Committee. Irving [Brown] in Paris became the European Representative reporting through the International Department. Harry Goldberg, Dick Deverall in Japan, Henry Rutz, and . . .

*Shea: Serafino Romauldi*

KIRKLAND: Serafino and Andy McClellan in Latin America. So it became more like the kind of Department [of International Affairs] that we have today. Also when Phil Delaney left the Federation and went to work for the Operating Engineers, the ILO Workers' Delegate became Rudy Faupl, who was a Machinist. He was not on the direct AFL-CIO payroll, but he was the Workers' Delegate and of course reported in that capacity to the International Department and to George Meany as President. Rudy was there for a few years.

*Shea: Rudy was from Wisconsin.*

KIRKLAND: Rudy was from Wisconsin, yes.

*Kienzle: When did Phil Delaney become the S/IL at the State Department and what impact did that have on the operational procedures?*

KIRKLAND: I can't remember the dates, times, and places, but I know he did that.

*Shea: As I recall, he went to work at State around 1960 or so.*

*Kienzle: So that was a little later then.*

KIRKLAND: Before that he had moved from the Federation to the Operating Engineers as the Director of Organization. He was there for a time, then went into the State Department.

*Shea: Do you recall John Henning from California?*

KIRKLAND: Yes, he was on the staff of the California state fed. I think he was the research director, and he was appointed Ambassador to New Zealand and served in that capacity. Then he came back and headed the California state fed.

*Shea: At one time he was an Assistant Secretary of Labor too.*

KIRKLAND: He was Under Secretary of Labor under Bill Wirtz during the Kennedy and then the Johnson administrations, yes.

*Kienzle: I think George Weaver was the Assistant Secretary for International Labor Affairs about that time.*

KIRKLAND: George L.P. Weaver

*Kienzle: That was about the same time that Phil Delaney was the S/IL, although I think Delaney spent a year or two down at the Labor Department before he became the S/IL.*

KIRKLAND: My memory is a little hazy about that. I know that took place but I cannot [put dates on it].

*Kienzle: Can you characterize the relationship of the AFL-CIO [and the U.S. Government on international labor issues] after Weaver and Delaney became government officials? Did [their presence inside the government] facilitate the international operations of the AFL-CIO?*

KIRKLAND: You have to be more precise.

*Kienzle: Did it help the AFL-CIO in its dealings with the ILO and with other international labor movements? For instance, the ICFTU was a major issue at that time-or was that before you focused on the international side?*

KIRKLAND: No, I am familiar with the formation of the ICFTU. Yes.

*Kienzle: No, I don't mean that, but later on you took a day to day operational role in some of these [international issues].*

KIRKLAND: Yes, but you were talking about Phil Delaney and George Weaver.

*Kienzle: Yes, we were talking about the early 1960s and [I was wondering] whether you were operationally involved when Weaver and Delaney were active.*

KIRKLAND: I began going to the ILO each year, I think, back in 1958. 1958 was a maritime conference of the ILO and I sent over for that. I fell into that assignment on maritime affairs because following merger we had two primary maritime unions aside from the Officers, Mates and the Engineers. We had the SIU [Seafarers International Union] and the NMU [National Maritime Union] and they were rather bitter enemies.

*Shea: That was Joe Curran . . .*

KIRKLAND: That was during Joe Curran and Paul Hall's regime. Rather than choose between them on these assignments on maritime affairs to the International Maritime Consultative Organization and to the ILO maritime congresses, George Meany resolved it by naming me with advisors from each of those unions. I recall at the ILO Maritime Conference I was a delegate and I had advisors, one from the NMU named Blackie McDougal and one from the SIU, Whitey Hawke. We got along beautifully.

After 1958 I think I went to most of the ILO [annual conferences] except for that two year hiatus when I left the AFL-CIO and worked for the Operating Engineers as Research and Education Director during the time that Phil Delaney was over there.

*Shea: Would you care to comment on George Meany's involvement in international labor affairs?*

KIRKLAND: Well, George was of course a key player in the Free Trade Union Committee in New York, and when he became Secretary Treasurer of the AFL, he developed and maintained a strong interest in international activities. It has been speculated that that may have been because that was about all that William Green would allow him to do at the time. But I think rather it was because of his own keen interest that he had developed before that in the Free Trade Union Committee. He maintained that interest. He was very active of course in the formation of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and used to spend practically every summer in Europe attending meetings of the ICFTU and the ILO and visiting different trade union federations in Europe. I became his chief assistant in 1960. He would go over by ship and on his way back, I would go up to New York and get on the pilot boat and meet the steamer out where it picked up the pilot. I would board the ship and sail into New York harbor with him and fill him in on all that had transpired during his absence and bring him various documents and prepare him for his encounters with the press when he hit port.

*Shea: Talking about George Meany, would you attribute his anti-Communism to his contacts with Lovestone? It was my feeling-and perhaps I'm wrong-he was a staunch anti-Communist from his early days as a trade unionist.*

KIRKLAND: I don't think he was just anti-Communist. He was pro-democratic. George used to say that the basic function of a trade union was to see that the big guys didn't kick the little guys around. He was anti-fascist, anti-Nazi, and anti-totalitarian. He was just as much against Franco and Peron and Mussolini as he was against Stalin.

*Shea: Absolutely. And when the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) was formed, the AFL refused to go along.*

KIRKLAND: Yes, he knew and anticipated that it would become a tool of the Communists and he was right. The CIO went into it, and that was a basic error.

*Shea: Along with the British Trade Union Congress [TUC].*

KIRKLAND: Yes, and they came to realize that they were wrong when the takeover by the Soviets became too clear to evade.

*Shea: First in Czechoslovakia and . . .*

KIRKLAND: Oh, it was before that. The character of the WFTU as a Soviet front became apparent early on.

*Shea: As early as 1944?*

KIRKLAND: Yes.

*Kienzle: Did George Meany play the primary role during that period in directing international policy towards the WFTU? Did William Green involve himself in the issues at that time?*

KIRKLAND: I think Bill Green did, yes. There was no difference of opinion between them about it.

*Kienzle: So there was solid support for the . . .*

KIRKLAND: There was a combination of suspicions about the character of the WFTU and also the state of affairs between the AFL and the CIO at the time.

*Kienzle: Do you want to describe some of the differences in attitude on the international front, say towards the WFTU?*

KIRKLAND: The differences between whom?

*Kienzle: Between the CIO on the one hand and the AFL on the other, and how those differences played out in the international sphere.*

KIRKLAND: Well, the WFTU episode typified the big difference, and I think that really began to change when the CIO purged the Stalinist-controlled unions in the CIO. When was it? In the late 1940s.

*Shea: 1947*

KIRKLAND: 1947 or so, yes.

*Shea: They expelled about a third of their unions.*

KIRKLAND: And the touchstone issue in that move was the issue of the Marshall Plan. The Communist-controlled unions opposed the Marshall Plan.

*Shea: People like Harry Bridges and Ben Gould. How about the role of people like Bill Doherty, Senior, in international activities or Joe Beirne of the Communications Workers of America [CWA] and David Dubinsky [of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union]?*

KIRKLAND: The most significant thing, as I recall, about Joe Beirne was his role in the creation of the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD). I think that Joe was the moving party in that. He persuaded Meany to support it and advocate it, and it marked a really *important new initiative* by the Federation. It really led to the development of the evolution of a universal foreign service of labor representatives around the world. The inception of AIFLD was the Kennedy Administration's initiative, the Alliance for

Progress, which involved an expansion of AID activities in Latin America. (Telephone interruption.)

*Kienzle: You were discussing the origin of AIFLD and the view from the top of AIFLD and its purposes.*

KIRKLAND: Well, the argument was made during the Alliance for Progress that some of the assistance ought to go to real people and not just to the tinhorns in governments in Latin America. So the AIFLD was developed as a device for channeling some of the assistance funding to working people. It was regarded at the time as politic to create AIFLD as a labor-management operation, so initially it had on its board representatives of management as well as of labor, although it is fair to say that it was largely dominated by labor. That continued until I became President when I fired the management people.

*Shea: That would have been J. Peter Grace; wouldn't it?*

KIRKLAND: Peter Grace, yes.

*Shea: And Serafino Romauldi was the first director.*

*Kienzle: Would you like to expand on the reasons why management people were fired?*

KIRKLAND: Well, I think it became a greater liability than an asset. It was never much of an asset. It was a substantial liability and it exposed us to some criticism for having a labor assistance program that included management people. That issue became particularly acute when Chile was taken over by Pinochet. Peter Grace maintained a relationship with Pinochet, and I found that intolerable, so shortly after I became President, I had a lunch meeting in New York with Peter Grace, and I told him he was fired. He took it in good grace.

*Kienzle: Now the other three institutes were without management participation.*

KIRKLAND: That's right

*Kienzle: But modeled basically on the same concept.*

KIRKLAND: Modeled basically on the same concept, and the concept was a good one. The AIFLD began finding and training suitable people who could be counted on to help promote the development of independent democratic trade unions in Latin American countries. AIFLD opened country program offices in different parts of Central and South America and began a training program where we brought people up to a school in Front Royal, [Virginia], and taught them to do more training in their respective countries in Latin America. AIFLD also worked in the area of creating cooperative labor banks and housing projects and had what we called an impact program where we gave small grants and loans to local groups to rebuild school houses or develop some infrastructure in their countries.

*Shea: It also had some housing programs too.*

KIRKLAND: We had a major housing program in Mexico, I remember, and one, I think, in Venezuela.

*Shea: And in Brazil and Argentina too. Bill Doherty, Sr., and the Letter Carriers were also very active in the program.*

KIRKLAND: Yes.

*Kienzle: I was wondering about the management of the institutes and how the International Department fit into the chain of command.*

KIRKLAND: Well, the institutes were set up as independent bodies. A few years later the example of AIFLD was replicated with the creation of the Asian-American Free Labor Institute (AAFLI) in Asia and the African-American Labor Center (AALC) in Africa. Irving [Brown] oversaw the first development of the AALC, and we opened offices in Asia and Africa through those institutes. The last one formed was the Free Trade Union Institute (FTUI). The Free Trade Union Institute's initial function was working in Spain and Portugal as democracy evolved there.

*Shea: After the death of Franco.*

KIRKLAND: And Salazar. We gave considerable assistance to the Portuguese UGT [Uniao Geral dos Trabalhadores] and to the Basque ELA. I think we worked mainly with the German foundations with the UGT.

*Shea: The Friedrich Ebert Foundation*

KIRKLAND: Yes.

*Shea: In Spain?*

KIRKLAND: Yes. Then as opportunities opened up in Eastern Europe that area became the province of the Free Trade Union Institute as well.

*Kienzle: Do you want to go into some of the efforts with Solidarity or Solidarnosc, because that seems like a monumental chapter in the AFL-CIO's international affairs?*

KIRKLAND: Well, there was a precursor in Poland to Solidarnosc. That was sort of a covert organization called the "K.O.R." in Poland with which we had contacts through Irving [Brown] in our Paris office. I remember a fellow named Leo Labeledz, who lived in England, who was one point of contact with K.O.R. He published a journal of Polish affairs called "Survey" and he was in close touch and sometimes used as a go-between, but we

were in contact with K.O.R. and gave them some help during the period preceding the strikes that led to the formation of Solidarnosc. And of course when Solidarnosc emerged in 1980/81 we were solidly in support. We organized a Polish aid fund to raise money within the trade union movement to send them assistance, overt and quite openly, in the face of, I might add, some U.S. Government opposition and State Department opposition.

*Kienzle: Was that from the European Bureau?*

KIRKLAND: No, that was from the Secretary of State at the time, who was Ed Muskie. I remember meeting with Ed Muskie. He asked us to come over to talk to him and he tried to dissuade us from assisting Solidarnosc as destabilizing and an unwarranted interference in Polish-American relations. This was [directly] from Ed Muskie, who was Secretary of State.

*Kienzle: Your response?*

KIRKLAND: [Kirkland makes an arm gesture, followed by loud laughter.] "We are an independent and free trade union movement; that's what the word [independent] means. We'll do our thing." Then following martial law we developed various channels of assistance.

*Shea: Then later with George Shultz, how was it?*

KIRKLAND: Well, that was during the period when Solidarnosc was underground. Actually during the early years of the Reagan Administration when Solidarnosc was legal, prior to martial law, we maintained our work with Solidarnosc and gave it some help. Larry Eagleburger, I believe, was Under Secretary of State at the time.

*Shea: That is when Shultz was Secretary?*

KIRKLAND: Yes. During that fall just before martial law, Eagleburger called me once or twice and suggested that they had information that something dire was fixing to happen, and that I should tell my friends in Poland that they should watch their asses. I think that they were very worried about a possible Russian intervention. I used to respond to Larry by saying, "This is a free and democratic organization. I don't know how a democratic trade union organization can operate without having meetings." And of course it was at a time of a leadership meeting of Solidarnosc that martial law was imposed and they were rounded up and arrested all in one place. I was in Europe at the time of the crackdown in December of 1981, and I stopped off in London on the way back to the States. A dinner meeting had been arranged by a fellow named Joe Godson, who was a former labor attaché [Information Officer in London], with a group of representatives of the Labor Party and the TUC. They had a dinner for me at the English Speaking Union, and prominent among those in the British group attending that dinner was Denis Healey, who was, I think, the "shadow" Defense Minister. The one thing that I recall was that martial law had just been imposed, and I told the group that I felt that this was a matter of extreme urgency and that every

possible instrument of pressure should be brought to bare on the Polish Government and that assistance ought to be given to Solidarnosc and sanctions imposed on the [Polish] Government. And Healey said, "I couldn't disagree with you more. I think we should all pray for the success of General Jaruzelski. There is no possibility of there being a democratic labor movement in Poland and the best that we can hope for is stability and General Jaruzelski represents stability." I was outraged and quite furious and we had a bitter argument.

Then I came back to the United States and I got a call from [President] Reagan. He asked me to come over and see him. I went over to the White House. He was there in the Oval Office with his National Security Advisor and I think with Al Haig.

*Shea: Haig was the Secretary of State then.*

KIRKLAND: Yes. And Reagan opened the conversation by saying, "Well, at last we have something we can agree on." I said, "I don't think so, Mr. President, because I don't think you are prepared to do the things that I think need to be done." He said, "Well, what do you think needs to be done?" I said, "First of all, there should be the toughest possible sanctions imposed on Poland, and you should begin by declaring our loans to Poland, specifically the loans of the Commodity Credit Corporation, *in default*, which in fact they are. You should declare them *formally* in default. The effect of that would be to undermine the value of all outstanding loans to Poland and destroy their credit. That would make it impossible for them to get further loans. There are millions of dollars of outstanding loans from private banks and from the Commodity Credit Corporation to Poland. And to me it seems absolutely unconscionable that those loans should still be counted as assets and continue to flow. That is the single most effective sanction that should be done forthwith. And then we are prepared to develop channels of assistance to Solidarnosc. We know how to do it. We have the contacts necessary to do it, and we'll use whatever resources we can, but whatever other resources which can be provided would be [helpful]." And he said, "Well, let us think about that."

And the next day I had a meeting with [Vice President] Bush at his house and he had some other people there including the Director of Central Intelligence. I reiterated what I had said [to President Reagan]. And of course they didn't do what I proposed. They put on little, luke-warm, relatively meaningless sanctions and then Charlie Wick did his "Let Poland be Poland" television extravaganza, and that was it. That's the whole thing.

The Reagan Administration is now claiming credit and it's all a lot of crap. We developed channels and we got some material and some funds into the underground and we had several alternative ways of doing it including financing the Brussels' office of Solidarnosc with Jerzy Malewski, but we had a couple of other channels as well. And we kept them alive during the underground years.

*Shea: Didn't you take a trip to Poland at that time, and you had trouble getting a visa?*

KIRKLAND: I was not allowed [to go]. I was invited to speak to the First Congress of Solidarnosc in 1981 before the crackdown, when they were above ground. Irving [Brown] and I both wanted to go and we both applied for a visa. Irving was in either Norway or Sweden at the time, I forget which, and applied at the local Polish consulate and was granted approval for a visa. I applied in Washington through the embassy and didn't hear. Irving had gotten his approval. Well, I thought that's got to be a fluke. And, of course, Irving's approval didn't survive review at the Polish Foreign Office. Irving's visa was withdrawn, and I waited to get word on whether or not I was going to get a visa. Solidarnosc was legal; it was a product of an agreement; and I had a formal invitation from them.

About a day before the deadline when I had to go in order to be there, I had a visit from the Polish Ambassador Spasowski. He came over to see me at my office, and he proceeded to tell me that he had been in communication with the Foreign Ministry in Poland, and they had advised him that my application for a visa would be rejected, and he had requested permission from them to come and see me and tell me that face to face, which I thought was fairly classy. And we then had a very long conversation about Polish affairs and things in general. I remember taking him to a window in my office overlooking Lafayette Park, and saying, "You know, there is a statue down there to Kosciusko, and I think you ought to go there sometime and read the words on that statue. As I recall the words they go something like this, 'And freedom screamed when Kosciusko fell.' "

I formed the conclusion from my conversation with Spasowski that he was not in sympathy with his government's position. And as I was then thinking afterwards, this guy will probably defect, and he did when the crackdown came. But I was not allowed a visa. I had prepared a short speech, and I knew that George Higgins was going over. George went over under color of his capacity as a priest, you know. I don't think he even told them that he was planning to go to the Congress when he got his visa. So I gave my speech to George Higgins and he read it to the Congress, and he brought me back a Solidarnosc banner that Walesa had signed. But that was that. I was not allowed to go.

*Kienzle: Then the AFL-CIO maintained providing assistance to Solidarnosc during its hour of trouble?*

KIRKLAND: Yes, during all the time of its underground years.

*Kienzle: Were you surprised that it was allowed to resurface around 1988?*

KIRKLAND: No, I wasn't surprised. I think the movement was more than they could handle, and they were either going to do a repeat of Czechoslovakia full bore or reach some compromise. I said in my speech that I sent to the Congress, and I believe it, that what was taking place was the rise of a movement for civil society, and that is what Solidarnosc symbolized. In fact, they sort of used it as a watch word, and that I think accounted for the breath and depth of its support throughout all elements of Polish society. And I firmly believe, I still believe, and I believed then that history moves when civil society reaches a

critical point. It is not decided in the foreign ministries or in the palaces of power but on the streets and in the work places. And when a critical mass has been reached, then there is nothing you can do unless you are willing to kill and slaughter and put the whole country in chains.

*Kienzle: Who were the other allies of the AFL-CIO in supporting Solidarity during these underground years? Were there other trade union movements or groups involved?*

KIRKLAND: I think we were instrumental in getting activities out of the ICFTU, and there were some key trade union centers [involved]. The Brits were pretty good, but they didn't do any funding or anything. The ICFTU leadership stood up quite well, Johnny Vanderveken. And we had the Solidarnosc office in Brussels where the headquarters of the ICFTU were.

*Shea: When did you first meet Lech Walesa?*

KIRKLAND: I first met Lech Walesa in Paris, when he was allowed to leave Poland after amnesty. And the French, Mitterrand, had a big conference in Paris on *le droits de l'homme*, the rights of man, and Lech was allowed to come to that. I was in Paris at the time, and we had a meeting in his hotel room. That was the first time I had met him. I was still not allowed to go to Poland. I kept applying for a visa and never getting it.

*Kienzle: When did you first go to Poland?*

KIRKLAND: The first time I went to Poland was after amnesty. There was a big, huge delegation that George Bush sent to Poland and I was included in that delegation. There were a lot of businessmen, government people, and all that. And I went along. Jaruzelski was still in charge. They met with Jaruzelski. I shook the son-of-a-bitch's hand. [Laughter] But I had a little side meeting with my friends and I had a few packets in my pocket that I delivered.

Then the next time [I went to Poland] was at the Second Congress of Solidarity, when I got a visa and I spoke to their Congress in Gdansk. I had meetings and discussions with Lech. That Congress was in 1990.

*Shea: Then in 1991 he came here.*

KIRKLAND: To the Federation. We invited him. I had another session with him. I was invited to participate in the tenth anniversary of Solidarnosc in August of 1990 or 1991. It must have been 1991. I'll have to check that.

*Kienzle: This was after the dissolution of the Soviet Union?*

KIRKLAND: No. That was going on.

*Shea: It was in October of 1991 that he came here to the AFL-CIO Convention.*

KIRKLAND: That's right. This tenth anniversary.

*Kienzle: Were there other international issues in which you were extensively involved personally? South Africa or Israel?*

KIRKLAND: Oh, yes. Of course, Israel certainly. We maintained very close relations with Histadrut [Israeli Federation of Labor]. I was over there frequently. In fact, I recall that after the Yom Kippur War we raised a considerable amount of money, over one million dollars, I think, for medical assistance to take care of wounded soldiers and rehabilitation and so forth, and I went over to deliver the money to Histadrut. I was there frequently, and of course we had close relations. Histadrut maintained an American representative for a long time, and I had contacts with the [Israeli] Embassy. There was a Labor Attaché, I recall, at the Israeli Embassy and there still is.

South Africa. We had AALC programs there. We were not allowed to keep a representative there, so we [ran the program] from a neighboring country. He would make trips down there from time to time. Mike Lescaux was mainly responsible for it. He is now in the [AFL-CIO] Paris office.

The one time that I was down there in recent years, prior to the big change, was as a member of a high level ICFTU delegation to South Africa to meet with the black trade union people there and sound them out about what the position of the international trade union movement ought to be on the issue of sanctions and other questions of assistance to them. I was on that delegation with Norman Willis and a fellow from Norway and a German. We met with the different unions. We made a tour. Piroshaw Camay arranged a visit to Alexandria Township without permission, which was supposed to be a no-no. We went to that township and spent a little bit of time there, and we were detained by the cops, who arrived fully equipped with their hippos, these armored personnel carriers, and they surrounded us. We had a dicey few minutes there. A crowd of people from the township, all these black workers there, were watching while the cops were interrogating us. Norman Willis went over to the edge of this crowd and began to lead them in song. He invited them to join him in singing the Gilbert and Sullivan tune [which goes], "When constabulary duties are to be done, a policeman's lot is not a happy one." If somebody had thrown a rock or anything, all hell would have broken loose. Fortunately no one did. And this fellow who was in charge of the police unit was on the phone to his superiors and they obviously told him to let us go. They didn't particularly want an incident. So we drove on out and we had five or six cars. We went a few blocks and then we were stopped by another police detachment. The policeman leaned into our lead car and [asked], "Just what are you doing here? Do you have a permit?" "No. We were just driving around and we got lost." "Oh. You were just driving around and you got lost." And he stood up and he started counting the cars. One, two, three, four, five, six. And Norman Willis leaned his head out [of the car and said], "I can see why you made lieutenant." But we survived that.

After our meetings. . . The AFL-CIO was already strongly pushing sanctions; in fact, we lobbied the sanctions through the Congress against the resistance of the Administration and the State Department.

*Kienzle: Do you feel that the sanctions played an instrumental role in the transformation of South Africa?*

KIRKLAND: Yes, I do, but the issue that we were down there to determine was whether there should be support from the ICFTU for sanctions and so forth. The upshot of it was that the answer was yes. They wanted them.

*Kienzle: Did the member countries generally impose sanctions on South Africa?*

KIRKLAND: Yes, I think some of the European countries did. The United Kingdom did not because Thatcher was opposed to them, but the TUC called for them and advocated them.

*Shea: The Australians must have gone along with sanctions.*

KIRKLAND: Yes, I'm sure. Bobby Hawke was there then, and he would.

*Shea: Hawke speaks highly of his contacts with you.*

KIRKLAND: Oh, yes. Bobby is a great guy. We were good friends. We got to be friends when he was head of the Australian Congress of Trade Unions. He was a regular attendant of the ILO. I would see him in Geneva every year. We used to go out. That was before he quit drinking.

*Kienzle: Backtracking perhaps to Poland and by extension to Eastern Europe, was the AFL-CIO as actively involved in the other Eastern European countries?*

KIRKLAND: Yes

*Kienzle: Would you like to describe that involvement?*

KIRKLAND: Well, I started to tell you about the tenth anniversary of Solidarnosc. They had a big celebration in Gdansk around that memorial in the shipyards, and they had invited us to place a plaque on the wall in the shipyard right adjoining that memorial. They had a place there in front of that wall memorializing the martyrs of the previous strikes, the people who had been killed. The workers in the shipyard had been murdered by the authorities. I had a plaque made up. I designed it and they actually manufactured it in the shipyard according to our specifications. I put the AFL-CIO seal on it and some words from [the song] "Solidarity Forever." "We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old." So we dedicated that plaque at that ceremony. I laid a wreath at that monument and then unveiled the plaque. It was quite an affair.

But immediately before going to Gdansk, I stopped in Warsaw before going to Gdansk, and I visited and placed some flowers on the tomb of Father [Jerzy] Popieluszko at his church in Warsaw. He was the priest who was murdered by the Secret Police. It was a very moving occasion. I placed these flowers there and a caretaker of the church came up to me and said, "Mr. Kirkland, you ought to know that at every mass that Father Popieluszko gave before he was killed, he would mention your name."

*Shea: Do you recall meeting John Davis, our Ambassador there?*

KIRKLAND: Yes. I did not have too much truck with ambassadors. But I had an invitation to go to a human rights conference that was to be held in Vilnius in Lithuania. We had close contacts with the Lithuanians through a remarkable fellow named Voka, who had spoken at one of our conventions. He was a Lithuanian. He was a bulldozer driver or something who got elected in that democratic wave. Oh, he was elected actually to the Soviet Parliament. But he was a gutsy democrat and he used his little red book as a member of the Soviet Parliament to get around all over Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and the Baltic and proselyte for us and establish contacts with different people.

*Kienzle: He wasn't restrained in any way?*

KIRKLAND: He was a Member of Parliament. How could they restrain him? He used his little red book.

*Kienzle: They had a way of taking care of trouble-makers.*

KIRKLAND: By this time things had started to crumble, but the human rights congress could not be held in Vilnius. It was moved to Leningrad. Leningrad had changed and the City Council had become dominated by dissidents and democrats. They invited us. This was an international human rights conference. One of the leading lights of it was a Polish senator by the name of Romoshevski. So I went from Gdansk to Leningrad. I got a visa to Russia. It was the first time that I had been allowed into Russia, because I had this invitation from the Leningrad City Council, and the conference was held there. I sat there next to [Vytautas] Landsbergis, who by that time was President of Lithuania. He is good guy and we got to be very good friends. He is back now. You know he was defeated and now he is back.

One little side light to that-during a break in the congress, there was a group of democratic activists having a rally in Leningrad in front of the Winter Palace, and they had a flatbed truck. They asked me to come and speak to the crowd. So I harangued the crowd from the back of a flatbed truck in front of the Winter Palace. There were a few people from Solidarnosc there, and they climbed the gates of the Winter Palace and hung the banner of Solidarnosc on the gates of the Winter Palace. I think I still have a picture that one of those fellows took of me talking to a guy on the street who came up to me after that rally, and he had a t-shirt on and it had [a picture of] an arm with a hand holding a dagger and plunging

the dagger into a red star. And it had a legend on it, which said, "Kill a Commie for Mommy." Those were the days.

And then I had an invitation from [United States Ambassador to the Soviet Union] Jack Matlock to go to Moscow. Matlock proposed that I should come on American Labor Day and that he would have a reception at Spaso House, with an invitation list confined to democratic dissidents and people who were trying to organize independent unions. Our list, in effect. And I accepted, and we had this reception at Spaso House on American Labor Day for more than 100 Russians from all over the [then] Soviet Union, from as far a Sakhalin, from Kazakhstan, from the Dunbas, from the Kuzbas, from Siberia, from Vakuta. All came to this Labor Day [function] and we had them split up in little groups, and each of our party went from one group to another talking to them at this reception and meeting them all. And there was a fellow there, a remarkable fellow, in the Embassy. I don't know if you have run into him? Mike Gfoeller?

*Kienzle: Yes, I have heard the name.*

KIRKLAND: That's a fellow you ought to interview too, by the way, Mike Gfoeller. He is still in the Foreign Service, and I think he is back now. He was economics officer, second down the line, I think.

*Shea: Yes, I've met him through Tony Freeman.*

KIRKLAND: Mike took it on himself to establish contacts with people who wanted independent unions in Russia, and it was from his list of people and his contacts that we developed our contacts in the Soviet Union. There was no labor attaché in Moscow, naturally. There was no reason [to have a labor attaché there] for all those years. [When I got back to Washington], I went to Larry Eagleburger and I asked him to make Mike Gfoeller the Labor Attaché, which he did. Gfoeller stayed there for another year or two, then was posted in Brussels in an entirely different capacity. Now I think he is back in Russia in some other capacity. He is no longer a labor attaché. But he is an extraordinary fellow, and very, very useful to us.

*Shea: Do we have Matt Boyce there now?*

*Kienzle: He was, but I think he has been replaced by now.*

KIRKLAND: The interesting thing was I would have thought that the Labor Day affair at Spaso House with gutsy democratic activists from all over the Soviet Union would be quite newsworthy. And I asked Matlock if he had invited some journalists, and he showed me on his [guest] list that beside the names that we had given, he had invited the leading journalists posted in Moscow. Not a one of them showed up.

*Kienzle: Is that right!*

KIRKLAND: And it was a non-event in terms of the public notice.

*Shea: Tom Fenton from CNN?*

KIRKLAND: Nobody was there. There was a fellow from Radio Liberty. That was it.

*Kienzle: This was 1988 or 1989?*

KIRKLAND: No, this would have been 1990, I think. Gorbachev was still President of the Soviet Union, and it was before the coup attempt. And Yeltsin was President of the Russian Republic. Gorbachev was still President of the U.S.S.R. and Yeltsin had just become President of the Russian Republic. I was invited by Yeltsin to come and meet him at the Kremlin, which I did, and he gave me a tour. I had a session with him in the Kremlin. My wife, Irena, was with me, and I remember we were standing in an anteroom waiting for Yeltsin and he came walking down the hall. I'm standing there and my wife is right behind me. And as he approached, he puts a big smile on his face and puts his hand out. So I stuck my hand out. As he got near to me, instead of taking my hand, he reached over my shoulder and took Irena by the hand. A natural born politician. I invited him to come by the AFL-CIO when he came to Washington, which he did later. I had some members of the [AFL-CIO] Council there to meet with him and we had a long discussion with him.

It was an interesting visit. Obviously a visit of a leader of the Soviet Union to AFL-CIO headquarters was *an event*, so we decided to do it properly. We had the lobby set up with a speaker's stand where I would greet Yeltsin facing an area that we had roped off for the journalists and cameramen that were following him around. We invited the whole AFL-CIO staff to come and be present as he entered the building and they were thronging in the balcony overlooking the lobby. When Yeltsin arrived, followed by the television cameras and the press, who stood behind this roped area, I had a few words of greeting to Yeltsin, facing the cameramen with my back to the balcony, where all our people were watching, and then I turned it over to Yeltsin. Yeltsin came up to the stand, turned it around 180 degrees, so he was facing the balcony with our people, and with his back to the journalists, began speaking to our people and they cheered. *Now that's a politician!*

After that I took him up the council room to meet with our council and we had a colloquy. I asked him again about something that I had raised earlier when I saw him in Moscow. I said, "Mr. Yeltsin, one of the great problems of creating democratic institutions in your country is the age old practice since the revolution of having party cells in the workplace controlling the dispensation of privileges and spying on people and purporting to represent them. What are you going to do about party cells in the workplace?" He said, "When I get back, they are going to be abolished." And he did. And he proceeded to tell about [a visit he made]. "After I met with you [in Moscow], I paid a visit to one of our warships in one of our northern ports, and I spoke to the crew, and I told them that there were going to be no more party cells on that ship or any other ship in the Soviet Navy, because there was going to be pluralism. I can't have one party forward and one party aft and one party at midship, so

there is going to be none. The party commissars on this ship are fired.' " And as far as I know, he did it.

*Shea: Did you ever meet Gorbachev?*

KIRKLAND: I never met or talked to him. I did see him. I was in Moscow again later on for the first Sakharov Congress, which Elena Bonner arranged in Moscow, and she invited me and I spoke to it. They had a concert one night, and I was seated in one of the front rows. It was an extraordinary concert with an orchestra and choirs from different places. The Russian Rostropovich performed. It was a beautiful thing. I was sitting there enjoying the concert- and Elena Bonner was presiding-and Irena, who was sitting beside me, nudged me and said, "Look up there in the box seats." I could just see the tops of two heads sticking up. One had a birth mark on it, and the other had a beehive hairdo. That was Gorbachev and Mrs. Gorbachev sitting there. They were just a short distance away, and that's as close as I ever came to him. They sat through that concert, and they sat through some hard words by Elena Bonner about the regime.

*Kienzle: Would you care to comment on the AFL-CIO assistance activities that followed as a result of your early contacts in Russia?*

KIRKLAND: Well, we ultimately established an office in Moscow and we helped to finance an ICFTU representative there, young Don Slaiman. Then we opened an office in Kiev, and that is on-going. We helped finance a printing press for the democratic unions and establish some training and assistance programs.

*Kienzle: What about the AFL-CIO activities in the other Eastern European countries beside Russia and Poland?*

KIRKLAND: We were very active in Hungary in assisting the establishment of LIGA. In fact right after the Second Solidarity Congress [in Poland], I went from there to Budapest to meet with the people who were helping LIGA. The leader of that movement, a fellow by the name of Paul Forqacs took me out to a cemetery on the edge of town in Budapest, and on the edge of this cemetery at a particular location they were excavating the dumping ground for the bodies of young workers who had been executed by the regime after the 1956 Revolution. These were very young workers. Some were only sixteen years old. The regime had arrested them when the Revolution was suppressed. The age for capital punishment under the Communist regime in Hungary at the time was eighteen. So the ones that were under eighteen they kept in prison until they reached eighteen, whereupon they executed them. They then dumped them in a mass grave on the edge of an unmarked section of this cemetery and covered them with quick lime. So they were excavating where these people were buried, and they had experts from various disciplines, medical people, anthropologists, pathologists and all. It was a very painstaking effort to identify the remains. And the surviving families of some of these kids were there waiting to see if their children could be identified, so that they could give them a proper burial with a marker. [The authorities] had identified a few of them and they had buried them properly and put

markers up with pictures on them. The families were standing there waiting while these people were pouring through these little bits of bone and teeth and what not. And that's the kind of people that were in charge of...

*Shea: Do you have some activities in Bulgaria?*

KIRKLAND: Yes. We have given considerable aid to the incipient trade union movement there called Podkrepa. I have been in touch with its leadership primarily through the wife of the man who was their spokesman and leader. She lived in New York, and she would come down to see me from time to time and pass on what their requirements were. Also in Romania. . . (telephone interruption).

*Kienzle: You were speaking about Romania.*

KIRKLAND: Yes. We did the same things there.

*Kienzle: Are you optimistic about the future of free trade unionism in these areas? There was some discussion about the problem of former apparatchiki taking over the unions.*

KIRKLAND: Well, there are problems. There are problems in Bulgaria, and there are problems in Romania in particular. In Romania the regime never really changed. It was sort of an internal coup, and then it is hard to pass judgment on what you have to do to survive in those countries. There are problems. We are also working in Albania and in Yugoslavia. There are huge problems there of course, but nobody ever said it would be a rose garden. There has been a resurgence of the old apparatchiks in much of Central and Eastern Europe, but judging by what has just happened in Lithuania, perhaps that will be a passing phase too. We will keep persevering.

*Kienzle: I wonder if we could turn to another part of the world and an area where the AFL-CIO had a lot of visibility, and that is Mexico and the NAFTA agreement? Would you care to comment on how you view that? Obviously the AFL-CIO was a major player.*

KIRKLAND: Of course I think NAFTA is an atrocity. It only serves one interest, and that is the moneyed interest in this country. It doesn't serve the workers in Mexico, and it is very damaging to workers in this country. We had basically two stipulations. We wanted tough worker rights language in the agreement, so that if trade served any purpose it could help lever up conditions that ordinary people in that country suffer from, and of course the environmental mess along the border, and we were sold down the river on both of those.

*Shea: Well, you were instrumental in getting an administrative office in the Labor Department headed up until recently by Jack Otero.*

KIRKLAND: Yes. What about it?

*Shea: It was supposedly set up to monitor [the agreement].*

KIRKLAND: It's ineffectual, because there are no teeth in the labor rights side agreement whatsoever. It's a pure facade. I made a proposal that was published as an op-ed piece at the time that instead of going south and merging our economy with the morals of the PRI [Partido Revolucionario Institucional, the long time ruling party in Mexico] and the peso, we should create a North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement. We should elbow our way into the European Common Market and create the largest free trade area in the history of the world that would represent something like half of the world's gross national product. Now that would be a significant expansion of free trade.

*Kienzle: Did you get any response from the Clinton Administration on your op-ed piece?*

KIRKLAND: No. No. No. No. Well, I did in a way. Sometime later I was at a dinner at the British Embassy for John Major, who came over to meet with President Clinton. And at that dinner I reiterated my proposal and said that I thought it was still a good idea. He said he agreed and he would take it up with Clinton and he did. And he got a little flurry in the papers for it.

*Kienzle: Would you care to comment on your relations with President Clinton and on his lack of receptivity on issues like NAFTA?*

KIRKLAND: Well, on that particular issue, we are in disagreement. I had a discussion with him in which I said he should follow through on a speech he had made, I believe, in Winston-Salem during his campaign, where he had addressed the trade issue and had made certain commitments that he proposed to address and do away with the incentives that existed in American law, tax laws and otherwise, that encouraged American corporations to move their operations overseas. I said, "If you would actively do that, you would take a little of the sting out of the NAFTA." Of course he didn't. On other issues, I got along with Clinton very well.

*Kienzle: Which issues did you find him receptive on?*

KIRKLAND: Well, most particularly, there were certain executive orders that were issued by George Bush during the presidential campaign to curry favor with the business community and the National Right to Work Committee. There was an executive order overturning a decision on a major public works project in Boston Harbor that involved the legality of a pre-hire agreement with the building trades, which he nullified. There was another executive order that revised the filing requirements under the Landrum-Griffin Act, which had imposed an extraordinary burden on our locals. It had required the posting of signs in every work place that workers didn't have to join a union. I got Clinton to reverse both of those executive orders and also to undo the blacklist on the air traffic controllers.

*Kienzle: Oh, really. So they were rehired?*

KIRKLAND: Yes, they are eligible for reemployment.

*Kienzle: I guess it didn't take much persuasion on the Family and Medical Leave Act?*

KIRKLAND: No, we had already done work in the Congress and the legislation was there waiting to pass. It was just a question of having Administration support instead of opposition. That's all we needed to pass it and get it signed.

*Shea: Getting back to NAFTA, Lane, did you talk to Don Fidel Valesquez?*

KIRKLAND: Oh, I have talked to Don Fidel many times. He is a very warm and friendly fellow, but we were on opposite sides on this issue. He was carrying water for the PRI.

*Kienzle: Well, I have covered most of the questions on my list.*

*Shea: We really appreciate it and we overstayed our visit too.*

KIRKLAND: Not at all.

*Kienzle: You have been very kind. Are there any final observations that you would like to make for the record on international issues.*

KIRKLAND: There are other areas that you might want to explore as you pursue these discussions with different people. One is the decolonization struggle in which we were involved.

*Kienzle: You mean after World War II with the British, French, and Portuguese colonies?*

KIRKLAND: Yes, especially in North Africa, where we found ourselves sometimes at extreme odds with the French Government and with some of our colleagues in Britain and elsewhere.

*Kienzle: I know that Irving Brown played quite a role there, particularly in Algeria..*

KIRKLAND: Yes, and in Tunisia and in Morocco.

*Kienzle: In Tunisia he had personal relations with Bourguiba and also [with labor leaders] in Morocco.*

*Shea: I was listening to the German news last night and I wasn't aware that the British Government will not go along with the proposed reduction in work hours to conform with European Union provisions. The TUC and Labor Party are solidly opposed. Major came out with a very strong statement against it.*

KIRKLAND: The British Government has already firmly opted out of the Maastricht Treaty. That's not a new development. They have firmly declared that they will have nothing to do with the Social Charter.

*Shea: With the Labor Party probably getting in next year, they could reverse that.*

KIRKLAND: We'll see.

*Kienzle: Okay, well thank you very much for this interview. We really appreciate it.*

KIRKLAND: I enjoyed it. It was good seeing you.

*End of interview*