

Interview with Harry Hubbard, AFL-CIO president, Austin, Texas, December 17, 1974, conducted by Jack Bass and Walter de Vries, transcribed by Linda Killen.

Jack Bass: Mr. Hubbard, give us just a little, brief summary of your own background. What was your union affiliation?

Hubbard: To give it to you as brief as I can, I'm from Pipees, Texas. Finished high school there. Went in the navy in 1942. Came out and the first union I joined was the Hodcarriers union. Helping brick layers as a laborer. And then went to work for synthetic rubber production in Ft. \_\_\_\_\_, Texas and became a member of the oil, chemical and [rubber] workers union. During the Eisenhower administration we saw the cut back in production that you're seeing now. Under every Republican administration. I was laid off and then got a job as a bread salesman for Fairmaid Baking Company and was a member of the teamsters union for three and a half years. Stewart for that union. Then a Democratic administration came back into power and synthetic rubber production opened back up. I went back into that in 1950 and picked up my membership in the oil, chemical and \_\_\_\_\_ workers, where I've been a member ever since. So actually I'm a member of the oil, chemical and \_\_\_\_\_ for twenty-five years.

J.B.: And you were elected AFL-CIO president in what year?

Hubbard: Last year. About a year and a half ago.

J.B.: Is there a board?

Hubbard: We have an executive board. Texas AFL-CIO executive board. But actually the Texas AFL-CIO has two elective offices. Secretary-Treasurer and president. Actually, in 1966 I came with the AFL-CIO as full time legislative director on the staff. Six years as legislative director. Four years ago ran for secretary-treasurer and was elected secretary-treasurer. Then a year and a half ago was elected president of the organization. The election being held through convention process.

J.B.: Do you know, in round numbers, how many union members there are in Texas?

Hubbard: There's approximately <sup>450,000</sup>~~450,000~~.

J.B.: And how many are AFL-CIO affiliated?

Hubbard: Affiliated with us? I'd say approximately--I say approximate because we just got a local in this morning with 1,000 members--but 236,000. When I say union members in Texas, I'm talking about also UAW, Teamsters [Interruption.]

Walter de Vries: What percent of the work force in Texas is unionized?

Hubbard: About eighteen percent.

W.D.V.: Where does that rank with the other southern states, do you know?

Hubbard: In the southern states? I imagine it's probably about the same. It runs in the southern states, eighteen to twenty-five.

W.D.V.: Has it been increasing or decreasing or holding steady?

Hubbard: It's been increasing slightly. Very slightly. In fact I guess you could say holding steady more than increasing.

J.B.: What's the monthly per member contribution that goes to the state office?

Hubbard: As far as per capita is concerned? Twenty-five cents per member. 236,000. Twenty-five cents per member.

J.B.: That's slightly above average in the South, isn't it?

Hubbard: Yeah, yeah. Except in Louisiana. Louisiana--  
I don't know, theirs is up to fifty or fifty-five cents, I think. I think they went up to fifty-five cents last year.

W.D.W.: But then most states don't have a Victor *Bussie*.

Hubbard: That's true. I wish they did. He's a great one.

J.B.: What has been your role in Democratic party politics?

Hubbard: I've been involved in Democratic party politics for years. Way back when I was in Jefferson county as a precinct worker. Campaign chairman for state senate candidates and all that. But my recent role in Democratic politics, in the last couple of years, is to try to open the Democratic party up to minorities and where labor would have more voice in Texas and the Democratic party. Working with the governor and the United States Democratic Senator in the process to select delegates at the precinct level to do that. And did that at the last convention. Where we saw the state Democratic executive committee membership change to where labor had three members on the SDC and how we have seven. There were two blacks. There are now five. There were two browns and there's five browns on the SDEC. Out of a total of sixty-two members. In addition to that, at the mini-convention in Kansas City we had fourteen delegates going there that were either union members or union members' wives. I guess probably twice as many as we've

ever had going from labor as delegates to the national convention.

W.D.V.: When did the party start to open up to labor? Just recently?

Hubbard: I would say the party started opening up recently to minorities period. And we consider ourselves a minority. Eighteen percent. You can't consider it any other way. So, I would say within the last two years, with the new rules in the Democratic party. The McGovern, following up by the McGluskey rules. The affirmative action programs which followed along that line. I would say in the last two years actually the party's been opened up. It wasn't because they really wanted to. Because they was forced to. And that's the role that we've been playing. We've not done it, so to speak, by force. But we've done it by getting on the inside. And making sure that the party's opened up by working inside, rather than fighting it.

J.B.: What changes have you seen in the legislature, in the way it operates, since you went to work up there in '66? Has there been any substantive changes in the legislature?

Hubbard: Yeah, there's been changes. Again, the Texas AFL-CIO was very instrumental in those changes because we were the one that fought the battles in court to make sure that we had single member districts. Which brought about the big change that you've seen in the last six, eight, ten years. Single member districts brought on. . . . Where you'd have, ten years ago, maybe two black members sitting in the house now you have, you know, twelve. Two in the senate. And Barbara Jordan, for instance, in Congress. All of this was brought about by single member districts. We was very instrumental in bringing that about.



That's the main thing. What it really did, it kind of brought the legislature from a rurally dominated legislature more to a metropolitan type legislature. Although there's still an awful lot of rural domination there. But there are still three large metropolitan areas of Texas that don't have single member districts. Which we hope to get in the next session of the legislature.

W.D.V.: During the past twenty-five years has that been the most significant change or have there been others.

Hubbard: I think you'd have to say that's been the most significant change. Because up until single member districts, the Texas legislature was just completely dominated by rural elements of the state. As it is, I guess, in most all southern states--or has been.

W.D.V.: What other changes have occurred during that time?

Hubbard: You mean so far as issues are concerned?

W.D.V.: Politics. For example, in the governor's races contest.

Hubbard: I guess I'd have to say that the corruption in government has brought about quite a change when you start talking about politics in government. You know, the Sharpstown thing where Barnes and Smith was involved and all that. Which brought about change and elected a Dolph Briscoe governor who could have never been elected without that. Elected a Bill Hobby lieutenant governor who could never have been elected without the Sharpstown scandal that pretty well took care of some of the leading politicians in the state. I'd have to say there is less, in the last six years, domination by the corporations of state

government and state government officials. Briscoe, of course, is no dynamic leader as far as governor is concerned. . . by no means. But then on the other hand, he's not controlled. For instance, like the John Connallys were. And evidently the Preston Smiths were. Not completely dominated by the corporate interests in this state. So in that respect there has been quite a change as far as domination by the corporations.

W.D.V.: How about the role of the AFL-CIO in politics? Has that changed?

Hubbard: Well, we hope that it has. We hope that we're doing more of it and being more effective and having more of a voice. We intend to have more between now and 1976. We're going to put together an organization in the AFL-CIO where we can identify every precinct in the state. Have them on computer cards. And be ready in 1976. I'd say yes.

W.D.V.: How are you coming with that voter identification program? The identification of the union members and so on. Registered and non-registered.

Hubbard: Very well. We have thirty-one area councils throughout the states. And those thirty-one councils have women's activities departments. And we keep a card file on every member that identifies them as to whether they're registered to vote, what their precinct is, their telephone number, everything. Where we can be in constant contact with them specially in voter education. Our computer system on our membership is better than it's ever been, more up to date than it's ever been.

We think we're doing very well in that respect. This identification of precincts is going to be something we've never done and we're going to be in that in January.

W.D.V.: At one time, the AFL-CIO endorsement on a candidate was often considered a kiss of death. Is that still true?

Hubbard: No, we have everyone from US Senate on down who comes to our convention and openly seeks our endorsement.

W.D.V.: Has that been a change?

Hubbard: Oh yes, sure it's been a change. Of course they recognize, we recognize, that with eighteen percent of the membership, that we're not going to go out and elect people that we would like to elect. On the other hand, candidates recognize that we do have enough influence that we may not can win, but we certainly can defeat him.

J.B.: Am I correct that organized labor supported Farenthold in '72 and Briscoe in '74?

Hubbard: Right. In '74 we supported Briscoe in the general election over Branberry. In '72 we supported Briscoe in the general election, Democrats, of course. In '74 we took no position in the Farenthold-Briscoe primary. In '72 I just don't recall. It seems to me like we did the same thing. We had a split vote on endorsing Farenthold. And I voted to endorse Farenthold. But I don't remember whether we gave an endorsement or whether we just said something nice about both of them in '72.

J.B.: What's been the relationship with Briscoe? We've been told that Briscoe has had more of an open door policy toward organized labor, appointed more people to boards and commissions.

Hubbard: That's very true.

J.B.: What's been the difference between Briscoe and previous governors in so far as organized labor is concerned?

Hubbard: I'd have to say that the only difference I see is a change in the attitude of people. Then, on the other hand, I think that we've conducted our business more out in the open and honest. Not saying that we didn't in past years, but I think everything's been out in the open. There's been more frankness between our organization and, say, the governor's office. I think probably that if there's any one thing I'd have to say that when Briscoe does something for labor he don't go around the back door to do it. Afraid somebody else is going to know it's going on or something like that. I'd just have to say more openness on the part of the governor's office and the AFL-CIO.

J.B.: Do you have any problem with access to the governor? If you want to see him, you can see him. Is that basically right?

Hubbard: Yes. No problem.

J.B.: What type of appointments has he made that involved labor people?

Hubbard: I can give you a list of them. He's appointed Joe

Texas Employment Commission, who was president of the biggest CWA local in Houston and also is president of the Harris county AFL-CIO council with 85,000 members. In fact, just called me last night and said he was going to reappoint him, probably today. He's appointed Jackie Sinclair, who was the assistant Jerald Brown executive secretary of state building trade. Appointed him as commissioner of the department

of labor and standards. He's appointed C.E. Long, from San Antonio, to the mass transit commission. He's appointed Ray Johnson to the commission on aging, who's retired out of the EW national representative. I'd have to get you the list.

J.B.: Is this a departure from previous governors?

Hubbard: Yeah, I'd have to say so. Previous governors have made one or two token appointments, here and there. I'd have to say, too, I think, it's more openness on the part of the AFL-CIO. When I was elected president we established an appointments committee. It was made up of a representative from each international union that had over 10,000 members affiliated with us. They act as appointments committee. And all the recommendations for appointment to the governor comes into that appointments committee. They screen them and then recommend to the officers of the AFL-CIO and in turn we recommend to the governor. This is all done openly. We send letters out to all the locals. Say if you have anyone that's interested in appointment get their resume in to the appointments committee. I think that's probably one of the main reasons. We've made it plain to the governor that we're not just looking for token appointments. We're going to recommend people to you that come from appointment committee that we think are qualified. We're not looking for just token appointments for somebody that's a political friend of mine or something like that.

W.D.V.: Are most of these appointments labor oriented towards a position or do they go to other kinds of boards, too?

Hubbard: Most of them, of course, that we seek are labor oriented positions. But for instance, we'll be recommending Paul Tige, who's the

chairman of our education committee and with engineers in Texas City. We'll be recommending him for the college coordinating board. And I think, have a pretty good opportunity. We've never had anyone serve on any of the major university board of regents or coordinating board. And I think have a pretty good chance. We'll be moving in to some other areas of education where all our membership has a concern. We've got people serving on Texas Alcoholics Commission, for instance. We've got two people on the Texas State Technical Institute board of regents and various places like that. But generally we look at the industrial accident board, labor commissioners, Texas employment commission and areas like that.

W.D.V.: Did you work to kill the document produced by the constitutional convention? Based on the right to work provision?

Hubbard: Yes. We told them in the very beginning, in no uncertain terms, that if they allowed emotional material, statutory material--that's in the statutes. To open up the constitution to remove all the dead wood and the statutory material that had been placed in there by politicians for their own purposes, that needed to be removed. But if they was going to replace it with the same kind of material for political purposes, such as right to work, then we'd fight it. Because we was not going to go along and see the Republican party have issues at the expense of our Texas constitution. We were not going to build some king-maker by allowing him to say that he was father of the constitution, no matter what was in it. So in the final analysis, we had to oppose it and did kill the constitution. Revision process Didn't want to do it. We had to do it. But we told them at the very

beginning.

W.D.V.: The Texas Democratic party, unlike other Democratic parties in the South, has a significant liberal faction. We're having trouble finding out just exactly what a Texas liberal is and how it differs from a Texas moderate or a Democratic conservative.

Hubbard: It's hard to figure out. I'm a Texas liberal. But [a] Texas liberal would class me as a Texas moderate to conservative because of my association with the Democratic party. What it means to me, in my estimation, is we can get more done and we can change the party more to our satisfaction by working within the party rather than standing off and butting your head against a brick wall. That's what it means to me. What is known today as the liberal element of the party of course, as you well know--Billy<sup>e</sup> Carr, <sup>Ronnie Dugger</sup> ~~Eye Dover~~ and all those folks. I agree with them. And we work together. But then on the other hand, where I guess I'm not as liberal as they are is a liberal in Texas, historically, has had the crusades for causes. And where I drop off, in their eyesight as a liberal, is when you crusade for years and years for the cause and then you get to the point where you can reap the benefits of your crusade and refuse to take the benefits because you lose your cause to crusade. And that's a difference in my liberalism and I guess what you'd call liberal liberalism.

W.D.V.: Are you saying an inability to compromise or to reach an agreement?

Hubbard: I guess you can say it in that manner. Historically liberals in Texas as just had to have something, cause, to rally about.

W.D.V.: Are there any liberals in state-wide office today?

Hubbard: There's some that would say that Bob Armstrong, Land Commissioner, was liberal. There were some that would say that John White was liberal, our agricultural commissioner.

W.D.V.: White told us he considers himself a moderate.

Hubbard: Right. Well, I imagine most everybody except Billy Carr and Ronny Dugger and a few people like that today would say that they were moderates instead of liberal. I don't think people put as much stock in a label as far as politics is concerned as they did in the past.

W.D.V.: So that's diminishing?

Hubbard: Oh, I think so. For instance, I've supported every liberal cow that came down from the very beginning and that goes all the way to the McGovern campaign, the Sissy Farenthold campaign in '72--not '74--right on through every liberal candidate and every liberal cause. There's no organization that can anywhere put the record of what we've done in civil rights and social legislation--none. And that includes the liberal wing of the party.

W.D.V.: Would your support of Briscoe in '74 be an example of what you meant about no point to keep going on the Farenthold race? That point had been proved in '72?

Hubbard: Yeah. In that particular one even the liberals, every liberal that I know was advising her not to get into that campaign. Was encouraging her to get into a campaign she could win, like the railroad commission. It was a personality thing, I suppose. She was just. . . had



so much hatred toward Briscoe, she just had to do it. But every liberal from here to New York to Washington advised her don't do it, stay out of it. I've got a letter from some of the top liberals in the country saying stay out of it and in '76 you'll be in a position to move into the national administration. Don't do it because when you get beat so bad, you're going to blame labor, you're going to blame the blacks, you're going to blame the Mexican-Americans.

So, certainly, if I had my choice of who I would like to see governor of the state of Texas it would be Sissy Farenthold or Don Yarborough or someone like that. But also you have to deal in reality, too.

W.D.V.: So your liberal ideology is tempered with a little practical politics. What you're saying is the liberal Texan tends not to do that.

Hubbard: I guess what I'm saying is that if you continue to but your head against that wall to accomplish something and you see a door over there that you haven't seen before, you're going to walk through that door rather than just keep butting your head against the wall.

W.D.V.: Not if you're basically paranoid or masochistic.

Hubbard: I don't think I am. I don't know if it makes sense, but I'm trying, in my plain language, to explain to you as I see it. But as far as philosophy. . . liberalism. . . I figure I'm just as liberal as Billy Carr or Ronny Dugger or any of the other of those folks. The thing about it, you know, somewhere along the line you have to accomplish something. It's just that simple.

J.B.: What role do you see labor playing on the upcoming fight on school finance?

Hubbard: I think we'll play a leading role in it. We've been very actively involved with Senator *Mauzy* who's working up the bill. We've been very actively involved with the governor's office and Dr. Hooker, who's putting together the governor's program, which is going to be essentially the Mosse bill. Our educational director has been working with Texas Education Agency.

J.B.: Is that going to involve additional taxation?

Hubbard: At this particular time we don't think that it is. They've got \$1.5 billion built up already. is coming in and I think it going to. . . . You talk about liberals. Bob Bullitt, who ten years ago was as conservative as they come, today has been elected by liberals to moderates state comptroller. Says that he's going to go out and collect taxes that's out there. Corporations are not paying and many people are not paying. I think he'll do it.

J.B.: Do you see some future role for him in state politics?

Hubbard: I think he's definitely going to be someone to contend with in Texas political--

W.D.V.: Is the basic issue that divides the conservatives and moderates and liberals taxation? The issue of the corporate profits tax, personal income tax?

Hubbard: No, no. Taxation, although it should, really don't get involved in liberal vs conservative to moderates. Taxation in Texas has never been that involved. For instance, on the passage of state sales taxes in Texas, and increasing the sales tax and all that. Certainly the liberals fall on the side of anti-sales tax because it effects the poor

people more and all that. And liberals' issues are generally with the poor people. But as far as taxation is concerned, I don't think you can use that as a dividing point, liberal vs conservative, not in Texas.

W.D.V.: IS it the role of government?

Hubbard: Yeah, I think it is. I think it's the role of government. And generally, we liberals feel like--as I said in the beginning--state government has been and still is to a certain extent dominated by corporations and rurally dominated. And therefore liberals are going to fall on the anti-establishment side. On any particular issue it's just a matter of whether you. . . . As a division point, liberal vs conservative and moderate and whathave you, I think the division point is whether you want to just continue to be adamant anti-establishment or whether you want to try to achieve something. No matter whether it's an issue or personality involved in politics or what.

W.D.V.: Do you see that corporate-rural influence continuing to diminish in the future, after '76?

Hubbard: Until the Republicans make their complete pay-off of corporations that bought the country out in '72 and '68. I think the Ford administration will continue to make a pay-off to the corporations as long as they're there. So they have to. They don't have any choice.

J.B.: What's your reaction to Lloyd Bentsen as a potential presidential candidate?

Hubbard: With Kennedy dropping out, Mondale dropping out, and looking at what's there right now, I think probably Senator Bentsen is probably about as good as anything else that we're looking at right now.

I'm pleased with Senator Bentsen's voting record generally since he's been US Senator on issues that concerned labor. Has about a 70 percent voting record which he's having to live down in some other circles. I would say generally that labor in Texas is not unhappy with his performance at this time and generally would be in support for his move to seek the presidency.

J.B.: How significant is the role he played in pension reform?

Hubbard: I'm really not sure what part he actually played in what you would notice to be there in the innerworking of finally coming out and passing the bill. I know that he received an awful lot of credit. What he did as far as the eventual passing of the legislation I'm not just certain. But in the eyes of the people and in the eyes of the workers, he evidently played a pretty good part.

J.B.: What's the sort of question you get asked about Bentsen from labor leaders in other states and in Washington?

Hubbard: Several came over to our delegation in Kansas City and asked that particular question with Bentsen there. I guess everyone of the questions started out with "you know, we've heard a lot about Senator Bentsen and what we hear we like. But we want to hear it from officers of the AFL-CIO in Texas. What do you think about him?" Of course my reaction is, well, we're generally pleased with his performance on labor issues at this point. And in those we are looking at who are seeking the presidential nomination at this time we're happy about it. That's about, I guess, the reaction on both sides.

J.B.: How do you compare him with Yarborough as a Senator?

Hubbard: When Senator Yarborough was defeated by Bentsen, I worked full-time in Senator Yarborough's campaign office over here on 12th Street for about two months. Moved my office over there. Every time he ever run for office, we're strong support of him. Again, if I had my choice of US Senators, it would be Senator Yarborough. I guess mostly because on issues of concern to people in general you'd never have to worry about where Senator Yarborough was going to be. Probably that's the reason he's not the US Senator today. Because he was so open and forthright. And when he did something he felt was good for the people he liked to brag about it.

W.D.V.: Do you get involved in quite a few state-wide races or just the major ones, like governor and Senator.

Hubbard: Generally we don't get too involved. Usually make a recommendation.

W.D.V.: How about in terms of endorsements and money.

Hubbard: No, we do not contribute money in state-wide races or like US Senate. In the US Senate and the House, that money--if there's any money to be contributed--comes from

W.D.V.: And you concentrate on the state legislature?

Hubbard: State legislature and in some cases city councils, commissioners court, judges.

W.D.V.: And most of that activity is in the primaries?

Hubbard: Yeah, generally, unless there's some strong opposition in the general election. Up until recent years, primary election in Texas has pretty well been tantamount to election in the general, where

Democrats are concerned. That's changing some

W.D.V.: Does the area council make the decision as to which candidate you're going to support?

Hubbard: The area council recommends, in all cases, to our convention.

W.D.V.: For state legislature, too?

Hubbard: Yes.

J.B.: What sort of assistance do you provide legislative candidates that you endorse?

Hubbard: Some finances. For instance, in a state house race. Usually the tops in a state house race . . . average probably two-fifty, \$250 to \$500. And state senate race would be anywhere from \$500 to \$1,500. The finances is kind of insignificant as compared to our assistance in manpower, womanpower, campaign organization, telephone and block work and all these things. That's where we concentrate mostly.

J.B.: Are you the head of COPE?

Hubbard: Yes. What we do is, we have a constitutional convention every two years. Officers election, constitution changes and so forth. Which will come up July of next year. On the off year we have a COPE convention. We had a COPE convention last year which considered all the state representatives, state senators, state-wide races. The officers of the AFL-CIO are also the officers of Texas COPE.

W.D.V.: How important is Wallace in the AFL-CIO?

Hubbard: There's no doubt he's important. There's an awful lot of our membership--just the same as there is in other organizations--that,

I guess you'd say sympathize with Wallace's position. I think that's diminished considerably in the last couple of years. I guess it could be for several reasons. His health, his change. Kind of an attitude where he's now changed to a more realistic position than he started out with a very strong position. And that's the only thing he could do to gain the notoriety that he did nation-wide. I saw the other day where the head of the Ku Klux Klan says that they can't support him anymore because he's become too black or something like that. But, to answer your question, I think he's important in Texas. I think George Wallace is important nation-wide. Whether you like it or not. When I say it's important, I don't mean that I in any way support him. It would be very difficult to do. But as far as his movement, certainly it's important in Texas labor. We've fought the movement all along that he espoused and will continue to.

J.B.: If you're liberal and labor in Texas is liberal, why, say did labor not support Castillo in the chairmanship fight last time?

Hubbard: We had started, almost ten months ago, and have worked up an agreement between all parties--liberals, conservatives, the governor's office, the Senator's office, the state chairman--have agreed on a delegates selection process, affirmative action program that would open up the party and bring about what I talked to you about in the beginning. More blacks, more browns, more labor. We have gone on this process all along. Three days before the state convention Leonel Castillo called me from the airport. Said "Oh, by the way, I'm thinking about running for state chairman. What do you think about it?" I said "I think you're making a mistake. Number one, Leonel, you've got a good name in poli-

cal circles, especially in <sup>Harris</sup>~~Harrington~~ county. And I think it's going to probably hurt you to get involved in something like that." He said "Well, I know I can't win. Probably can't get thirty percent of the vote. But I'm thinking about running because they can't get nobody else to run." I said "Leonel, that's fine. If they, who ever you're talking about, wants to use you and you want to be used, you go right ahead." He said "Well, would you support me?" I said "No, I would not. I've already publicly said I was going to support the effort that we had put forth in opening up the party. And that included supporting the re-election of the state chairman." So, again, I guess a liberal can be realistic every once in a while, too. That particular case. . . still considering myself a liberal, I was a realistic liberal.

J.B.: Were you surprised that he got more than ~~30~~ <sup>38</sup> percent of the vote?

Hubbard: No. I expected him to get that much. And a lot of it had to do with the unorganized way that the convention was run. If the convention had got started on time and run on schedule and everything, he would probably have got thirty-five percent of the vote.

W.D.V.: Do you see a coalition of labor, blacks and Chicanos developing in the years ahead?

Hubbard: Oh, I think it will continue.

W.D.V.: Well, I mean become stronger, more firm.

Hubbard: I think so. Talking about Texas right now, I think so in Texas because of the close alliances that we've had with the black caucus, the brown caucus. And because in the last two years we've built



up a strong A. Phillip Randolph organization, supported by the national AFL-CIO, Texas AFL-CIO. We've also built up a good organization in the labor council of Latin American which just came into being last June in Texas. We're going to continue to expand that. In our human relations department I think we've got two of the most able people. A black by the name of Johnny Henderson and a brown by the name of Gonzales. Who are full time staff people. Have the same salary and everything else that all the rest of the staff do. Do a fine job. And putting all that together I think that the coalition of black, brown and labor will continue.

J.B.: Do you publish a newspaper?

Hubbard: Yes. Be glad to give you some copies of our most recent issue if you'd like.

J.B.: How many A. Phillip Randolph Institutes are there in Texas?

Hubbard: Chapters? I believe we have either eight or nine now. Nine, I believe. I'm not sure.

J.B.: How do they function? They cross union lines, am I correct? And serve basically to train black union members in politics? Political fundamentals?

Hubbard: Right. Voter education generally and the officers of the chapters--

[End of side of tape.]

W.D.V.: I don't think you have much time to think ahead, but if you were to think ahead about politics in Texas say in the next ten years, where would you see it going in terms of organized labor?

Hubbard: Are we again talking about the pendulum of liberal to moderate to conservative?

W.D.V.: No, in the politics of the state, the state legislature. Your role in politics.

Hubbard: Labor's role in politics? I see it increasing. I see it increasing considerably. And the reason for that is because, in the last year or so I think we've increased considerably our influence in state government. And I guess it's where you put the priorities. I don't know. My entire background is political and legislative. And, of course, when I was elected president that's where the interest has gone. That's what our charter says we're here for. To represent the workers in political and legislative matters. My background being generally that, I guess it's built in that I was going to emphasize what the charter says.

J.B.: Has there been increases in unemployment compensation since Briscoe's been governor? Does Texas have a one week waiting period?

Hubbard: Yes. Yes, which we hope to eliminate in the next session.

J.B.: Are the benefits pegged to cost of living indexes at all?

Hubbard: No, not on unemployment. Workmen's comp it is. It's spread throughout with the AFL-CIO. I see an increase in membership with the Texas AFL-CIO. In the last year we've increased our membership from 212,000 to 236,000. We see that *[Continuing to]* grow. It depends on whether our influence continues too. There again, if we can show the membership out there that they're getting their money's

worth, we'll grow. If we don't, then we won't. Up to this point, starting with the success, I guess you'd say, success in the constitutional convention keeping the right to work out all the way up through our appointments have been made by the governor and the part that we've played in Democratic politics, it's all been pretty well successful. As long as we continue to do that I continue to see the AFL-CIO growing. And we believe that in the next year we'll be up above 250,000 members.

W.D.V.: Has there been an increase in interest and involvement by union members in politics and state government in the years that you've been involved with the movement?

Hubbard: Well, in politics generally I think you have the same drop off in labor that you have in the general public. No doubt. No, I'd have to say that there's been less interest and involvement in politics, in general. In the last year we've seen more interest in the overall involvement with labor in Texas. And again, I want to feel like we had something to do with that because of the way that we've conducted ourselves in this organization. But then on the other hand I know that the worker out there is also seeing what's ahead and has been seeing what's ahead with a Republican administration and knowing that somewhere along the line there's going to have to be some help. And the only place they could look to, actually, is the labor organization to give that help. For that reason, I think, we've seen more interest in labor's programs in the last year. But so far as politics, no, it's harder every day to get anyone involved in politics. That's generally because of the lack of confidence in public officials. They feel like the same as anyone else is. What the heck, they're all going to do the

same anyhow.

W.D.V.: Anything else we should ask?

Hubbard: Not necessarily. I guess you could say that sometimes our philosophy, so far as liberalism vs conservatism, may have to take a little backseat when sitting where I do, representing people as complex as the labor movement is. And it's no different than any other organization. We've got people out there we represent that's just as conservative. We've got Republicans. We've got every other thing. In our representation we try some work to get in a position to do what's best for the overall labor movement. I guess in doing so, on many issues, we get labeled all over the spectrum.

J.B.: What's your reaction to the national labor hostility shown toward the mini-convention in Kansas City?

Hubbard: I think it has some merit. I think when Barkin and Meany says that they ought to have had more input into the national Democratic party because they've been the one organization that's supplied the money, that's supplied the organization to kind of backbone the Democratic party, I think that's true. I don't think that any organization ought to dominate the Democratic party. But I do think the national AFL-CIO ought to be given that kind of recognition and they would have the input into the party that they deserve. And I think they deserve more than they've had. On the other hand, we in Texas--and I've told them so--are going to continue to work with the Democratic party. Continue to try to make it more of an effective party and try to open it up more. But all the time I recognize that I really don't think that the

national AFL-CIO has been treated as they should by the national party. For many, many years they have kind of been the backbone of the national Democratic party. Which Strauss will agree. He agrees with that. I've been contacted, Strauss has called, Barkin's called. Talked to all of them. They're having a meeting in Washington today to decide who's going to drop off the national executive committee, I guess, and who's not. All that. My reaction is that certainly they deserve more than what they've gotten out of the national Democratic party. At the same time, I have to take the position that it kind of goes against what we've been doing in Texas. And that is, open the party up more to the blacks, the browns, and labor.

J.B.: I want to ask a question. I don't mean it as a hostile question but more as a devil's advocate. In view of national labor's refusal to support the national Democratic ticket in 1972, why should they get more consideration than they've gotten?

Hubbard: That's a good question. I guess I'd have to say that you don't look at just one particular year. You've got to look at the overall, as far as that's concerned. But that's a good argument. That's a good argument that the liberals and blacks and browns and so forth put forth. I can't answer that, but I think you have to consider the overall. What the national AFL-CIO has done overall. I certainly didn't agree with Meany. We're the first organization that sent a telegram to Meany saying that we didn't agree with him. We openly supported McGovern in Texas. We just didn't do it in the same manner that Harry Roth did in Colorado. But you make a good point. I guess all I could say is

you'd have to look at the overall rather than that one year.

J.B.: Does organized labor in Texas perceive any role for itself in working to register blacks, particularly in east Texas in rural areas where many of them remain unregistered? Are there any plans for that?

Hubbard: Oh yes. That's part of the A. Phillip Randolph organization. Johnny Henderson is in , Texas today

That's our black staff member on the human relations department. Yes, through the A. Phillip Randolph there will be efforts continued.

J.B.: Randolph chapters are in urban areas, aren't they?

Hubbard: No, no. We've got, like in Longview and places. . . deep east Texas. Westkin. They spread out. Tyler Palestine, those areas. For instance, in the re-election of Wright Patman, had it not been for the work that was done with A. Phillip Randolph in black communities of Wright Patman's district, there's no way he would have been re-elected. And he knows that.

J.B.: Is this a high priority thing? Voter registration particularly among blacks and particularly in east Texas, small town rural areas.

Hubbard: Yes, it's a priority with us as an organization. And of course one reason is because we have a history of trying to be in contact and try to assist those who are least able to assist themselves. That pretty well falls in that category. For instance we just paid a pretty good price to get a favorable decision out of a judge where we won a case on redistricting commissioners courts in east Texas. By virtue of that we have two county commissioners in east Texas who are

black. First in the history. We've got that kind of relationship in the black community. So it just follows that we follow that up.

J.B.: Were you actually putting money into that effort?

Hubbard: We assist them in voter registration through the A. Phillip Randolph organization. Mostly voter registration and get out the vote.

[End of interview.]