

CARTON 9:20

THE BROTHERHOOD OF SLEEPING CAR PORTERS

Dellums, C.L. Video
interview transcript,
annotated

1987

2017/193
c

3/13

①

C (Dallan) Video Interview 1987

12 mins Sought Demanded an enforceable FERC bill
"or none at all"

15 mins opposes ¹⁹⁴⁸ initial in grounds that
nobody has right to ~~say~~ vote on p. 9

16.30 my right)

18 Earl Warren sent Walter Gordon
to assess effectiveness of NY FEP Law

23 relationship to Jewish community

25 Criticized as "hell raiser on the Coast"
worked ~~hard~~ throughout West Coast Region
building NAACP ^{regionally}
(Growth fast, raising fund) p. 15

27 (Growth fast, raising fund) (become Judge?)

27 Frank Williams leaves

34 George Miller supports 1946 FERC mobilization
(Legislation set every other year
(off years was budget bureau)

35 If you intend to see the thing through you
don't take a vacation from it"

36 1947 effort he articulates position with p. 20
Tara Nathan

37 max mat / J. Earl Lash
committee

38 1949 Gus puts video in a "must" bill 21
Byron Rumford

Republicans had to force roll call. Gus put the Kyushu
on spot (some later - defector)
Gus goes to Congress, Kyushu takes over FERC effort
there his work on 2 bills due
to such

41 Public Accommodation vs jobs for civil rights
(CL forward job) 22
employment

P. 24

42 Bill Pickens West

43 2nd hand model + Ford (his car)

took 16 hours to drive to L.A.

44 Berkshire Coke incident, most clear

47 L.A. white woman incident with judge husband

26-28

23

29 30 32

44 Employment as priority vs housing

58 Lowest paid officers or any union
Randolph never got a raise in 19 years

59 Railway clerks (white union) had jurisdiction over black railway workers

31 later found by RCP

60 need to understand dynamics of economy

1.02 Division in WASP Warren Round
Walter White's interview merge cases
Mrs. Roosevelt calls

33

problem 33

1.07 FER Civil "race, creed, color", (national rig anarchy - almost argued bill)

1.08 AFL story re. RCSP 1928 (Hicks vote)

36

X

Why they joined despite racism of AFL
(Randolph, C, Webster - by three)

1.11

We belong there in mainstream & we have a mission to drive down civil rights reputation introduced in these 2 conventions
Frances Perkins story / Convention speech by Randolph 1934

Bill Green
1.24

1.24 Drove official discourse out of labor movement

42

1.28 Race Railroad Union seek to suppress
1.31 1960s They agreed to women discussing claim and dice

44

MLA story

Webster had pulled 126

Dellums Video Interview notes

3:00 Fred Roberts, early L/A State rep

3:25 Gus Hawkins 1934 ~~Free election~~

4:30 Dellums & APR agreed to endorse only
candidate they agreed supports Rom
primary 1942

6:00 Wayne Young

7:05 1937 strike

9:00 Y State poss-FERP in 1945 (CWL N.Y.)

10:00 Bill Bayer N.V.L. "Arist who didn't know
me" "Narrow" To

13 FEP bill in Calif Detailed commentary
on Long struggle

16 probably has right to vote on my right
"Certain rights are born right"

28 Walter Gordon

20 Earl Warren lucky issue

28 "March on Sacramento" rumor
Mobilization

33 George Miller supports

36 C.L. Chair of ~~FERP~~ Calif Comm for FEP 1949
call vote on bill

38 Gus/Kyrnow in Calif Assembly / both
put Republicans on spot (checked off)

40 Gus/Kyrnow alternate introducing bill

Work Copy

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C. L. Dellums Interview
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C. L. Dellums Interview

Dellums: We had trouble getting the bill assigned to a committee in 1945, you know? And then when it was assigned to a committee, the committee wouldn't schedule it.

Interviewer: What was the legislature like back then?

Dellums: All Republican. We had a Negro then. That's not the first Negro assemblyman. We had a Negro assemblyman supported by the Los Angeles Times. Well, I liked the guy. He's a nice fellow, an undertaker. And I ribbed him all the time, about the Republicans, what they would do. Oh, I guess it did a little good. He got the Civil Rights Bill through, '41, '41-'42, isn't it? You know, the Public Accommodations bill we had in California. [unintelligible] got the thing through. And then Fred got an anti-lynching bill through.

Interviewer: In the '40s?

Dellums: Yeah. It didn't mean anything [laughs], but they lynched a couple of young white fellows down in San Jose, and it just stirred things up like nobody's business, and people in California were used to Negroes being lynched, not white people. Two white boys got lynched down there, two or three. It was as many as two. And then in some big park, the biggest park they had down there then. And it put California in

a bad light all over the world. People in California just thought that that's a southern practice, and never gave much thought to it. But, anyway, a few years after that, after Fred got in the Assembly, we had a Congressman out of St. Louis named Dyer, and every two years Dyer introduced an anti-lynching bill in Congress. And he was getting re-elected every two years with the Dyer anti-lynching bill. He never [unintelligible]. He introduced it. And that was all there was to it. But most of the Negroes in Missouri then were in St. Louis, and they voted. And so Dyer stayed in there, and the Dyer anti-lynching bill, and it didn't mean a thing. Though Fred Roberts put in the anti-lynching bill in California worse than the one Dyer was talking about. And then when the Republicans got through amending it and chopping it up, it met their satisfaction and they passed it, but it didn't mean anything. It wouldn't have controlled anything.

Interviewer: So that was the way it was when Gus Hawkins . . .

Dellums: Gus came along, about 33, 34 years old, a Democrat, and ran for the Assembly, oh, I was local representative down there for him and L. B. Thompson. He got banged up in an auto accident, oh, eight or nine years ago, and he hasn't been out of the house since. But one of my trips down to Los Angeles, L. B. brought Gus around to introduce him, and we talked, and I met Gus two or three times during the week down there, and wherever I could hear about the meeting, and

Gus was going to attend and say anything, and I went to hear it. So I went along with him. He's a bright young man. And his mind is on the right track. So the next time I was together with Randolph, I told him about this young man. So we had agreed that we would not endorse candidates [inaudible] political office, and that we wouldn't identify with one and we wouldn't support one, and blah blah blah, unless he met our standards, and our standards were high. And Gus met them. So I told Randolph that this young fellow is OK, and I think we would not go wrong to help him. So finally he said, "Well, C. L. it's up to you. If within your judgment he's OK, go ahead and help him." And so I did. And so we've been friends ever since. I made a trip or two down there largely just to truss their people up and go ahead and get registered and to vote to help Gus. There's only one other occasion that I believe that we participated in helping anybody. Randolph got hold of me and told me that ^{Senator} Wayne Morse, [inaudible] Oregon, had been to see him and that Wayne thought he was in a lot of trouble and needed help. And there were a few Negroes in Oregon, and they voted, and then they [unintelligible] the Brotherhood, if it got out that the Brotherhood was with Wayne Morris, he thought it would help. And then Wayne told him the Labor movement needed some shaking up in Oregon. And they asked Wayne to send Dellums up to Oregon to help him, and to shake labor up. So Chief explained to Wayne how we operated as far as politics

endorsed

previous help.

Oregon

was concerned. And then he said, "I couldn't send C. L. no place to do anything. C. L. is a pretty independent cuss. But," he says, "I'll talk with him, and let him know it's all right with me if he wants to go up and help you, Senator, it's all right with me." So Chief explained to me and told me about it, and he said, "Do you know him?" And I said, "No, I've never met him, I've seen him." Because after the big Waterfront strike of 1934, they set up some machinery there with a one-man arbitration, and Wayne Morse was the man that the owners and Bridges and all them, everybody agreed on Wayne Morse. And so the first hearings that Wayne held over some disputes they were having with the union and whatnot, and when Wayne came to San Francisco for those meetings, Harry called me and asked me to come over and sit in on the meetings anyway, and so I went over. And that was the only time that I had seen Wayne Morris, is I went over and saw him in action when he was the one-man arbitrator there.

Interviewer: Did you end up going up and working for him?

Dellums: Yeah, I went up to Oregon and, oh, spent a week or ten days out on the [inaudible]. But Bill Green got hold of the labor people up there and told them to get off their stool and that Dellums was coming up, and they knew Dellums by reputation, and for them to put on some meetings and whatnot, and get Dellums involved in those meetings. He's a damned good rabble-rouser. So . . .

Interviewer: When was Gus Hawkins first elected?

Dellums: 1934.

Interviewer: Oh, that early! He'd been there for a long time.

Dellums: Yeah. He defeated Roberts, the Republican Negro
Assemblyman. Gus defeated him.

Interviewer: Oh, no!

Dellums: "And we got the first Democrat in there then. So Gus
put in the '45 bill and . . .

Interviewer: Did that ever get to hearing then, or did it just die?

Dellums: It just died. Nobody [inaudible] but me and Gus.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Dellums: And I only went once, as I recall.

Interviewer: [Overlap]

Interviewer: At that time weren't you putting a lot of effort into
New York still?

Dellums: Yeah. Everything was centered on New York, and even
after the bill had passed in New York, I think that I went - I think I went
to Sacramento after the New York bill had passed, but I'm not sure.

Interviewer: When did New York's pass? Was that '42?

Interviewer: '45.

Dellums: A long time. All four of those other states passed them
in '45. Just California . . .

New York
passed
strong
law
CL
like it
p. 8

Interviewer: It took a while.

Dellums: They did.

Interviewer: [Overlapping] that California was going to be the slowest.

Dellums: Yeah, yeah, they [inaudible]. And then Oregon got one, you know? Wasn't worth the paper it was written on.

Interviewer: But they got one before us!?

Dellums: But yeah. Oregon got something on that before us.

[laughs] And that's how I met Bill Barry. Bill Barry, the old Urban League Bill Barry. He got the job working up for the Urban League in Oregon. And I met Bill at some of my trips up there on - and I liked Bill, and I saw that Bill was the first Urban League Negro that I had ever met that didn't make me nervous, you know? I was afraid of the rest of them. But I saw this guy - I saw Bill Barry was on the right track. And I spent a lot of time around there with Bill. And Bill went out to rebuild the executive committee of the Urban League up there. The executive committee ran the Urban Leagues. And they didn't have membership like guys like the NAACP did. And, therefore, their money came from white people. And white people ran it. In some cities there were no Negroes even on the executive board. All white in the Urban League, you know. So I wasn't hot on the Urban League. But when I met Bill Barry and I saw what he was up to, I encouraged him, and every time I was up

Bill
Barry
NUL

there, why, we were together. ^{name?} One of the wives of one of our members up there got elected president of the NAACP, and I went up there especially for that, and to talk with her and to talk with Bill, and got them working together, and got her to consult Bill about things, you know. And Bill wrote a few press releases for her here and there, you know, and got them to her, and let her get all the credit for it, you know. So we had a good working combination up there. And since Bill isn't afraid of his job, then, you see, we can maneuver mobilizations in the capital in Oregon.

CL
thinking of
building
1200 p

You know, not to the extent that we later on did in California, but Bill led the drive up there for the FEPC in Oregon even though he was working for the Urban League. And I don't think there was a Negro on the board. There might have been a preacher on there, but I'm not too certain of it.

But [inaudible] Fred's, you know, he went on, and he testified and everything, filed the bill up there and helped get it through the Oregon legislature. It wasn't worth a damn. I wouldn't have accepted it. I didn't agree that in all cases a half a loaf is better than none at all. I didn't agree with that. And I was determined that we would have an enforceable FEPC in California or none at all.

CL
thought
Oregon was
weak

Interviewer: Were there ever times in the years after 1945 when you kept reintroducing the bill when you had to make that choice, when you had a chance to get some sort of symbolic bill, but you said no dice, and let it go?

Dellums: Yes and no. Now, there were always amendments being offered, and that's where you stop them. You stop them in the amendments. The bill, itself, Gus took care of that, and the bill, itself, was always patterned after the New York bill, and we always tried to make it even stronger than the New York one because we knew we were going to have to back up some to get enough votes to pass it, because we didn't have the Democrats in. The Republicans were running California, and we wouldn't have one yet if the Republicans had kept running the state. So . . .

Interviewer: Who was Governor in j'45? Was that Earl Warren?

Dellums: No, no. Now, wait a minute. You mentioned Earl Warren [smiles]. The first mobilization we had in Sacramento was really an NAACP deal. We organized the California Committee for Employment Practices, and some people, you know, you have to drag them a little to get them to go along. So I'm trying to drag this Los Angeles gang, you know, come and go along with us. But the [inaudible] and Frank Williams, who was the regional executive, then this lady, you know, has got that position now. Verna Cannison⁸⁰² (?). Frank Williams had that then. He's with the - what is that, Charles? Frank's with the . . .

Interviewer: Some foundation. I forget the name.

Dellums: Stokes.

Interviewer: Stokes foundation.

Dellums: It's another name, with Stokes. But everybody knows what you're talking about if you just say . . .

Interviewer: Stokes Phelps.

Dellums: Stokes Phelps, yeah. And so the three of us mapped out what we wanted to do and who we wanted on the committee because it takes some time to get around to see people, you know?

Interviewer: Now, when was this? After the bill failed in '45?

Dellums: Yes. Yeah, this was - this was way up, oh. You know, after the bill failed in '45, there was a meeting called in Fresno. I didn't call it. Gus was involved in it. It was a statewide meeting, and I went. It was held in Fresno. And they wanted to circulate an initiative petition and put it on the ballot, and I said, "Hell, no." Gus went along with them. We didn't fall out about it, but he had all the grounds in the world to fall out with me [laughs] if he wanted to. But I turned him loose, you know, and I gave Gus a hard time for this. Gus went along with this initiative.

1946
Initiative

Interviewer: Why did you oppose it?

Dellums: I opposed it on the grounds that nobody had the right to say where I can work on any job that I have the ability to perform. Why in the hell should these white people in California take it on themselves to vote on some subject like that? There are certain rights that are born rights, because you're a born human being, you're in the world. And

nobody has any business voting on it. And I wasn't going to stand for it, and I wouldn't go along with it. Well, when Gus voted for it, they won. Well, I'd been around long enough to know the audience, and I knew before the vote was taken who was running the show really. And it was going to go through. We didn't have a quarter (?). We didn't have a statewide organization. We didn't even have a state conference of NAACP [inaudible].

Interviewer: What year was this in?

Interviewer: '46.

Interviewer: '46.

Dellums: '46.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Dellums: So how in the hell can you expect to put over a statewide initiative. But, you know, you gotta digress a little. I think now, and I thought immediately afterwards, if Earl Warren hadn't got elected Governor in the primary, that bill might have - that initiative might have gone through.

Earl
Warren

Interviewer: Why is that [inaudible]?

Dellums: There was a man running on the Democratic ticket named Kenny, Kenny or Kennedy. Kenny, I think, was his name. But he was well known liberal. His name was well known. And was - he got the Democrat, Democratic nomination without wasting any time, you know.

But California had cross-filing in those days. So it was no trouble to cross-file. So Earl Warren's people cross-filed, and got the Republican ticket got put over on the Democrat over there, and he won in the primary. Nobody ever dreamed of such a thing. Earl not only won the Republican Governorship, but he won the Democratic one also in the primary.

Interviewer: Oh boy!

Dellums: Well, now the Republicans had sewed up about 90 percent of the bill goes throughout the state. And they had signed up for the primary and the general election. Well, now with Earl winning in the primary, there is no general election now. See, Kenny was going to force Earl's hand because he was going to campaign for FEPC. The Republicans would have had to go along. They just couldn't fight it. And if Earl Warren had been on that ballot for November, and Earl Warren had been forced to come out and endorse the FEPC initiative, it probably would have gone through, because a third of the voters in California voted for it even under those circumstances, you know, with no Governor to be elected, and a third of the voters still voting for it is why I think it might have gone over if both candidates would have been out there supporting each, you know, like Pat Brown did.

Interviewer: Did Earl Warren ever take a stand on it then, or did he duck the issue?

Dellums: He ducked it entirely, and I couldn't forgive Earl for that. Now, something came up in Washington, it's national in scope. Earl Warren had a ^{appointed} [inaudible] Gordon as the head of the Prison and Parole Board. And he sent his chairman, because he was [inaudible] in law enforcement, and Earl had Walter ^{Gordon} (?) to go back there and attend this conference, representing California, and on the return gone by New York and confer with the heads of the New York FEP, and see if it works. And [inaudible] wanted Walter (?) to do a job on this thing, and so he, report back to him. And Walter did. But the people that had gotten around the Republican Governor, no matter who he was then, wouldn't let Earl endorse it. Now, after Earl had gotten his neck out - and Walter was tickled to death. You know, he couldn't get home fast enough, after he talked with the Governor and he's going to Washington and then over to New York, and he's going to report in writing to the Governor. Walt was sure we were going to get California, we were going to get an FEPC bill in California then.

year?

Interviewer: Because he liked what he saw in New York, right?

Dellums: Yeah.

Interviewer: And he was enthusiastic about it [inaudible].

Dellums: Yeah, and he wrote a good report and everything, and still Earl never endorsed our bill. Now, we had this first mobilization up there. I wrote Earl and asked for a conference. We had letterheads

printed then, you know, for the California Committee for Fair Employment Practices. There was only one name on that letterhead that anybody in California would have criticized, and that was C. L. Dellums. So we'd gotten Father O'Dwyer in southern California, the biggest Catholic in the state then, and I don't remember now who was on there. We had this City Councilman that we'd spent a lot of time and effort and money to get him into the City Council down in Los Angeles, a Mexican American fellow. What's his name?

Interviewer: [inaudible]

Dellums: [inaudible] *Roybal* Royboyle (?). Roybolye was on the committee, and never attended a single meeting, even meetings held in Los Angeles. He never attended them. So he was a letterhead member. We didn't want him on there as a letterhead member. Father O'Dwyer, we knew he was going to be a letterhead member, and we told him so, and we wanted him on there. We didn't expect Father O'Dwyer to get out there and have him do anything. But, you know, in movements and whatnot you have a few letterhead members in front, that they agree to go along with this just for the purpose of using their name.

Interviewer: C. L., who did you have in the Jewish community at that time? Wasn't that one of the main support groups . . .

Dellums: Yeah. Oh, that fellow - we had an Oakland man working with us. He wasn't on the committee. They were still a little touchy.

Particularly up here. We had to rely largely on southern California for the Jewish group.

Interviewer: Didn't you have Earl Raab on the committee?

Dellums: Yes, on that first one, Earl Raab, that's right. We did have Earl Raab on that committee.

Interviewer: Didn't you have Max ~~Blunt~~ ^{Blount} Mont?

Dellums: Max Blunt was on, but he's Los Angeles.

Interviewer: Yeah, he's Los Angeles.

Dellums: Yeah. And we had three or four other guys, Los Angeles oldtimers, you know, and we had Jenny Matches was still living then, on the ILGWU. She was a very brilliant little woman. And, oh, I can't remember all of those names now. They were mostly labor people, or labor connected people, you know, a few oldtimers still down there from the old socialist days. But I remember talking with Jake Petovsky in New York about the people down in Los Angeles, and Jakes would just rattle off eight or ten Jewish names right there and then, people that had been active and knew Randolph in the days when the socialists were on the ballots and were active, you know?

Interviewer: So you wrote off to Earl Warren using that letterhead, you were saying?

Dellums: Yeah, I sent it and wrote Earl on this letterhead, you know, with people like we were mentioning now, you know, on there like

Earl Raab and Nat Hawley, Nat Cawley, on there. We wanted Nat on because [inaudible] connections we thought, let Nat be the NAACP representative, and just leave me on the overall.

Interviewer: Because you were the most controversial?

Dellums: Yeah, I was the only person anybody criticized around here then, you know?

Interviewer: Why, C. L.? Why would they criticize you?

Dellums: Well, I was the hell raiser on the coast then, you know? Going up to Oregon, for instance, to stick my nose in up there to help a Democrat, you know, up in Oregon, Wayne Morris. And I made a couple of trips to Seattle, you know, to help the Washington [inaudible] to get the Washington bill through. And then we had a good NAACP branch there. If Frank Williams had attended to his P's and Q's, we would have made the West Coast region virtually the national headquarters of the NAACP because we were building it like hell. With Frank and Ty Pittman (?) and myself getting around over the whole region, and meeting with the local people there, and making speeches, and according to the reputation, all three of us could make a pretty good country speech. You know? And we were building it. One year they tried to keep it from getting to us, but we finally found out - one year we raised more money from the Christmas Seals than all the rest of the United States. A little old 50 percent of the money that came from Seals that year came from

the West Coast region. You know, the thinly populated eight western states in those days. So if Frank had stayed here - but, as I told Frank, you know, a young man in a hurry is a dangerous young man. And it turned out that way, you know, so he got too ambitious, and he took a leave of absence for one year to go with Stanley Mosk to help build up the Civil Rights Department in the Attorney General's Office. And when he came over to talk with me about it, I said, "Frank, don't do it." "Well, this is a great opportunity." And I said, 'Yeah, Frank, but for somebody else, not you, because if you go on a state job for a year, you'll never return, 'cause once you get your nose in the public trough, you'll keep it in there," so . . .

Interviewer: Careful, C. L.

Dellums: Yeah. Well, times have changed, you know.

Interviewer: Not that much.

Dellums: [inaudible] wanted a judgeship. That wasn't a judgeship anyway [inaudible]. But - and Roy - Roy Wilkins agreed with me, that if Frank left, more than likely he would not return.

Interviewer: And he didn't, right?

Dellums: And he didn't. But Roy was concerned because he didn't want anybody to think that he was afraid of Frank, and that he was taking advantage of anything, and he denied the leave. Well, here come Frank across the Bay, you know? And told me that Roy had denied the

leave. And, "The only way I'm going to get the leave is for you to get in the act." And so briefly he got the leave. And then when the year was up, he asked for an extension of a year. Well, Roy called me then, and Roy - Roy never loved me too much, and I think that was the first time Roy had ever called me on the phone, you know? But Roy called me, and told me about Frank wanted an extension on it, you know? And he said, "Now, you see, I told you - I told you not to let him go in the first place when you had to stick your nose in it." So I said, "What are we going to do now? I said if you draw a red ring around there so [inaudible] forget him. So give him the year's extension and he'll resign by then 'cause Frank's not coming back," and that's what he did. Roy gave him the year's extension, and when it was up, he resigned. He didn't return to us. But back to Earl. Earl never answered my letter. Gave him all the information, you know?

Interviewer: This was at a meeting with him, right?

Dellums: Yeah.

Interviewer: On the bill, on the FE . . .

Dellums: You see, we were going to spend the weekend in Sacramento, like mobilizations have done since, and Monday morning we wanted to go see the Governor, or at any time during the weekend that would meet with his convenience. And he ignored the letter. Well, you know, the word got out that Dellums was leading a march on

*Mobilization
not march*

Sacramento. Well, we were very careful not to ever use march - if anybody mentioned marches, we would stop them and correct them right quick. And this was not a march on Sacramento. It was an FEPC mobilization in Sacramento. Neil Haggerty - Neil Haggerty was the state executive officer of the State Federation of Labor. That was his excuse for not participating in the demonstration up there with us. He didn't believe in marches. And old Neil never lived it down. Every time he saw me he looked funny. You know? [laughs] Every time, whenever we met any place, Neil looked embarrassed, you know. And he kept that up until he died, because Randolph noticed that he didn't seem comfortable and at ease when he was in my presence, and asked me, "Did you and Neil fall out?" And I said, "No," because Randolph liked Neil Haggerty. And so I told him, "No, we didn't fall out. He didn't support us in our drive to try to get FEPC in California." And so it's just that simple, you know? I probably said some things about him I wouldn't have said otherwise." [laughs] But, anyway . . .

Interviewer: Was this 1953 you're talking about?

Dellums: No, it was before then. I think the first one - see, now, the initiative petition, and in all fairness to that, as I have stated before, if Earl didn't win in the primary, it might have gone through. But it was the first initiative circulated without anything and qualified in the history of California. People got out - and saw initiative petitions that had been

1947

mimeographed that people were circulating and getting signed, and people were signing them. And that's how it got on the ballot. And so here's the head of the labor movement, coming up here with some crummy excuse that he didn't believe in marches. And so I had to curse him out, you know, and call him some names, the lousy so and so. He knew it wasn't a march on Sacramento. He knew the difference. And - but now I went back - Gus - Gus talked to me, and he said, "I don't think there'd be any point in introducing a bill in this session of the legislature. The people have just voted it down, and you know these people up here. But let's just stick it in anyway, and let's see what happens." So Gus put the bill in, and so he and I went around to some old stalwarts, you know, and, of course, George Miller was glad to see us, and we had to get [inaudible], you know? But George wasn't worried about the thing, and we weren't worrying about George. But we didn't get to first base. Those guys used it as an excuse to be afraid. You know? "Man, they brought us out of Sacramento. People just voted - just voted against it last year, and here you come on back here, and you know we couldn't do anything for you now." I said, "Well, let's keep the heat on you people. We're not gonna let you forget it, so you're just supposed to make up your mind to that. No, you'll get by this year, but we'll be back next year."

George Miller

Interviewer: And the legislature met every other year . . .

Dellums: Every other year.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Dellums: But it met every year, but the even numbered year was only for budget purposes. So everybody was in Sacramento drawing their expense allowance. There wasn't anybody doing anything. Then when they couldn't do anything until the committee was ready to report, so if you knew where they hung out, it was a good time for the lobbyists to do their work during that year when the people never even looked upon the thing as being in session, and for all practical purposes it wasn't in session, you know. But, anyway, I learned every place where an assemblyman went publicly [laughs], and we hounded them down after that, you know, after them, but it wasn't a surprise to me that they wouldn't do anything a year after the initiative. But if you intend to get this through, you don't take a vacation from it. You stay on it. So now then we went back in '47, '48 we got to get back on the track. And then we organized this California Committee for Fair Employment Practices. I was the chairman and Ty Pittman was the secretary. And with Frank Williams pretty much [inaudible] et got Father O'Dwyer to let us put his name on the letterhead, and Royball couldn't say no. He looked frightened [inaudible]. But the only time I've seen Royball I went down to Los Angeles for some purpose, I don't know what. It might have been just for a routine trip I made periodically down there. But I wanted to talk with Max, and I went out to the Jewish building. Did you ever see

that building that they have down there? Jewish Labor Committee owns quite a building down there. It's out on North Vermont. Is there a Vermont Street?

Interviewer: North Vermont.

Dellums: Yeah. North Vermont is where it is. It covers a block, you know, with the parking and everything. And - but they had problems because too many Jewish organizations were afraid to move into the building. They didn't want it to be THE Jewish headquarters. So they always had trouble keeping it properly occupied, you know? And I think the Jewish Labor Committee's office finally was moved out. And - because Max got ill and was off for quite some time. I don't know if he ever was able to go back to work or not. But - well, now, let's see. That brings us to . . .

Interviewer: 1949.

Dellums: 1949. And Gus - Gus ^alost efforts before he went to Congress. The session just before reapportionment was put over. Gus caught a Senate bill, a must Senate bill, and put an amendment to it for a civil FEPC. You know? On there, and put it over in the Assembly. We were getting some Democrats in the Assembly by then, you know. And the Republicans couldn't run over us roughshod. And Gus had a lot of prestige. Byron had gotten in there by then, you know, to help.

Interviewer: That's Byron Rumford.

Dellums: Byron Rumford.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Dellums: And the Assembly passed this amendment that Gus had attached to a Republican do-pass bill, and then it went back then to the Senate, on account of this amendment, and for the first time the Republicans had to face a roll call on a civil rights issue, and there they were. They're not going to tolerate FEPC. But this is a must bill. The Governor wants, everybody wants, it's got to go through. I don't recall now whether it was apportionment bill or just what it was, but the Republicans killed it. They knocked it off on a strictly partisan vote. And even the Democrat enemies got a chance to vote for FEPC then because [laughs, inaudible] ^{Republicans} going to kill it. So - but it was [inaudible] strategy that Gus used to put the Republicans on the spot, and helped defeat Republicans too. And so then two years after that Gus has gone to Congress. Byron is left, and Byron took over introducing the bill. But, see, we had worked a trading deal between Byron and Gus. That's how Byron's name is on the bill. It would have been Gus Hawkins' bill, but we had - there had been an arrangement where in one session of the legislature Gus would introduce the FEPC bill, and the next one Rumford would introduce it. And that's how it got there that Rumford's name got on the housing bill and the labor bill because of that switching. And . . .

Interviewer: At this point it was purely an employment bill though; you were not pushing a fair housing bill at this time, were you?

Dellums: Oh, no, they wouldn't talk housing with us. And then, see, that was a decision that had to be made back in the march on Washington days, because there were too many civil rights people, particularly Negroes, who thought that public accommodations was the most important thing facing, facing us. And I led the fight that employment was the most important.

Interviewer: What did they think about housing? Is that what you mean by public accommodations? I thought by public accommodations you meant . . .

Dellums: No, they were separate. Public accommodations - there were a lot of people that looked at public accommodations as being top priority for civil rights people, Negroes particularly, because - well, it's something you can't explain. But if you were - was going down to Los Angeles for a meeting, and we were calling statewide, William Pickens was on a tour. And William Pickens was coming out here, but he just had certain places, and he wasn't coming to Oakland. He was coming to Los Angeles, and we were going to get as near a statewide group NAACP people to meet with Bill, and I was going down for that. And we had a little fellow here - I call him a little fellow because he's short, I mean. Named E. S. Thomas. A wonderful human being, a fine fellow. And E. S.

Meat
Clove
Mushy

was going to ride down with me in my secondhand Model T Ford. You know? It took 6 hours to drive to Los Angeles with that thing then, with those two-lane highways, one in each direction. And to get through the mountains was quite a job. So with those two-lane highways through the mountains and these trucks and whatnots, you know. It was a helluva job. So E., Thomas and I got up and we pulled out of here just at daybreak, you know, and started driving down there. By the time we got to Bakersfield we were hungry. So the highway went right down the main street of all those valley towns. So when we got to Bakersfield, we decided - a rest spot, and [inaudible] and get breakfast. We spotted one of this main thoroughfare going through there, and we stopped and we went in. And we sat at the counter because we just wanted a quick breakfast and keep going. And - well, I had had a lot of experience then, and there was a mirror behind the counter, facing the counter, you know, so I could see through the mirror what the waitress is doing. I saw the waitress picking up all the menus off the table, and she took them all off the counter, and took them all in the kitchen. So I'm watching everything now. You know, something's, something's going. And then we weren't too shocked in Bakersfield because wherever there's cotton and oil, there's plenty of southerners. And we knew Bakersfield was the bunk. And then in a few minutes here come a guy out of the kitchen there with a meat cleaver, a big old cleaver in his hand. And he

was keeping it behind him [chuckles], you know? But, see, with that mirror there, I could see this cleaver.

Interviewer: Oh, no!

Dellums: But the longer that guy stood there looking at us, and I'm looking at him, the bigger he got and the bigger that meat cleaver got. Finally, Thomas noticed it. He leaned on me. He said, "C. L., I think we'd better get out of here." So I said, "Well, yeah, but let's take our time. Let's not rush out." But it's a feeling you can't describe. You know? It's just an experience that, if every American had to live it once, maybe we could send him - no, there's no place in Africa. Well, you could put a tag on him in South Africa and [laughs]. But it's an experience that you've got to live through it to really appreciate how you felt.

Interviewer: C. L . . .

Dellums: And I was nervous all the way then from then on to Los Angeles I was nervous. I told the people down there about it at one of the conferences that I spoke to, and I mentioned it during my rabbleroxing days any number of times. And I brought it in - I wonder how many accidents have been on public highways and whatnot because one of the drivers was rest broken and tired and hungry because they couldn't find a place to sleep and they couldn't get a place to eat. And how many white people have died in accidents on these public highways because

that other driver had been denied sleep and food, and was just worn out and nodded at the wheel, you know. Nobody knows. But it's reasonable to assume that it happened, because there are some of us sitting here in the audience that have driven under those conditions. I'm one of them. And I know it was a touchy thing. And I don't know what would have happened if I'd been alone. Because if I'd been alone, you see, I might have nodded off. But with Thomas there with me, he knew to just keep talking, you know, and he watched me, so if it looked like I'm drifting some, he'd say, "C. L.," you know? But - I had another experience - let me inject something here. Down to Los Angeles, and I met a lady down there, Caucasian lady, fine looking lady. And she was from Santa Barbara, and she had come down to Los Angeles to attend that meeting because she had heard about William Pickens. A friend of hers there in Santa Barbara had heard Pickens speak in some place in the East, on some of, one of her trips or something, and she came back, and she was thrilled, and she told this lady about this Negro that she had heard make a speech. I don't know whether he spoke to a college, a college group or what, but she was carried away with him. She had never heard a Negro make a speech before. And, see, she hadn't found out that Negroes spoke just like she did [laughs]. It was one of the many things that white people hadn't found out, you know? [laughs] And it was a treat to hear William Pickens make a speech, you know? I told him once, you know, I

said, "Bill, the nation lost a great comedian when somebody sent you to Yale." [laughs] 'Cause he's a brilliant Yale graduate, you know, but he could keep you laughing all the time too. But, anyway, Pickens is down there, so I noticed this lady at the first break. She was lost. And there was very little integration in California then, you know? Negroes didn't know whether to approach this woman or not. Maybe they hadn't found out she's just a woman. [laughs] You know? But I went over and introduced myself and asked her if she had made arrangements to go to lunch. And she said, "No," she was thinking about it because she liked lunch. I said, "Well, I'm getting two or three of us together. Would you join us?" She said, "Oh, yes, that's what I'm down here for," you know? "To learn and," so, anyway, she went to lunch with us. And then she stayed with us the rest of the time down there, so she didn't get lonesome anymore. Now, she told us that her husband was a judge in Santa Barbara, and she heard him say that the customary way a judge made up his mind on a case was to decide who he wanted to rule for, she said, because a good lawyer can write an intelligent decision on either side of a case. So you decide on who you want to rule for, and then you can write a decision. You're not worried about it being repealed. You just want to render a decision that won't embarrass you, and it's not too difficult to do. He said he compared the law with the Bible, you know, you prove anything or disprove anything. And, therefore, this discussion

came up at their dinner table, and some Negro was involved in some kind of lawsuit, and her husband was going to rule against him, of course, you know [laughs]. And that was the explanation. And she jumped him after everybody was gone and everything. She jumped him, you know, and said, "Do you mean to tell me that you're not concerned with who's right or who's wrong, just who you want to rule for." And she said he said, "Yeah, that's the way judges handle these things." It's not limited to race, but that's primarily where it comes into, in force. But he said, "If you've got a case and you've got a couple of big shots, you've got a couple of big shots on here, you're going to make a lot of enemies no matter which side you rule on, and you're going to make some friends. So you use the same formula. Decide which one of these, where is the most pressure and the most money, who you want to rule for. And it's easy then," he said, "to - you might have to do a little maneuvering, upholding the motion or something here and there that you, objection here and there that you shouldn't do, but nobody pays too much attention to it. Most lawyers don't even take an exception to it, so . . ." And she said, "You know, that just disgusted me, and made me appreciate the problems that colored people face, and here you get involved in something and you go to court, and the decision is going to be rendered against you solely because of your color. The hell with the facts. If the facts are over there, OK, but if they're not over there, my husband's

gonna [laughing, unintelligible]." So she said, and then - she told me what had happened and her friend couldn't come to Los Angeles with her to hear Pickens speak, so she came on alone, she was so anxious to hear this guy, and she had taken an interest in what's happening to people, now that she had had firsthand knowledge about it, you know? So it was worth the trip for her to hear Pickens because Pickens could make a speech. But I injected that something was said that caused me to think of this . . .

Interviewer: You said that you had argued way back when, just after the war, that it was more important to go after employment . . .

Dellums: Oh.

Interviewer: . . . practices than public accommodations.

Dellums: Yeah, because I found Walter White leaning toward public accommodations and housing. He wasn't giving the employment the credit that it should be given, and I told Randolph that we'd better discuss this subject because Walt seems to - seems to give too much credence to the need for housing and public accommodations. He doesn't seem to be as conscious as we are that it doesn't make any difference whether you have the right to live up on that hill and not whether you have the right to go to the Paramount Theater or not if you don't have the price of admission.

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Interviewer: So your thought was that employment rights would lead to economic . . .

Dellums: Employment rights had to be first because if you don't have the down payment on that house up there, you're not going to move up there. And if you - well, we saw it come closer to come home. We stopped in what we called Negro hotels for years. You know? Well, it was only partly racial. We didn't have the money to stay in downtown hotels. You know? We needed a 3-dollar room. And - but in time we won our struggle. Pullman Company. We got a contract signed, Pullman Company and a couple of railroads, we had a few [inaudible] of their own. So then we had to talk about this thing. So Chief and I got together on it first, and then we brought it before the International Executive Committee of the Brotherhood, that it's time for us to move downtown, but we wanted it understood, and we particularly want our members to understand that we think it important because white people are not used to seeing Negroes in their leading hotels. They've got to get used to it. And then as time went on, you know, we saw the value of it, and we went through the period when the hotels got together, you know, and they would let Negro preachers - there wasn't too many of them - stay in the hotels. But . . .

Interviewer: Why just preachers?

Dellums: Well, you know, if they looked religious, they were going on the assumption that white people wouldn't - you know, would feel that this, some white church groups got these Negroes down here. They jumped to their own conclusions. [laughs] They didn't realize how dumb white people are, see? Or were at that time. [laughs] But we started to stay downtown in hotels, you know? And, of course, the International Executive Board had to vote a little more money for us to stay in them because we were still living on a shoestring. We were the lowest paid officials of an international union the nation's ever seen, and we never got away from it. It was that way when Mr. Randolph retired and that way when I retired. You know, they're still low paid. The [inaudible] 19 years Mr. Randolph worked for the Brotherhood they never got a raise in pay. This last 19 years they never got a raise, didn't pay at all. So we always had to struggle. Of course, they worked - they worked, granted people in our jurisdiction that we could organize. We had just about everybody that we could get. See, the railway clerks, what is now called the Railway and Airline [inaudible], the Railway and Airline Clerks, but it was Railway and Steamship Clerks then. And the AFofL had granted them jurisdiction over practically all the Negroes working for railways with exception of the porters. You know? So the - many of the redcaps had been organized by Clerks and all the Negro organized redcaps - at least we organized most of the redcaps for him and gave them to him - he

[inaudible] himself to Mr. Randolph, a Negro named Townsend. And he turned against us and turned against Mr. Randolph. He saw himself as a national leader. And turned against us. But . . . we - oh. We convinced Walter that we ought to encourage Negroes in all walks of life to make, to understand the economics of this situation, and that FEPC was the most important piece of legislation that it was possible to get through for the benefit of the people. And Mr. Randolph started on this national tours, to remembering to bring that in, no matter what he was talking about to bring it in, and to - say something to show Negroes that unless you have the price of admission, you're not going in there, and you're not going to eat a New York cut steak in that ritzy place if you don't have the price that the menu calls for for that New York steak. So by carrying on that national campaign and with Walter supposedly - see, Walter always had a problem that he pointed to us any number of times. He had a problem we didn't have, because we had an organization, and we were the organization, so to speak. Because there wasn't any members in our organization gonna get up and take A. Phillip Randolph on. You know, they'd sit on their hands if it was that important, but they weren't going to cross him. And Walter never had that. Walter had problems. And I say Walter because it was Walter in those days. But I haven't talked to this - what's his name?

Interviewer: Benjamin [inaudible])

Dellums: I haven't talked to Ben about it, but there was a distinct division in the NAACP National Board for years. There was a southern bloc in there. And their argument all the time was, "You guys don't know. You're not down here anymore," you know. "You left. We've gotta live with these so and so's," you know? "And we can't do everything you guys want done." And it came to a head when Walter took a leave for his honeymoon, and had married Poppy Cannon. Was her name Cannon? Had married Poppy Cannon. Well, Poppy was listed as Caucasian. But if Poppy and Walter White was walking down the sidewalk together and you was talking to someone that didn't know them, and you just said to them, this couple that we are meeting coming here is an interracial couple. Well, almost everybody that faced that, that didn't know anything about them, would have taken Walter for the Caucasian and Poppy Cannon for the Negro. He was that much whiter than she was, you know? And so the southern bloc didn't want Walter to return as the Executive Officer of the NAACP. And it created quite a national stir.

Mrs. Roosevelt called me about it, and she was on the National Board, and she was going to be at that meeting when this subject was going to be tops on the agenda—what about Walter White? And she said, "We need Phillip. Phillip has got such a sound mind and thinking, and his brilliance, his reasoning on there, he's just irreplaceable." She said, "We've got to have him," she said, "but he doesn't attend the meetings."

And here is this national meeting coming up there when Walter's future is at stake, and Walter is afraid he won't be there. So Walter told me to call you and help him work on C.L., C. L. to work on Phillip to be at that meeting," you know? So I told her, "Yeah, yeah, I'll get on him right away about it." So I did. So I made him shake hands with me to seal the fact that he is going to be at that meeting. "I want your word that, dammit, you are going to attend that meeting. Walter needs you, and Mrs. Roosevelt, she's counting noses, and she said you're needed, and she thinks that you definitely will swing the vote." And so he attended the meeting, and Walter was returning to the NAACP. Now, what would have happened if he hadn't been there, we have no way of knowing. But let's see. Walter had that problem, and I know Roy - Roy had mentioned that problem to me years before that, that they did have this problem with the southern bloc, and there were several cities represented on there that, you know, you couldn't see yourself doing without. Atlanta had a powerful branch for years, and this lady that had something - I don't know whether it was from a stroke or what, Charles. Did you ever see that lady from Baltimore that her mouth was twisted back like that? She at one time had the biggest branch in the whole NAACP. You know? And she was a power. She had trouble talking, but that lady was a ball of fire. And there she sat, you know, representing the biggest branch in the NAACP, from Baltimore. Well, Baltimore's part of the South. You

know? And so they had problems. That the rest of us didn't have.

Fortunately, we overcame them, and then we made people extremely conscious of their economic right, their right to work. If you don't have a job, you're up against it.

Interviewer: So the original FEP bill - just one more question - what was the protective basis? Was it just race and color?

Dellums: Mm hmm. Race, creed and color.

Interviewer: ~~Just race, creed, and color.~~

Dellums: Yeah, for the Jewish people, you know. Creed, that's the only thing anybody thought about when you said "creed." They thought that's there for the Jews.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Dellums: You know? So it's just race, creed, and color.

Interviewer: Did it stay that way all the way up until just before it was passed? When it was passed, there were other things . . .

Dellums: It passed - well, the only thing we added on there was national origin.

Interviewer: And ancestry.

Dellums: Yeah. National origin and ancestry. That's the only thing that was added to it before the bill was adopted.

Interviewer: When did you add that in?

Dellums: '57, I think. I think it was '57.

Interviewer: Where did we leave off with the early '50s?

Interviewer: Yeah, the early '50s, when - yeah, you had at least a roll call vote on the floor of the Senate so you knew who were your friends and enemies, right? ~~And that gave you something to deal with.~~
~~Was that in the early '50s?~~

Dellums: The '50 session of the legislature. And - well, you know, there was a pattern also in those days: anything affecting the Negro was put at the bottom. Or unless some other trick. And example of what I mean there: We joined the American Federation of Labor, our union. We threatened to strike the former Governor in 1928. And we took a strike vote and got them signed, announced the date and everything for the strike. The Railway Labor Act provided then - it still does - that the - at that time called the Board of Mediation. It's now called the Mediation Board. And there is a historical story around that. And we were condemned all over the nation because we joined the AFofL. We're now an anti-Negro labor group, you know? Some people thought that every labor union had a color clause in its constitution. And here are the idealists, you know, the A. Phillip Randolph, C. L. Dellums, and Milton P. Webster, they were the big three, and they have affiliated with this organization. So Chief said to me, "C. L., when you get over to the hotel, let's devote some time to explaining why we joined the AFof L." So, anyway, after some discussion that night, he agreed that he would give

an overall analysis of it, and then leave it pretty much up to our people as to how they could interpret what he said and all themselves. So I decided that I would explain it by saying we joined the AFofL for a reason, and with a mission. The reason we affiliated with the AFofL was because it was the only statewide and nationwide organization of working people, the organized labor movement. And our movement is an organized labor movement. And we belonged in there because it was our opinion that the Negro in the United States will never come into his own under any form or shape of social segregation. Therefore, we belong in the AFofL. And then we have a mission. The mission is to drive the official discrimination out. And you can drive it out better by being inside than you can from being out on the sidewalk condemning it. And that's why we joined the AFofL. And it pretty much went over. We shut up the preachers pretty much. They, [inaudible] they had a mailing list of Negro preachers scattered clear across the nation. And they gave annual donations to them, and special donations to them. And they had one group that they, could run up anything for them and tell them to push it, and they'd push it. The number one Negro bishop in the nation in those days fought us, and praised the AFofL, you know, praised the labor movement generally, but fought the AFofL, attempted to show the Negroes didn't get any place until they broke a strike, and they had to break strikes. Well, we never argued about that. But we started

why joined etc

introducing resolutions. The second convention we attended we
introduced a resolution, a civil rights resolution in there. And it kept
building. Randolph got permission to speak up to 20 minutes, and, oh,
when we first asked for it, they agreed for 10 minutes, but in time there
was no limit. He could speak as long as he wanted to, and wasn't
nobody gonna stop us. And - but as all of us here know, you put a
resolution into a convention of any kind, somebody's going to report on
it. And there's generally some resolutions committee, which in most
cases is the most important committee before a convention. And strategy
gets into the act. First thing you know, the - well, let's bring this, make
clear this. The highlight of the conventions became the Brotherhood
fight on the floor of the convention. We were demanding that the unions
be given a certain minimum period of time to remove the color clauses
out of their constitutions, and/or [inaudible], or they would be put out.
Well, we knew they weren't about to put [laughs] no organization out
because the labor movement was dominated by the building trades in
those days, and that's where the membership was. You know? It was in
the building trades. Carpenters were the biggest union in the AFofL for
years and years, you know? And the Executive Committee had 15
members for years. All of them came from the building trades, for years.
Finally, somebody knocks it over. But first thing we note, our resolution
is reported - oh, they - the buzz around the convention after the time

closes for the introduction of resolutions, and the committees are all reported, you know, and ready. Well, as soon as the resolutions committee is ready to report, the chairman starts them to report again because there are oodles of resolutions introduced in there. It's going to take some time. And we noticed our resolution is being reported on at the same time, every year. Conventions were held annually then. And it highlighted when the first woman a president had ever put in his cabinet came to the AFofL convention to speech, Miss Frances Perkins. The convention was to be held in San Francisco. And Miss Perkins was scheduled to speak in the morning session, you know, x morning. And damned fools had the resolutions committee reported on our resolution after 11:30. And Miss Perkins is speaking the morning session. 12:00 o'clock we go to lunch. For some reason everybody gets hungry [inaudible] by 12:00 o'clock, you know, it's usually they want to get out of there and go to lunch. And there were all kinds of luncheon engagements and whatnot that people have that they want to get to, you know. So here there was - reported on our resolution there about 11:30, 11:35. OK, we get the microphones. Well, our strategy was that [inaudible] and I weren't going to speak, you know? But we had to get the microphones in time to get a microphone, you know? And then if, if [inaudible] recognized either one of us first, we'd yield to Mr. Randolph and let him take over. So all Miss Perkins and her coterie showed up

there about, between 15 and 20 minutes to 12:00. 'Cause she wanted - 10 to 15 minutes. Well, the auditorium of San Francisco was never more crowded than it was that morning. The first woman in a president's cabinet and she's coming to San Francisco to address this convention. You know, [inaudible], they were over everything, all over the park and over the street there in front of the auditorium. The auditorium was packed to standing capacity. It's one of the first times, if not THE first time, that the press was there from all over the world. So this is a helluva big event. And here these damned fools reported on our resolution. They knew we were going to fight it. They couldn't be dumb enough to think that we'd sit there because Miss Perkins sitting up there on the platform we wouldn't fight it. She and her coterie came in there, you know, and the guys just - Green had just stopped them, you know, to let Miss Perkins and her people get up on the platform and sit down. And some guys got the microphone. Web's in one free microphone, I'm at the other one, you know. So when Green got order, everything quieted down there, and we've got to dispose of the subject before us, and then the Secretary of Labor will speak. So then Green looked around to see who he's going to recognize [laughs]. Every microphone in the convention has a long line of guys lined up around. When Web and I, we'd been there for 30 minutes already. Oh, and then we had a couple of friends in there, you know, that would get the microphones to help us

out. John [inaudible] anything. Dave Dubinski was a little slow, but if we pressed Dave, he'd do it. We were certain that we'd get a microphone all right. So, anyway, Mr. Randolph was recognized, and he made one of his best speeches. He made a terrific speech. And it took the convention, you know? All the people were standing and whistling and cheering and stomping when he finished and all. And then Green had to introduce Miss Perkins. It's 12:00 o'clock now. Three or four minutes afterwards. Or a little more. And she got up, and she was visibly nervous and disturbed. And she said, "This is unfair." She said, "This timing - somebody needs to keep some thought to timing around here." She said, "Because it's an imposition to call on anybody to speak after A. Phillip Randolph has just made a speech." And she said, "Probably the greatest orator ever. And here I am. Mr. Green, don't ever do this again, not to me." So it was just that terrific. But we didn't win vote one. You know? We didn't - we got the same thing we'd always gotten. You know? So those strategies are used in their [inaudible] and they kept it up. So we - we debated as to whether or not we wanted to make an issue of that. The three of us, Webster and [inaudible] and myself, and we decided, well, let's let it slide for now. We may have to do something about it later on, but let's give them a little more time. Let's see. They know we know what they're doing. We've said enough about it, and we've talked to enough people around the convention, they couldn't help but know that

we were conscious of the fact that they were pulling something. From the 1934 convention is when Frances Perkins came here. I'm almost certain of that. This was '34. And from that time on, there never was a report on one of our resolutions that was more than 25 minutes to adjournment time or recess time. So, you see, there was no time for anything. We were going to speak. And there wasn't anybody going to stop us. Well, Bill Green didn't want to stop us. Bill was all right. But Bill was at the mercy of the Executive Council. He was nothing but the spokesman for the Executive Council. As a matter of fact, that's all Lynn Kirkland is. But Green didn't have the power, the force, nor the backing to do anything about it. George Meany came along, a different type of a person. You know? And would fight anybody, in any way they were willing to fight. And he brought more stature to the presidency of the AFofL and then later the AFL-CIO. But we did drive official discrimination out on the American labor movement. Before we stopped, every labor affiliated had removed the color clause from its constitution and/or ritual. Now, our last struggle was they got an application from two railroad unions, the engineers and the trainmen. They had never been affiliated with anything. They were part of the Big Four and had always looked upon themselves as the crown prince of the American labor movement. And they wanted to affiliate for the first time. And both of them had color clauses still in their constitution [laughs]. So George

came to see us about it. I think Webster had passed away by then, and
it was just Randolph and myself. I think that's what it was. But George
came to us and told us that he had a solemn pledge from both unions,
both their presidents and secretary treasurers, that at the very next
convention they'll remove the color clause. Well, our opposition was then
let them make an application to affiliate for the next convention and not
this one. So the trainmen went to George and told George that they had
been quite friendly with Dellums for years, told about the trouble they
had down in Los Angeles for the electric trains that ran from Los Angeles
to Long Beach. And those were trainmen that operated them. It had
been ruled many years before that that was an extension of the Southern
Pacific. Those red trains that ran down there. So it was railroad work.
And, therefore, the trainmen's union had the contract with the local
people.

Interviewer: Those were the old Pacific Electric?

Dellums: Yeah. And the trainmen's union was a powerful
organization, you know. They had 65 million dollars in their checking
account in those days. And that meant they had millions in earmarked
accounts, for different purposes. They had a huge strike fund separate
from this commercial account. So we told them, after we thought about
it overnight, told them we'd talk with them the next day about it. So we
told them that we were not afraid of their, [stammer] their word. They

gave their word that they had the forces now and they couldn't remove the color clause. We believed they would do it. But they must understand something also. The records must never show that we caused the vote to allow our union to affiliate knowing it's got the color clause in it. So we're not relieving you of your pledge to remove the color clause in the very next convention, and you are understanding the fact that we have got to vote against you. The only concession we will make is that we won't take the floor. We won't take the floor and make a convention fight out of it. We will give you one convention to remove the color clause. But we will see that the record shows that we vote against you. And we did. And so it went on, which we didn't take - not any of us took the floor to speak on it. And the next February - I think it was the very next year, but if not, the year after that, when we meet down to Miami Beach, the February of each year. I got down there and Mr. Randolph had retired. And I walked over the room where the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO was meeting. And, of course, I see everything that's going to happen if it happens, I'd more than likely see it. I saw a guy lean over, you know, and whisper something to the guy next to him [laughs]. Well, they got two guys over here I marked. I gotta watch now, you know? You know, you can whisper to somebody and say, "Look, I want to tell you something. Don't look right now." And then tell them what it is, and they'll die waiting to look, and they're gonna look - they're

gonna look in 2 seconds after you turn your head around, they're gonna look [laughing]. So I saw this other guy, when he looked around, so I knew then, yeah, I was the subject of whatever that was, you know? But in a few minutes both of them got up, and came around to, after I had taken my seat and all. Both of those guys got up and came around there. Well, I know they wouldn't make that place for just two of them to jump on me. [laughs] So they introduced themselves, and the president was blooming with a smile, you know? He said, "Brother Dellums, please, please believe me. I've never had a happier day in my life than this." He says, "There's always a few good people every place. And you've had a few friends always. You just didn't have enough. And we have been trying to get it for a long time, and we are thrilled to be able to shake hands with you and say that we have no color clause and then our constitution, our ritual, or anything else," and they said, "But that's not the happiest thing. The thing that's making me the happiest of all, I've got eleven members, locomotive engineers, working today, all Negroes. Got eleven." And he said, [THE END]