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Meantime, meantime, we closed in by using the power of the other terms. Until we got them narrowed down, the one last chance they had was in – I'm not too far over time yet am I? The last chance they had to break through in a serious way was in Oma – in-in Kansas City. So we called a conference of all the key figures in Omaha and the contiguous terminals to Kansas City, and you know you get a bunch of over the road truck drivers together and there's not much that goes on in the industry legal and illegal they don't know about.

We had this council of war and – and we found every trick, every possible device the bosses could use to smuggle freight in and out through Kansas City to keep alive in Omaha while we had them strangled in other ways. And we got all the facts. And we made a little map, got one of these unmarked county maps of the state that you can get if you go to the state highway department, and we marked it up with all kinds of symbols and lines that all had real meaning, to show exactly how we could lick the whole situation of Missouri Valley if we clamp down on Omaha.

We got a committee together and we went down, saw Tobin about it and asked for his help. And he was impressed, he looked at this map and that did it, he says, "Geez, just like a General!" (audience laughs)

So he told us, told us, "All right I'll back you. You go out there and you lay down the law to these Kansas City bosses. Don't strike unless you have to, but if you have to strike them I'll back you and I'll pay strike benefits."

Now formally then the – the, as they still do, the Teamster's union paid strike benefits. But Tobin had it fixed up in the constitution and by-laws like these insurance policies you get, you know, as a bonus when you buy a – a year's subscription to a newspaper. You got to have a certain color necktie on and you got to be walking with the wind, not against the wind, when you get hit by a car crossing the street or the policy's not good. And Tobin had the strike benefits set this way. So he told us now, whatever you do, you go out there and you – he says, you know, you go to follow the law.

Well I'll just make it short, it reminded me of – of a friendly vessel in war time being given a chart to come in through the mine field and depart without – without getting blown up on the way in. He showed us exactly how we could work our way through all the clauses. We go out to Kansas City and we call all the bosses in, they come in, oh boy were they cocky. They thought they had us because in – in Kansas City and it St. Louis, two of the key terminals in Missouri, were two of the figures among the old feudal barons that were dead against this thing. And they wanted no part of it because each of them had a little principality carved out.

He had a nice little set up for himself in which he run everything with a – with an iron hand and the head of the – the head of the Teamster's set up in Kansas City at that time was also a political lieutenant of, what's the name of the joker that was the political tzar there for – Pendergast. The guy that put all the concrete all over Kansas City in order to get a little cut. They were dead against this whole thing and they were – they were egging the bosses on to fight us.

The bosses thought they really had something, they were cocky. We walk into the meeting and there's bosses there from everywhere. Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Kentucky, Tennessee, southern Missouri, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, just that whole area. Anybody who thought he might get touched the way the steam roller was going down the road. And they said, "we – we'll do so and so and so and so and so, which was practically nothing, you can take it or leave it." Well we said, "Well –let - let us consult a minute, because we don't want to give a yes or no answer to – to your proposition for a settlement." We're following out Tobin's plan to get through the minefield.

Well it's about ten o'clock in the morning, we say, "Can we have say till four o'clock in the afternoon?"

And we go out of the room, go right to a phone in our room in the hotel, call Tobin, "Bosses refused to sign it."

"Don't do a thing, now," he says, "We'll get a wire," he says, "I'll call the rest of the general executive board and I'll wire you a ratification."

"Well Tobin, we'd given the bosses until four o'clock before we give the answer."

"Good, I'll have the wire in before that."

Sure enough about three o'clock we get a wire from Daniel J. Tobin authorizing a strike of all the over the road trucking concerns operating in and out of Kansas City with full strike benefits. We'd come in at four o'clock and the bosses sit there talking – we sit down in front of them, okay, then we just flipped the telegram on them. (audience laughs)

They asked for a caucus. (audience laughs) They were out about 15 minutes, they come back in with a sub-committee of six. Said, "We want to meet a sub committee of yours, we want to sit down around the clock negotiations and we guarantee the negotiations won't end even in a recess for sleep until we've had a settlement and we'll give you a fair settlement."

And they gave us a fair settlement, they gave us what we wanted. This closed Omaha into the point where five of the Omaha bosses capitulated. And with this, we brought everything to a new stage. We had fought the major war, we'd beaten out all the opposition in every respect, and we had proven that we could back up everything we had said we were going to do if the contract hadn't been signed here in the merchandise mart in the first place And then we demonstrated to the eastern bosses that there was such a thing as retroactivity.

We picked one of the biggest operators in the east, he runs out of Detroit and he runs all the way from New York City to Oklahoma City fanning out in all directions. And we'd had – we'd had a special detachment keeping a record on him while we're fighting out in Missouri Valley. We had all the grievances, amounted to thousands of dollars in money he owed the drivers. We said in – first we give him the demands, he laughed. He thought this is funny as hell. We set a deadline, right at a peak period in over the road trucking. Pre-arranged signal and at that hour just all of a sudden every wheel he had stopped between New York City and Oklahoma City and they didn't turn again until we got the final report from the final business agent of the final local that every worker in that terminal received in his hand a check for the full settlement of the money the boss had cheated him out of by chiseling on the contract.

And this demonstrate that it wasn't any class collaboration deal, and you can imagine what it did for the morale of the – of the truck drivers. In the course of the fight, a body of – of truck drivers out in the Sioux City are got framed up by the FBI. They claim that these drivers picketing out on the highway had rolled a truck over. And so help me, the Federal Bureau of Investigation sent a big surveying detachment out and went through a long process of surveying, studying a legal map and everything in order to make a case to prove that the truck had been stopped on the Iowa side of the line and rolled over onto the Minnesota side of the line, which made it interstate commerce and gave the federal government jurisdiction.

They brought these men to trial under the Mann Act (audience laughs), the Mann Act is for stealing vehicles, and – or no not the Mann Act, no – no (audience laughs). The Dyer Act, the Dyer Act. Once in awhile we had a truck driver who had a grievance over the Mann Act, needed a little legal help. The Dyer Act, for stealing a vehicle and transporting it across state lines. Now one of the significant things is that

the whole area from Michigan across to Colorado and from Minnesota, North Dakota down into Oklahoma and Arkansas and Texas, local after local stood in absolute solidarity with those men and when they were convicted then the judge tried to – tried to order them sent to the state penitentiary that very night if we didn't make – if we didn't make \$15,000 dollars in cash bonds for them.

All over the area the local secretary treasurers just went out and dipped into the treasury and started wiring money into Sioux City. And just before the deadline we were able to walk over to the federal clerk and lay \$15,000 iron men on the line and take these workers out of the county jail and save them from being in federal penitentiary the next morning.

Fought the thing, appealed it, in the end it stuck and they had to do a two year hitch in the penitentiary. But it's a little – a little side light that gives you some feeling of the kind of battles that went on in that period and the kind of solidarity that can be generated on a far wider more amorphous area. Now dealing with this – with this whole interstate area that I've been speaking of, that was the case in Minneapolis.

Now we consolidated then the over the road organization with the renewal of the contract a year later in the late summer, early fall, of 1939 in which another big improvement was made in conditions. We'd tightened up all the way up and down the line on the contract in the point of the view of the concepts of union control on the job. And arrived at a definitive stage in the development of the over the road structure, and an imposition on the bosses under union control and under union power were the unqualified right to strike that represented the definitive shackling of the old craft union structure of the international brotherhood of Teamsters, and that opened the way to the growth to the present stage and potential power of the Teamsters Union.

We weren't able to carry on from there, we had to leave at that point because something else was happening. While we were consolidating the over the road victory, and preparing a tightly knit setup, World War II started. Hitler invaded Poland and Roosevelt, who had made his quarantine-the-aggressors speech in 1938 began preparing for American intervention in the second World War.

The same time, the radicalization was ebbing, because it had not passed beyond the union level of the political level and the price was already being paid even though they were – was a recession in 1939 that was closely comparable in its depths to the recession in the earlier part of the '30s.

The bureaucracies were becoming re-entrenched in the unions a new form now with the rise of the CIO. And these trends signaled a reversal of the favorable objective conditions that had operated to our benefit in the earlier '30s. And this led soon to a new controversy with Tobin. And the question of war policies was at the heart of the controversy.

Tobin was already then, in 1939, playing the role of a bellwether for Roosevelt. You know what a bellwether is, that – you know what they call them in the stockyard, the Judas goats, you know, that leads the other animals up the ramp in the slaughtering pen and then he goes on by and the other animals go in and become roasts and chops and one thing or another. Tobin was playing the role of a bellwether to help dragoon the workers into the ranks of the imperialist army for World War II.

He was writing editorials in journals, militant editorials calling for the United States to get into the war against Hitler and beginning to seek to impose this line on unions. We sought to avoid any unnecessary friction with Tobin in this regard, but there could be no compromise on the fundamental questions of principal involved. And in this situation the reversal of the objective trends was beginning to embolden the reactionaries and the opportunists throughout the union, including the Teamsters union, and it was even having certain effects in local 574. Particularly among people who had come into the union after the strike

battle, and who were more reaping the benefits of the struggle that had been fought than being contributing members to everything that had been created.

And in Local 574, long well into 1940, they set up a phony committee of 100 inside the union. Bowdlerizing, desecrating, if I may use the expression to call it by a more appropriate name, crapping on that magnificent body of 100 fighters that had been the broad general staff of the strikes in 1934 that I described to you last night. Trying to make capital out of this concept for an utterly reactionary purpose. They were helped and encouraged in this by the FBI. Which had been keeping dossiers on the leaders in the main militants in 574 and was feeding information to these finks and phonies. Of a Red – you know material for Red baiting attacks that they could use inside the union.

And the local AF of L bureaucrats were getting into the act. Until it came to the point that Tobin decided he had to do something, or I mean he decided he had to do something. I think you can understand why Tobin wasn't exactly spoiling to get into another fight us. We'd had quite a few brushes and he hadn't done any too good. He didn't want another showdown fight with local 544 if he could avoid it; he didn't want it, he wanted to avoid it.

For one thing, he was uncertain as to how deeply the international brotherhood of Teamsters as a whole would be affected. Because we weren't without some support and following throughout the Teamsters Union, particularly after the two year struggle for the establishment of the over the road set down. But nevertheless, Tobin was prepared to subordinate the union considerations to his collaboration with Roosevelt. He began by making overtures for a compromise arrangement with the leadership of 544. He proposed to establish what you might have termed in the light of its opening conception of a benevolent receivership. A receivership, as you know in a union, is a device used by the international unions to send a representative in to take charge of a local and abrogate all democratic powers of decision in the local and arrogate to the receiver who is the representative of the general president of the international and takes orders only from him, all powers of decision.

What Tobin proposed was a receivership in which the local would be given a maximum of leeway, but we would have to accept a receiver who would have the power of veto if we insisted on doing something that the international felt couldn't be tolerated. And of course the whole thing hinged on the war question. Now we couldn't accept any such arrangement because it would have meant the gradual strangulation of all local autonomy. It would have – it would have marked the beginning of the imposition of a tight dictatorship over the union. The Party cadre in the union would have become compromised, it would have become disoriented, the whole Party would have suffered losses, the whole Party would have suffered discreditment because in the end we would have been perforce playing fast and loose with principles on that most vital of all questions, war. We had no alternative but to fight.

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