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Labor Series

# JESSE A. FRIEDMAN

*Interviewed by: James F. Shea and Don R. Kienzle*
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

## INTERVIEW

Note: Interviewee died September 17, 1996, before he could review this transcript.

*Shea: Good morning. Today is Friday, September 22, 1995. This is Jim Shea. Don Kienzle and I are at the American Institute for Free Labor Development in the office of my old and great friend, Jesse Friedman. We are interviewing Jesse for the Labor Diplomacy Oral History Project on his personal background, on AIFLD, and on his step-father, Serafino Romauldi.*

*Kienzle: Shall we start with a few words about your family background, where you came from, your education, and how you got involved with the labor movement?*

FRIEDMAN: Sure. I come from a family that was largely identified with the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) on my mother's side. In fact at the time that my mother met Serafino Romauldi , she was an employee of the ILGWU. I had an aunt, who was an administrative assistant very close to David Dubinsky, and who later became secretary to Louie Stolberg, and who spent 40 years close to the top leadership of that union. So my own background as a kid was that my family put David Dubinsky somewhere up there with God, and then the rest of the world followed.

My mother married Serafino in 1947. That was about the time he was beginning his second Latin American assignment. His first work in Latin America was to organize anti-Fascist leagues just before World War II in the Italian communities in Argentina, Chile, and Brazil. It was there that Serafino first became acquainted with some of the great democrats on the political side of things in the Italian communities of which there were many in those countries. Jim Shea here also knew Serafino in those post-war years, and I know that Jim made friendships with some of those people from that epoch. Serafino's first exposure to Latin American was on that political level, to organize the democratic Italian communities and to oppose the influence of the Fascists in Latin America. Then later in 1947 after the war, he went back as a labor representative of the old AFL.

Getting back to myself, I went to the University of Maryland , where I got a degree in journalism. I then went to the Cornell School of Industrial and Labor Relations and got out of there in 1958. I joined the Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Union . My first personal experience was as a shop steward in one of the big hotels based in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Later, when I went to work for the Department of Labor , I joined the American Federation of Government Employees. Then when John F. Kennedy was elected President and the Alliance for Progress was announced, it offered broad opportunities for people, especially of my age, to go into this [international labor] field. The building of democratic trade unionism became an official part of US foreign policy. We were encouraged to do that and I formed part of the team of people who went out to take advantage of this policy and make careers in this field.

*Kienzle: Under whose auspices were you working at that time? Was that AID or was that the AFL-CIO?*

FRIEDMAN: No, I went from the US Department of Labor to the AFL-CIO national headquarters. I had learned Spanish by that time, and I did have an interest, which was logical, in Latin America. In fact, as a young boy I got to know through Serafino some luminous people such as Romulo Betancourt, who later became president of Venezuela; Vicor Raul Haya de la Torre, who was the dominant political figure of Peru of this century; Luis Alberto Monge, who later became president of Costa Rica. There were many people like that in Serafino's sphere who fascinated me as a young man, and I wanted to be identified with the ideals and goals of such people. That made working in Latin America more attractive to me.

*Kienzle: Were you assigned to an overseas post by the AFL-CIO?*

FRIEDMAN: No, I worked in the headquarters. Then when the AIFLD was conceived, from the AFL-CIO headquarters I was assigned to do nothing else but to help organize this. But I want to make it very clear that the kind of work I was doing was to rent the office, call the phone company, get a phone in there, buy the typewriters, etc. I was not a part of the brain trust that originally conceived this thing.

*Shea: Didn't you work with St. John's College in Annapolis on an exchange program with Tommy Holloran and John Doherty?*

FRIEDMAN: When I was in the Department of Labor I had this great assignment to work at St. John's College in the International Labor Orientation Center with Johnny Doherty. I spent about three years there, not counting a stint in the Army. There we received trade unionists from all over the world coming on ICA programs. ICA was the predecessor of AID. I found that work fascinating. In fact, when I look back on it, I can hardly believe that I could have taken a salary for such work. Every day was fun. It was like a continuation of going to school, just receiving these people, introducing them to the US and US labor practices, and going to classes with them. But of course in those years we were not working only in Latin America. There was a heavy emphasis on Europe, on Japan, and on Asia.

*Kienzle: Can you put dates on this, Jesse?*

FRIEDMAN: Oh, I'm talking about 1958 and 1959. In 1959 I began with the AFL-CIO. In 1960 I went to Peru to live to be the AIFLD representative there. I spent some two and one half to three years in Peru and was then transferred to Mexico where I worked with the ORIT , and then the CTM in the mid-1960s. I returned to Washington and the AFL-CIO sometime around 1966. I spent a brief period of time with the AFL-CIO, then returned to AIFLD as a regional director.

*Kienzle: You've been here in Washington since?*

FRIEDMAN: I have been at AIFLD headquarters ever since, of course traveling extensively. I have served AIFLD in various capacities, and I am now the Deputy Executive Director .

*Kienzle: Would you like to describe your experience in Peru? What were AIFLD's goals there and how were your working relations with the Embassy?*

FRIEDMAN: First I would like to make a couple of comments about Serafino [Romauldi]. I think that it is very fitting in an oral history of this kind that some things be put into perspective. Now it is *au courant* and popular to say that all that we are doing is a Cold War effort and that maybe we are not as useful today as we used to be because when the Communists were strong, that's what we were all about. I would like to make some remarks about that because it *just ain't the case*.

The ORIT was founded by Serafino , together with some other colleagues, amongst them Arturo Sabroso of Peru, who was the great Samuel Gompers of the Peruvian labor movement; Bernard Ibanez, the Chilean leader; and others. They founded what is now the ORIT in January 1948 in Lima. There were no Cold War considerations. The whole philosophy of what is now ORIT-in those days it was called the Inter-American Confederation of Labor but was reorganized in 1951 into the ORIT when the ICFTU was formed-the whole basis of that organization was the struggle to achieve freedom of association, so that workers could form unions and so that unions could play a more meaningful role in the struggle for democracy. The communists were totally uninvolved. The entire struggle was pitted against Perez Jimenez in Venezuela, Odria in Peru, Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, and the beginning of the Duvalier regime in Haiti. All of these oppressive regimes which were crucifying, killing, and exiling labor leaders were not Communist regimes. So when Fidel Castro and Cuba came along in 1959, ORIT was already established as an organization. So those who look at international labor and US labor's role in it and portray that as just one anti-communist effort or just some kind of a CIA front to accomplish things *terribly misinterpret* the whole history. The history was a struggle for freedom of association, a struggle to build strong unions as a component in achieving democracy and making unions a meaningful player within that democracy. When Communism became a factor, say in post-1960 Cuba, the Cuban Communists imposed the same harsh conditions on free labor that Perez Jimenez and his dictatorial colleagues had done years before. So the antipathy of free labor towards Communist unions in Communist societies was as natural as its antipathy towards the fascist type or the military type of harsh dictatorships. To characterize the AFL-CIO-or the AFL in those days-as just being a Cold War product is to do it a very *grievous injustice*. Yet that is how the enemies of organized labor and US labor's participation [in international labor activities] throughout the world try to portray it.

*Kienzle: You did not mention Peron in connection with the founding of ORIT. How did ORIT relate to the Peronists at that point?*

FRIEDMAN: Frankly it was a very antagonistic period. The Peronists were viewed as "neutralist, pro-Axis" during the war. Peron was a dictator. There was antipathy between the old AFL and the Peronists. A very famous delegation went to Argentina. On it were Jack Knight, the chairman of the Inter-American Affairs Committee, Serafino [Romauldi], and several others. That commission went to Argentina, looked at the situation, and came to the conclusion that the [Argentine] CGT at the time, in 1948. . .

*Shea: That's when they met with Peron and Evita.*

FRIEDMAN: They met with them. It was an acrimonious meeting. The delegation concluded that the CGT was nothing more than an extension of the Argentine Ministry of Labor. The delegation had to leave Argentina practically clandestinely because from that point on they were in danger, and those antagonisms characterized Argentine-US relations.

But it was not only the US. It is very important to point out that at the founding congress of the ORIT, which took place in 1951 in Mexico City, the Mexicans invited the CGT of Argentina. The Mexican invitation to the CGT of Argentina so offended all of the Latin American delegates at that time that the credentials committee refused to seat the invited guests there as not being legitimate trade unionists. That caused such embarrassment for the Mexican hosts that they walked out of the founding congress in 1951, which took place in Mexico City and in which they were partners. They walked out in protest. So ORIT was formed in 1951 without the Mexicans. They did not affiliate until 1954. So the antipathy towards the [Peronist] movement at that time was not only an American phenomenon, it was shared by the community of unions which comprised ORIT in those days.

Time and events passed, and in the early 1960s several Argentine and US trade unions thought that enough water had passed over the dam and that it was time for us to examine our coincidences of interest, because the CGT was indeed a union and sometimes strongly in opposition to the government of the day. It was no longer the instrument of the political party because there had been many changes-Peron had left Argentina and the CGT was independent. People like Juan Jose Taccone of the Light and Power [Workers Union], Jose Alonzo, who had been General Secretary of the CGT-although he was not at that time but he was still very influential-and others like Joe Beirne of the United States placed emphasis on our coincidences of interest. I should mention, too, that this whole concept was brought about by [the State Department] Labor Attaché Program and our various Labor Attachés [in Argentina], some of whom at that time had huge prestige. I can remember Henry Hammond was the one who was most active in promoting this kind of exchange. Henry Hammond was then assisted by a very young and junior Foreign Service Officer named Tony Freeman, who was also part of this.

Later, when it came to putting into practice this rapprochement between ourselves and the Argentines, the US Government had the good sense to send some Labor Attachés like Jim Shea down there, who played a very important role in bringing [the US and Argentine labor movements] together. Now that era [of division] is behind us, but it would be a disservice to history not to acknowledge that it existed, that it was real, that it was deep and that it took many years and a lot of patience to put it behind us and get on.

*Kienzle: Let's back up just a moment. I believe the Peronists tried to establish a regional organization called ATLAS. Was that a serious competitor with ORIT, the ICFTU oriented regional organization?*

FRIEDMAN: No, it never was really serious. What happened was that when the credentials committee of the ORIT refused to recognize the [Argentine] CGT delegates as legitimate trade unionists, the insult was so huge that there was an attitude that must have come from Person himself, or maybe from Evita, that, "Well, if they don't want us in there, then we will form our own organization." So they formed ATLAS, which [early on] had a huge budget that came from the Argentine Ministry of Labor. I heard that in one

country they had six labor attachés to do the work of ATLAS. Still, I read a plaque, I think in Nicaragua, on a beauty shop called "The Eva Peron Beauty Shop." I thought it was interesting. It was a donation from the social project funds of ATLAS. So ATLAS was never really an inter-American labor movement. It was a project of either the Ministry of Labor or some other foreign affairs ministry and was never really an effective organization.

*Kienzle: So ATLAS was really a creature of the Peron regime?*

FRIEDMAN: Absolutely. No question about that.

*Kienzle: Do you want to talk about some of ORIT's goals and your role in ORIT when you were working in Mexico City?*

FRIEDMAN: Okay, but first let me say this. When you look back at ORIT from its founding in 1951 to the election of President Kennedy in 1961 , ORIT had some of the most heroic, magnificent people. What they did with no resources was truly incredible. There was no AIFLD, and no foreign governments were interested. At the very time Romulo Betancourt, Jose Gonzales Navarro, and Francisco Olivo in Venezuela were in jail or in exile, Milton Eisenhower, the President's brother, was pinning a medal on Perez Jimenez as a staunch defender of democratic principles in Venezuela. So with almost nothing in material resources, but with support from Governor Luis Munos Marin of Puerto Rico and people like that, Pepe Figueres, President of Costa Rica contributing a little and speaking out very often, Frances Grant and her Inter-American Association for Freedom and Democracy, which was the marriage of the Aprista-like Social Democrats, who later came into power, they were able to do miracles, and they were able to produce the kinds of people who later came to govern their countries in Latin America, with differing degrees of success or failure. So that was the ORIT of Serafino's era.

The great contribution of the Alliance for Progress and the foresight of George Meany was the recognition that US foreign aid is funded through taxes and revenue collected. Workers pay a considerable part of those taxes. If the US is to have an aid program, it is fitting and proper that a portion of that aid go to workers. Kennedy was convinced that the AFL-CIO would be *the* appropriate vehicle to deliver that aid, always recognizing and always respectful of the fact that the US ambassador in any given country represented the President of the United States and was to be respected. If we did not like his policy-and there were always policy disagreements-we nevertheless had to be very respectful. This idea [of government support for labor assistance activities] sounds so simple now, but was quite revolutionary at the time. This was before the Scandinavians and the Germans and the Israelis and everybody else got involved with their own government-funded labor programs. So if we [AFL-CIO field representatives] had policy disagreements from time to time, we should refer those disagreements back to Washington where they would be resolved through channels, or not resolved through channels. Those were our marching orders.

After 1960 AIFLD began to open up offices in Latin America. There was the ORIT. The ORIT was tasked with the political job of pushing labor's agenda on an inter-American level. In those years, the ORIT gave technical assistance in collective bargaining. That is, ORIT might have a fellow from Chile stationed in Ecuador who would help the Ecuadoran unions; he would sit at the table and be their advisor.

We [in AIFLD] were very careful in those years not to conflict with the ORIT. We noted that our presence in any country was technical. In most countries we divided ourselves into two major areas of action. One was education, and I think we became perhaps the largest workers' education program in the whole world. I don't know of any larger. There may be by now more than a million graduates who had one or another of the courses that we gave.

The other major area was social projects . Social projects ranged from small impact projects, which could be loans or grants of $5,000, to the huge housing projects, which we did in Argentina, Mexico, Honduras, Brazil, and the Dominican Republic. We did them all over. Later high interest rates and scarcity of funds got us out of that business, but earlier we had multi-million dollar housing projects. In the process of doing these we worked closely with ORIT. The General Secretary of ORIT sat on the Board of Trustees of AIFLD for many years, so that ORIT would have an input into AIFLD policy. The point is that from 1951 to 1960. . .

*Kienzle: This was during Serafino Romauldi's era?*

FRIEDMAN: Yes, and Andy McClelland was with AIFLD and of course AIFLD had the backing and full support of George Meany and all of the political muscle he could bring to bear in the United States. They waged an uphill battle with almost no resources just to establish the fact that free trade unions should be a vital component part of any normally functioning democratic society, if that society was to be healthy.

But then came the election of John F. Kennedy and the establishment of the Alliance for Progress. The US Government took the position that it would be part of our policy to promote collective bargaining and promote the growth of free trade unions in Latin America and throughout the world. So whereas [in the past] these labor types had been a pain in the neck to various and sundry ambassadors because they were always going around getting people out of jail, protesting this and that, [now] all of a sudden it became the policy of the United States to promote [labor assistance]. We were establishing institutions in each country to [provide assistance] and we had support from our various embassies. Again, who could ever measure the vital role of the labor attachés in arguing the case within the embassy, something that we could never do?

*Shea: You also had the pressure of American businessmen who were constantly running to the ambassadors complaining about these so called organizing efforts.*

FRIEDMAN: Well, it was a very controversial and revolutionary [policy ] which is now taken for granted in the world. Nobody questions if the Spaniards get involved in setting up a labor school or contributing to it somewhere. But at that time it was quite unusual. So the post-1960 Alliance years, which followed those early years, was like a different chapter in history. There were still dictatorships, and horrendous ones, to fight in the 1970s. The 1980s, for much of Central America, was like a terrible nightmare in terms of the abuses of human rights and civil rights in the civil wars that took place. It is interesting to note that when Jimmy Carter used human rights as his basic agenda, he turned to the labor movement as his principal ally in support of this policy. I was told in Venezuela, by some top leaders once, that they loved Carter more in Venezuela than we loved him in the United States. The explanation of that is that he was the first one to put human rights on his agenda, and very high on his agenda. This reflected a kind of attitude and a kind of view that even these people who [later] liked the United States had felt in their formative years.

So it took quite a few years for AIFLD to become accepted. AIFLD was resisted in a lot of embassies. Bill Doherty, who became Executive Director about 1965, was sometimes accused of being too aggressive, of using too much muscle, of being very harsh and tough. I believe, and I think a lot of people would agree, that if had he not been that way, AIFLD would have been swallowed in the bureaucracy. It would not have developed its own personality as an institution which is quite frankly allied with the welfare of workers in Latin America, and through that work with the welfare of the workers in our country.

*Shea: Jesse, I am absolutely convinced-and I've been an observer of the scene for many, many years-that if it had not been for Bill Doherty, AIFLD would have been long gone from the scene, and also the other two institutes, the Asian [American Free Labor Institute] and the African [American Labor Center].*

FRIEDMAN: I am second to none in my admiration for Doherty-especially since this is on tape-but there were a couple of other guys who played a role in keeping AIFLD afloat. Their names were Meany and Kirkland, and I don't think they should be ignored.

*Shea: Serafino was the first director.*

FRIEDMAN: Yes, when the whole concept of AIFLD came about, the first director of AIFLD was Serafino, and Serafino remained in that capacity until his retirement in 1965. It was Bill Doherty, who had been with the PTTI [Post, Telegraph, and Telecommunications International](?)-he was their inter-American representative-and Bill came to AIFLD around 1960. He was the Social Projects Director for many years. From Social Projects Director he became Executive Director when Serafino retired in 1965.

*Shea: Of course we want to talk about the role of George Meany and Lane Kirkland, but I wonder if you want to make a few comments about the extremely important role of Joe Beirne?*

FRIEDMAN: Well, Joe Beirne was a dynamic and charismatic President of the Communications Workers of America. Through his PTTI experience he became a solid internationalist. It was Joe Beirne, who returned from a trip to Latin America-on a PTTI mission-and he was disturbed at how little in US [assistance] resources was getting down to the workers. He was convinced that more could be done. It was from Joe Beirne's concept and from his discussions with Meany that the concept of forming an AIFLD came about. Meany became convinced that this was the right thing to do. It was very hard, because it was so revolutionary at the time, [i.e. the idea of] form[ing] an institute that would go out and work with workers. Meany took this idea to his friend Peter Grace, who was a very progressive management fellow and they came to the conclusion that if a project was presented that had the endorsement of labor and management it would be irresistible. Add to that [the fact] that Kennedy had just been elected and that part of his platform was the Alliance for Progress. All of those circumstances made possible the birth and reality of AIFLD, and the success of AIFLD made possible the subsequent creation of [the AFL-CIO labor assistance] institutes for Asia and Africa, and much later the Free Trade Union Institute came into being.

Later, under President Kirkland's stewardship, it was decided that the inclusion of management was a controversial issue. Many people argued in favor of it; others argued against it. The truth was that management never had much to do with the day-to-day operations or policy decisions of the AIFLD. There was always a majority of labor leaders on the board on any given decision. Very soon after President Kirkland took over the AFL-CIO, he decided that enough years had passed that we did not need management support anymore. It might have been necessary at the beginning to get AIFLD off the ground. AIFLD was reorganized in that sense; the management people were thanked; and they no longer participated on the board.

*Kienzle: Will you tell us how many AIFLD representatives there are in the field at present? What kind of prospects are there for the immediate future?*

FRIEDMAN: What a sad question! It would have been very nice if you had asked, "How important was AIFLD once?" [The answer to that question is] "very much." We used to have an office in every country. We used to have staff in every country. We had programs going that were mind boggling. You would go into places, like I did in Paraguay, and the school did not shut down. The message, the classes, and the enthusiasm were great; it would go weekdays, weekends. My experience in Peru was that if the students were interested in what the professor was saying, they would stay until seven, eight o'clock at night. We could never keep a library. There was so much interest that as soon as we set up some books or something like that, it did not take long for all of the books to be out.

At any rate, because of the general situation with the lack of funding and cutbacks, we no longer have a program in every country. We have an office in Chile that services the southern cone, that is Uruguay, Argentina, and Chile. We have one office that services Brazil and Paraguay, another office in Bogota that services the Andean countries, an

office in El Salvador for the Central American countries, and an office in Barbados for the Caribbean. Actually, the office that services the Caribbean is in Caracas and it also services Venezuela. It is located in Caracas because the ORIT is located there. So there are five principal field offices and because of special circumstances, their recent history, there are also offices in Haiti and Nicaragua.

*Shea: Do you want to mention where your people came from? You might also want to mention the one who paid with his life, Mike Hammer?*

FRIEDMAN: In the beginning, when AIFLD was formed, most of our early staff came from the unions. They were nominated by their unions. Another spectacular story, because of all of those who would call us Cold War warriors. There were guys like Chuck Wheeler, Bob Cazares, and Pepe Suaro, who went to Latin America armed only with their knowledge of the US trade union movement, how it functions, and what a union ought to do. That was their ideology. They made a tremendous impact in their various countries [of assignment]. They formed friends amongst the trade unionists, made real relationships, and introduced concepts where they were not known before. So the great majority of the first wave of our employees came from the trade union movement.

Then there was a period when we had technical and agricultural programs. In that period and shortly after, we drew upon ex-Peace Corps people, who were fluent in the language and had some technical expertise. They were already used to the living abroad, were culturally sensitive, and had lived amongst the people. They had a great deal to offer. In that period came Bruce Jay, Paul Somogyi, who is now the Executive Director of the Free Trade Union Institute, Norm Shapoul (who came later in the 1980's) and Mike Hammer.

Mike Hammer was not a Peace Corps volunteer. Mike Hammer was a student at the Georgetown School of Foreign Service. He came to work at AIFLD as a messenger just because he needed a job. He was married, had a kid, and was going through school. But Mike Hammer fell in love with AIFLD, fell in love with its concept, fell in love with everything about it. He could not bring himself to leave. There is a kind of funny story about Mike because Serafino was the Executive Director then, and Serafino saw all of Mike's talent. Serafino said that the best thing we can do for this young man was to ask him to resign, because this guy was not a messenger; he had all this talent. So Mike resigned. I think he took a couple of more courses and came back as a program officer.

Mike was the founder of our agricultural component. We found that one of the problems we had was that we all came from an urban trade union background, but most of the Latin American confederations with which we were working had a peasant extension. We had to find a way to service them. It was a different kind of service. It had to do with cooperatives. There we had to draw upon the experience of our Israeli friends who knew more about [agricultural cooperatives] than we did. Mike Hammer went to Israel and took a course there. He became a specialist in cooperatives. He was [one of the first] to convince the Salvadorans that they could marshal all their energy and form a real peasant confederation, which was called the *Union Communal Salvadorena*, the Communal

Salvadoran Union, which affected, at its height, at least 100,000 Salvadoran citizens and was a substantial organization there.

Mike never lost his attachment to El Salvador, and he was much loved there. Early, before other people recognized it, he used to maintain that the future of Central America would be determined by what happened in El Salvador and advocated that there had to be an alternative-and that was a strong democratic center. That did not exist in El Salvador. Mike was urging everybody who would listen to him that we had to build a strong democratic center and the trade union movement had to be the basis for it. This was his philosophy. So Mike was working on that kind of program when he was assassinated, along with Mark Pearlman, on January 3, 1981, in the Sheraton Hotel in El Salvador.

*Shea: I worked with him in Brazil when he was the AIFLD Country Program Director there. He had had a previous assignment in El Salvador and could hardly wait to get back there.*

FRIEDMAN: Mike had worked not only in El Salvador. Mike had worked in Honduras and had been our director in Colombia and in Venezuela, as well as Brazil. But as you say, he was always involved with the Salvadorans. He never left El Salvador psychologically; he never divorced himself from El Salvador. He totally identified with it.

*Kienzle: Was there a particular motive in his assassination?*

FRIEDMAN: Well, as it developed, the real target of the assassins was Rodolfo Viera. Rodolfo Viera was the General Secretary of the UCS organization, with which we were working very closely. Viera was a great friend of Mike Hammer; they were like brothers, and Mike was unfortunately seated at the same table with Viera, along with Mark Pearlman. The assassins were told that Viera was in the room sitting at the table with two foreigners, and that they should eliminate them all. That is really what happened.

*Kienzle: They got all three?*

FRIEDMAN: And they got all three.

*Kienzle: Do you want to expand on AIFLD's cooperation with Israel and other international labor assistance activities?*

FRIEDMAN: We are a part of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and as such cooperate with them on certain programs of mutual interest. The Israelis [the General Federation of Labor in Israel or *Histadrut*] have long been interested in international affairs. They have their own international affairs institute and have approached us on cooperation, and we have approached them. The one area, as I said before, where they had some expertise that we sorely needed was in the rural field. They knew how to form cooperatives. They knew the importance of the role of agronomists

who were specialists in making bad land produce. They knew how to organize things to get goods to market.

Mike Hammer went to Israel and made friendships there. He saw the special skills that the Israelis had and called on some of them to go to Latin America. One of these fellows died shortly after he had made some great initiatives. Another, Victor Kalachuk, came over and is still in El Salvador today. He made tremendous contributions in Honduras, in El Salvador, and in the Dominican Republic. He even went to Haiti and did an assessment that was very technical about what could be done there. So there was an exchange on that level until we could acquire enough expertise where we did not have to rely so much on what the Israelis had to offer. That was one aspect of it.

A second aspect of it was Yehuda Paz and the [Histadrut's Afro-Asian and Latin American] institutes. There we held our courses or had joint courses with them, especially in the areas of cooperatives, where they had people who were truly expert. We used our relationships, classroom facilities, and contributions to bring members in who attended their courses. That has been on-going and we have enjoyed an excellent relationship with them. Histadrut has always had an inter-American representative, until recently when financial difficulties obliged them to close their Buenos Aires office. But we've had frequent and good exchanges with them on points of view and I think they would say, as we say, that it has been very useful.

*Kienzle: Do you want to go back to your experience in Peru and tell of your role as a field representative there?*

FRIEDMAN: Yes, when I went to Peru there was a military junta in place. This military junta wanted to keep the Aprista under its thumb. APRA is the name of a political party which represented about ninety per cent of the democratic trade union movement at that time, or even more perhaps. There I was with a program, part of the Alliance for Progress, to work with them. What we did was to introduce a vast program of labor education. We built unions. The union structure was there, because Peru had a rich history in these things, but we reinforced unions. We strengthened collective bargaining in the country and brought modern techniques into the labor relations system. We helped the unions, so that they themselves became a driving force in pushing for elections that later brought Belaunde into power. In all of this I was working with the CTP and its leadership, first with Arturo Sabroso, then later with Julio Cruzado.

In those years the CTP was far more powerful than it is today. One of the effects of the reign of Julio Cruzado as General Secretary was to make the movement independent of the trade union bureau of the party. After the death of Haya de la Torre, there was not a good succession, and there was a body of thought there that felt the trade union movement ought to do what the party tells it to do when the party tells it to do it. There was such a misunderstanding about what things were all about that we were even approached by party representatives to channel trade union programs through the trade union bureau of the political party. They were offended when we said that we could not

even entertain such a request. Cruzado resisted that but the cohesiveness of the CTP dissipated.

At the same time the military juntas of the 1970s were stimulating and financing the growth of opposition unions in their desire to destroy APRA as a force. That saw the true burgeoning of the communist trade union movement there, and also the so-called independent but pro-government trade union movement called the CTRP, which was totally supported and funded by the Velasco government. Anyway, those events happened after I left. Your question was what did I do when I was in Peru, and I did the traditional social projects and educational programs.

*Shea: Jesse, do you recall the labor attachés you worked with at that time and who was our ambassador?*

FRIEDMAN: When I went to Peru the ambassador was John Wesley Jones. John Wesley Jones was a true gentleman, as though cast from an old mold. His labor attaché was of a kind that you, Jim Shea, may be the last representative. His name was Tom Robles . Tom Robles had been the Executive Secretary of the New Mexico State Federation of Labor. He was a bilingual fellow and I think he came from the IBEW [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers]. In those years there were many US trade union technicians who could enter the Labor Attaché Program, and what a disservice it was to fail to continue [to recruit] those guys. Those guys brought a dimension to our embassies that has been sorely lacking. I won't say it is totally absent, because there were many people who came from the Foreign Service who were every bit as good as they were, because there were favorably disposed towards labor. Still, we need a special effort to get people like Tom Robles and Art Nixon, who was from the CWA [Communications Workers of America]. Well, Robles was of that type, and I will be eternally grateful to Robles for all of his experience in the trade union movement. There were times when I could go to him and tell him of certain problems that I had. There were times, as you alluded to before, when certain American employers, who were offended by the idea that there were US unions down there training people, would complain to the ambassador, often with exaggerated or false stories about us. Robles was a voice, inside the embassy, who could explain what it was we were doing and why it was consistent with policy. He was able to keep the ship on keel.

Robles was succeeded by another fellow whose origins were in the labor movement, although he later went on to be a consul. That was Irwin Rubenstein. Rubenstein, I think, had his origins in the [International] Paperworkers Union. He continued the same policy that Robles had of making sure, at a time when it was a controversial concept in US foreign policy, that workers' movements were considered and that we had a fair hearing inside the embassy -- and in convincing others that our cause was correct and just.

If you really want to talk about labor attachés, who knows how many Chileans are alive because Art Nixon happened to be in Chile? When the Pinochet coup came, those Chilean trade unionists knew there was an officer in the embassy who would do anything

he possibly could to protect them. They came to Art Nixon with lists. I know this is true, because I heard it from the Chileans themselves. Nixon was up day and night tracing the names on those lists. He served notice on the people from DINA, the Chilean secret police, who were so generous about killing people, that there was a diplomat in the US Embassy who was on their tail and holding them accountable for the fate of these people who had disappeared.

*Shea: Nixon was from the Communications Workers Union, by the way.*

*Kienzle: This occurred approximately when?*

FRIEDMAN: 1973. September 11, 1973, was the coup. Now here's a case where the AIFLD person could not do that. We were not in the embassy. But Art Nixon sure did. The State Department may have forgotten about Art Nixon today, but he is surely remembered in Chile.

*Kienzle: Did he get the recognition for his achievement that he deserved?*

FRIEDMAN: I doubt it. The recognition that he would have appreciated would have come from the unionists down there and from the Americans who were involved -- like AIFLD and the AFL-CIO. There he had recognition and prestige and perhaps that's all he sought. I'm unaware of any dinner or medal or anything.

*Shea: He went on to be our Labor Attaché in Mexico. I agree with Jesse that he did not get recognition. To be quite frank, he was selected out for time in grade. That was because of the reluctance of people in the Embassy to acknowledge the great contribution he made in saving the lives of these people. Arthur B. Nixon.*

*Kienzle: He was in Ecuador, Chile, and Mexico. Can you cite other examples of labor attachés who have done heroic things like this?*

FRIEDMAN: I think I could, but I would have to think about it. The Chilean experience so was dramatic. Nixon's intervention was also with the aid of an AIFLD guy named Joe Campos, who is something of a folk hero. The Chilean [authorities] were so fed up with Joe Campos and all of the people he was protecting that he was once stopped by the military and arrested for a traffic violation, like speeding. Joe was not even driving; he was in the back seat. They had orders to get him into the police station, and that's the way they did it.

So Chile was really dramatic. In other cases, Argentina for example, there diplomacy was not [conducted] on such a dramatic open level. There are many Argentines who are probably alive today because on a quiet basis our embassy and our various labor attachés acted. Tony Freeman could tell you about that.

Other cases I know: Elliott Abrams is a very controversial person, but I would tell the whole world [the following story]. Juan Jose Alfaro, a labor leader from Guatemala, was in Washington when his son was kidnapped. Juan at first reacted like any father would. We called Elliott Abrams, who made phone calls to anybody and everybody he could. He put aside everything. Elliott moved some generals there to go look for that boy. They found him the next day, bruised, frightened, but otherwise all right.

Those are the kinds of things that our heroic people do. Elliott responded. I would like to have a friend like Elliott if I were in trouble. I don't mean to get involved in the debate about Elliott, but for that action Elliott is one of my heroes. He was not a labor attaché, but he was one hell of a human rights officer and Assistant Secretary for Human Rights. I was involved in just one little chapter. God knows what other things that he did.

So Argentina is a case where a more quiet diplomacy was practiced on one side, while we in labor were being much more vocal. Each was effective in their own way.

*Kienzle: So there was effective working relationship between the labor attaché on the one hand and the AIFLD representative on the other in maintaining contacts and protecting labor leaders.*

FRIEDMAN: That's right. It is one thing for American citizen Jesse Friedman to go ask about a foreign national-Where is he? In what jail cell?-and be diddled around. It is quite another thing if citizen Jesse is received by somebody who knows he has the full backing of the ambassador of the United States and that if an answer is not forthcoming, the ambassador will ask why and send somebody else to press the case. I think on that score we can be very proud of our labor attachés across the board and many of our ambassadors.

*Shea: Jesse, as you know, I go back to Argentina on a regular basis and talk to some of my old friends in the trade union movement. They recall a guy named Jesse Friedman helping them out in their times of trouble. Bob Cazares, too.*

FRIEDMAN: Yes, I remember visiting trade union prisoners in the penitentiary in Buenos Aires. It was really a frightening experience to go in there and see them. But then I [remember with] pleasure [the visit to the United States] of Argentine President Menem, who when he came to Washington asked to visit the AFL-CIO. Menem went first to New York, where there was a dinner, to which I was invited. Sol Chaikin, then the ex-President of the ILGWU, said "President Menem, why have you put the AFL-CIO on your schedule? What's your agenda?" Menem replied, "To thank them, because I was a prisoner with Diego Ibanez and others. We felt abandoned. But then in the prison we heard that the AFL-CIO had sent a delegation of solidarity to Argentina and we knew the world had not forgotten us. I was not a trade unionist. I did not even know what the AFL-CIO was. Now I'm President of Argentina and I want to go to the AFL-CIO and just express my thanks." And he came and had a meeting with AFL-CIO President Kirkland.

*Kienzle: At the risk of asking a leading question, do think the reduction in the number of labor attachés and AIFLD representatives will impact on the potential for helping trade unionists in trouble in the future?*

FRIEDMAN: Hopefully the world has now reached a stage that many of us never thought it would reach. I'm not sure that any of us ever thought that the Western Hemisphere would ever have a time when there is only one dictatorship, Cuba. For all their warts and flaws, every other country has an elected head of state. The flaws in the judicial systems and the brutal violations of human rights and such are a terrible memory of the past. We hope that the kinds of problems that we confronted in the 1960s and 1970s and even into the 1980s are behind us.

The problems of the future are different, because the economies have become global, because of the growth of the free trade zones, and because of the growth of trade pacts. In the old days, a trade unionist in Peru or in Mexico had to get an agreement with an employer. The question was what kind of preparation did you have to do to sit down at the table with that employer. What kind of issues did you have to take into consideration? What body of law did you need to know? What were the techniques of leadership needed in order to arrive at an agreement? Those were the kinds of things we were dealing with.

Now, a worker can be sitting at a bench in a garment factory in El Salvador, not even knowing that the blouse she is sewing will show up in a Gap store in St. Louis. She does not know because perhaps it may be a Korean-owned factory or contractor. These are the kinds of problems we deal with now, which need our attention. It is structural adjustment and the workers' role in this structural adjustment. It is the struggle for workers' rights. It is an education process to show workers in the United States how their fate is linked to workers in Thailand, Chile, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, etc..

Cutting down on labor programs and the kinds of schools we can make available will be damaging. Our embassies will suffer because they will have lost that voice inside the embassy that argues for a more just foreign policy, because everybody is breaking their legs in the scramble to become free market, to privatize everything. It becomes almost unpatriotic, out of fashion, to include compassion as an element of policy. Hopefully we won't have as many human rights violations as existed in the past. There still are plenty in Cuba, and there are still plenty in countries with elected governments. Hopefully there are people within our embassies, and certainly within our labor movement, who will be forever vigilant in denouncing these things. But the nature of the general problem in relation to workers has changed. Cutting down on the kinds of programs that address these problems will be negative for the United States.

*Kienzle: Do you see any of these global economic pressures as a threat to some of these fragile democracies? Are they strong enough to withstand these international pressures?*

FRIEDMAN: By some miracle some have, but only by a miracle. Venezuela offers a case in point. Venezuela should be richer than the United States if you look at its population

and then look at its enormous mineral wealth, its oil, its iron ore, and it precious stones. There was a time when the government of Venezuela adjusted its laws to say that all of these resources are the property of the people and the benefits from them should be reflected in lower gas prices, in subsidized food prices, and in subsidized transportation. For a whole variety of reasons that policy did not work so well. That has to do with their own internal structure, but it also has to do with the structural adjustment that was imposed upon them and the harshness World Bank and IMF conditions. So what was once the leading democracy in Latin America, almost suffered a military coup. There was violence and riots in the streets and general dissatisfaction. When people are terribly angry, they search for radical solutions. For the time being, Venezuela has preserved its democracy, but it should be a real lesson to all of us that what we worked so hard for, that these many countries have representative democracies, is hanging on a fragile string. Democracy has to be nourished and reinforced. It could be in danger. Labor programs are only one kind of approach needed to nourish democracy.

*Shea: Jesse, do you want to make a few comments about the work of the international trade secretariats? For example, the International Metal Workers' Federation and its retired Secretary General, Herman Rebhan, and others you have worked with over the years?.*

FRIEDMAN: I know and love Herman Rebhan, but actually in Latin America we haven't done that much with the Metal Workers. The secretariats are very important, because they are industry focused, and they provide a service for the members of their industry that they can't quite get anywhere else. For example, just last night I spent a couple of hours with Jack Golodner, the President of the Professional Employees Department of the AFL-CIO. Jack is also very active in and is the President of the Pan-American Federation of Arts, Entertainment, and Media Workers. Jack was talking about the work of the secretariats in protecting the property rights of artists and the rather good agreement they made with the Mexicans in keeping advertisements made in Spanish from being shown here in the United States-ads made on the cheap in Mexico. These are good agreements, which they are making there. You could not [learn to] do that in a normal AIFLD course or at the Harvard [Trade Union Program]. You could only touch on these things, yet the people directly involved are doing it.

In other industries, such as the telecommunications industry, things are changing rapidly. Companies are being privatized. You have new dimensions added to the former telephone industry that have to do with cable TV and the coming of the information highway. People have to be up-dated. Morton Bahr and the Communications Workers of America are assembling the expertise and staffs to cope with this rapid industrial change and share information with others.

So the secretariats serve a very important purpose in looking after the interests of their own membership. The International Federation of Textile, Garment, Leather and Shoe Workers, for example, is doing some great work in trying to stop runaway shops operating in the industrial zones of Central America, where there are terrible abuses

among the workers, mostly female. They are calling attention to these abuses by organizing factories and breaking through the anti-labor barriers that are put up in the duty-free zones.

*Shea: Would you care to make a few comments about Mexico and don Fidel Velasquez ?*

*FRIEDMAN:* Don Fidel Velasquez. Well, I know you have talked with Ben Stephansky about don Fidel. It was an honor to know him. He is a unique figure in the entire world. He is now in his ninety-fifth year, still at the helm of the CTM (Mexican Confederation of Labor). He is one of those people arteriosclerosis has passed by. Maybe he has a pact with God that none of us know about. I had the good fortune of seeing him on a frequent basis during the years I was in Mexico, and more infrequently since. Every time that I see him I feel that I am in the room with a giant. I think Bill Doherty would say the same. I even have been with Tom Donahue and Lane Kirkland in the presence of don Fidel, and I think that even they look at him with a certain. . .

*Kienzle: Awe?*

FRIEDMAN: Not awe exactly. We in the AFL-CIO were very disappointed with the lack of enthusiasm with which the CTM took on the whole NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) issue. They were not aligned with us and that hurt, frankly. We wish their policy were different. Still, don Fidel Velasquez is a person who helped to mold the Mexican trade union movement and keep it as a stabilizing organization in a country that was so unstable. I remember that Serafino used to say, when he would hear critics of Mexico, that he really did not find it much worse than Chicago of the 1920s, and that in Italy, when he was a very young man, if you wanted to describe a total mess, you would say, "What is this? Is this a Mexico?" Because that is how they perceived Mexico in the 1920s, in the post-revolutionary period. People like Fidel Velasquez and Blanquez (?) had to make order out of that revolution. They needed a time of stability, and they needed guarantees for the workers. In that period of history, they played a huge role.

Now it is quite apparent that a new, more modern Mexican labor movement is emerging, which, in order to survive, must pursue its own interests much more aggressively and not be so in league with those keeping the lid on the pot. That, of course, is a question for them to decide. That Fidel Velasquez has played an enormous role, there is no question.

Fidel Velasquez always wanted to be a part of the international labor movement. He is the only one still around who knew Sam Gompers. Do you know anyone who knew Sam Gompers? Once I was part of a US delegation. We were all sitting around a table, and we told don Fidel we had all read about Sam Gompers and that we knew a lot about him, but we did not know much about him as a person. We asked don Fidel to reflect on Gompers as a person, and he did. He likened Gompers as a personality to George Meany, except he said that Gompers could be very stubborn and very. . .

*Shea: In fact Gompers died on his way back from Mexico. There is some question as to whether he died in Mexico or Texas. He had met with the leaders of the Mexican trade union movement. I'm not sure that it was the CTM at that time.*

FRIEDMAN: No, it was the *Casa del Obrero Mundial*, a predecessor organization. Fidel Velasquez was on the reception committee for that delegation that came down. Gompers' death is officially said to have been in San Antonio, Texas, I think. At least it is believed by the Mexicans that he died on the train going home, and that one of his last wishes was that, if he died, he wanted to die in the United States. To honor his last wish, they announced his death in Texas. I don't know if that is true or not, but I do know that that is what the Mexicans believe.

*Kienzle: Are there any other comments you would like to make about your assignment in Mexico and your work with ORIT that we haven't covered?*

FRIEDMAN: Well, maybe to remember Arturo Jauregui . I worked with Arturo Jauregui. He was another of those unforgettable and dynamic people. Jauregui could not stand a day off. He said days off gave him headaches. He was an indefatigable worker in the best tradition. I was lucky to work at his side and to learn. He was a Peruvian, a pasta worker. He worked originally at a spaghetti factory there.

*Kienzle: He was the General Secretary of ORIT at the time you were in Mexico?*

FRIEDMAN: Yes. He had been Assistant General Secretary for many years, then he was elected General Secretary. He replaced Alfonso Sanchez Maduriaga of Mexico. Those were the Alliance for Progress years. Jauregui could at times be a great critic of US foreign policy. Sometimes he was supportive. He was an absolute democrat. He was an independent guy. He was determined that Latin American labor should grow and be a force in every country. We shared that point of view with him, so that during the years Jauregui was head of ORIT, the AIFLD, in the person of me and those who succeeded me there, had a mandate to cooperate with Jauregui.

We worked hard in many countries. ORIT had a school in Cuernavaca, not unlike the school that exists today at the George Meany Center, the Inter-American Trade Union School. I helped to run that school. Later, when ORIT fell on harder times, ORIT could not afford to maintain the school, so it reverted back to the state of Morelos-Cuernavaca is a city in the state of Morelos-whereafter it was given by the state to the CTM. It is now a CTM educational facility. Working with Jauregui during those years was a very good school for me. Working with the ORIT gave me the inter-American perspective which I think I needed.

*Shea: You worked there with Jack O'Grady, of course.*

FRIEDMAN: No. When I worked in Mexico, Jim, Irving Salert was the labor attaché then. Salert was a special kind of labor attaché. After Salert, I left Mexico and Jack

O'Grady came. Then because of my job, I had to go to Mexico very often, six or seven times a year for one reason or another, and I got to work very closely with Jack O'Grady. Jack was a great man, another great credit to our Foreign Service. Much to the discredit of the Foreign Service, he was penalized and selected out for having too much of a one dimensional focus, which was labor. They should have erected a monument to Jack O'Grady for the people he was able to attract, for his understanding of events, and for the way he influenced things wherever he went. Instead they said he had too much of a one dimensional character. So AIFLD was very happy, once the appropriate legalities were cleared, to hire Jack O'Grady. Actually O'Grady's last job was as an AIFLD director. So I know Jack O'Grady very well and worked with him closely. However, he was not the labor attaché when I was in Mexico.

*Kienzle: What years were you stationed in Mexico?*

FRIEDMAN: I went to Mexico in 1963, and I left in 1965 or 1966 . [Although he was not in Mexico during my tour there], I am witness to the fact that a labor attaché who had been there years earlier-I am talking about Ben Stephansky-was remembered very fondly. Talk about the image of the United States! Everything that a labor attaché or other diplomats did was measured against the model that Stephansky set. I think it would have been terribly hard to have been a labor attaché following Stephansky. I have the idea that, if there was a strike, Stephansky would be out among the crowd finding out all of the issues and somehow letting the strikers know that somebody understood them. If there was a major political decision to be made, of which the CTM or labor was to be a part, I have the impression that Stephansky was one of those in whom the Mexicans would have confided.

*Shea: He went on to be our ambassador to Bolivia.*

FRIEDMAN: Yes, he became our ambassador to Bolivia. But your [oral history] project is on labor attachés and Ben Stephansky was still very freshly remembered when I was living in Mexico.

*Kienzle: Do you want to comment on the impact that the change in Guatemala, the Arbenz government, had on ORIT and the US position towards ORIT?*

FRIEDMAN: The US position towards ORIT? Of course that was before my time, but I do know something about it. I do know that Arturo Jauregui was arrested. That was at the time the successor president was assassinated. (Telephone interruption.)

*Kienzle: Do you want to continue your remarks on Mexico?*

FRIEDMAN: I think that covers it. During my particular stay in Mexico, I was the Education Director. I was in charge of the academic program at the Cuernavaca school. During the course of that period, I developed the curriculum. We selected students; we coordinated things with AIFLD. We coordinated education programs in the field where

AIFLD and ORIT had a coincidence of interests. I gravitated towards-I never had the title-being the assistant to Arturo Jauregui. We could not have been further apart in terms of personalities, but we complemented each other. So we spent weekends together and many evenings together, and I was a very willing student at the time. I always marveled at his ability to speak to a group of peasants or to a council of ministers, each at its own level and with the proper vocabulary and his ability to be patient and to stand back when he could not influence a situation, and then move in with all guns blazing when he could influence the situation. I treasure those years and, of course, I would like to think I made a contribution toward building up ORIT, in [the context of] the circumstances that we were confronting in those days.

I have never lost my love for ORIT and even today I am the principal liaison officer with ORIT, on a functional basis with the regime of Luis Anderson in Cuernavaca. But circumstances and times are very different today than they were then. Who was it that said, "To look into the future, you have to stand on the shoulders of giants"? Jauregui surely ranked as a giant of his time.

*Kienzle: You mentioned there were differences between the AFL-CIO and the CTM on NAFTA. Would you expand on that?*

FRIEDMAN: Yes. The AFL-CIO, for reasons that are very logical and very easy to understand, opposed NAFTA because NAFTA had no meaty provisions for workers' rights and environmental protections, and the subsequent sidebar agreements never satisfied the AFL-CIO. That would have been the application of the basic principles of the ILO as an integral part of NAFTA. Otherwise there was a danger-and I think the preoccupation of the AFL-CIO has been borne out-that exploitation of labor would be one of the factors that brought us into "a race to the bottom," and NAFTA would not be a trade pact that would benefit both societies as a whole. That was the position of the AFL-CIO. It was the hope of the AFL-CIO that the Mexicans would agree and that they, in their country and we in ours, would together fight to achieve worker rights as a part of the trade pacts. I participated in several missions which went down there to discuss these issues with the Mexicans. They treasured their relationship with the AFL-CIO, but their position was that they had a labor law which was sufficiently comprehensive to protect their workers in all of the areas with which we were concerned. It was unnecessary to have these rights in the trade pact because they already had them. So we could never achieve the degree of cooperation on that level that we sought.

*Kienzle: Were the Mexicans satisfied with the enforcement of their comprehensive labor law?*

FRIEDMAN: Well, they said they were and perhaps they have to be taken at their word. Certainly we were not satisfied. Under the meager provisions that do exist under the sidebar agreement, we already have some cases in process that. . . (End of Side B, Tape I).

*Kienzle: Do you want to conclude regarding the CTM's position on enforcement of the law?*

FRIEDMAN: The CTM leaves it to the labor inspectors to enforce the law and maybe to their own leaders to bring violations to the attention of the appropriate authorities. We believe that the treaty is flawed and that the treaty is no good without a labor rights provision. The CTM position contrasts with the position, for example, of the Chilean trade unions, which would like to enter NAFTA. The Chilean trade unions say, along with us, that they do not want to have a treaty if the treaty does not have a labor rights provision.

It has always been our position that trade should benefit everybody in the society and not just the few investors. The treaties have all kinds of provisions for the protection of property rights and marketing rights and all kinds of remedies for their violation. The treaties don't have any real, meaningful provisions for the protection of workers' rights. It is just that simple, and it is that to which we object. That does not mean, however, that in other areas we do not have coincidences of interest with the CTM. We cooperate with them in the context of ORIT on the hemispheric side and exchange information on international issues. There are meaningful relationships which exist between the Mexicans and ourselves, but we do not have a meeting of the minds on NAFTA. They know our position very well; we know theirs; and we have agreed to disagree.

*Kienzle: Do you think they are just out of touch with the times in Mexico or do you think there is really not a problem there?*

FRIEDMAN: As I said before-and this is a very personal view-the nature of the Mexican trade union movement is changing. That long period where the movement was a part of the stability and the old order of Mexico and its one party absolutely accepted political rule, all of that is changing, and the labor movement has to change with it. I know quite a few younger Mexican labor leaders who would like to be part of that change. They are good leaders. They understand that the old order is giving way to the new in Mexico. If they don't change sufficiently, I think they will suffer dramatic consequences. Already, even within that society, some unions have broken away and formed their own confederation, which strikes a much more independent stance, the FECEVIS.

*Kienzle: Are they recognized by the AFL-CIO?*

FRIEDMAN: Yes. They include the telephone workers. They have an excellent relationship with our own CWA. They have on-going cooperative programs at a very deep level. There is a good relationship between Morton Bahr, the President of the CWA, and Hernandez Juarez, the President of the Mexican Telephone Workers. I think the airline pilots are with them. The bus drivers are with them. They represent a new, more militant generation of Mexican leaders. Even within the CTM there are those who want to change with the times. There are also those, of course, of the old guard, who are comfortable with the way things are. It is, of course, for the Mexicans and not for

foreigners to decide their own destiny. But I think that any observer of Mexico sees the change coming and that those who do not accommodate to the changes are going to be left behind.

*Kienzle: Are there any final comments you would like to make before we conclude the interview?*

FRIEDMAN: Only that with regard to the role of the US Government, and its lack of support for labor, then later support for labor, you should really have a session with Bill Doherty. Bill would contribute a philosophical dimension to the discussion

*Kienzle: On behalf of the Labor Diplomacy Oral History Project, I want to thank you, Jesse, for allowing us to interview you this morning. This has been a very informative and valuable interview.*

FRIEDMAN: Thank you for inviting me.

*Shea: It has been a great pleasure interviewing you.*

*End of interview*