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# Interview between William Gropper and David Shapiro

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**INTERVIEW BETWEEN WILLIAM GROPPER AND DAVID SHAPIRO  
MAY 31, 1975**

*Original transcription completed June 12, 2012*

PH: PATRICIA HILLS  
DS: DAVID SHAPIRO  
WG: WILLIAM GROPPER  
SG: SOPHIE GROPPER

[Side A begins.]

PH: This is the first side of the interview between David Shapiro and William Gropper on May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1975.

[Recording begins mid-conversation.]

DS: Yeah?

WG: Sent to the printer —

DS: Yeah.

WG: And after they got through with the originals, they threw them [inaudible] in the garbage.

DS: Oh, God Almighty.

WG: These were the [inaudible - "cultural"?] —

DS: Yes, I — oh! [Inaudible.]

WG: Well, I insisted on getting mine back. Fred Ellis did. But we never really succeeded. We caught the editor, not a top guy, we caught —

DS: Keeping them.

WG: No. That's in the boudoir they'd keep them. After you would put it on a chair, the original on a chair, so as not to dirty the old chair, when you had to put some on the [inaudible].

DS: [Inaudible, laughs.]

WG: Well, it was an attitude, a little more of an attitude than, you know, an understanding.

DS: It's amazing, really amazing, that they would do that. Well, those are the things I wanted to talk to you about today. Now, some of the things — how you got started, for instance, doing work for *The Masses* and the *Freiheit*.

WG: Oh, that's a natural. I was born in poverty.

DS: So were we all. I was too. I grew up in Brownsville. But I mean, how did you — [tape pauses, resumes] come about?

WG: In the first place, you know, as a kid interested in drawing, I drew on the streets. The sidewalks. That was my playground, my audience, whatever you want to call it. And from that, I got into — someone had got interested in — [Arnold] Marchand, a fellow named Marchand, who was the husband or guy who lived with Romany Marie, and she was in charge of the Ferrer School art class. So [inaudible - "he"? "she"?] said, 'Come on, you like to draw? You want to be an artist?' I said, "Eh." So [inaudible - "he"? "she"? "they"?] took me to that class. Well, I was thrown in immediately on 107<sup>th</sup> Street.

DS: How old were you?

WG: I was about 10.

DS: You were going to the Ferrer School then?

WG: Yeah. Ten, 11. I was still going to public school.

DS: Who was the teacher?

WG: In the Ferrer School?

DS: Yeah.

WG: Robert Henri.

DS: But was he teaching the 10-year, you know, your — that's just the point.

WG: The point is I was the smallest kid. He got a kick out of taking a kid in there.

DS: Marchand.

WG: Yeah. Brought me in there, and got me a portfolio, and charcoal paper, and charcoal. And there was this tremendous girl, big model, naked, and all around me were men. Women, men, older people. And they all were a little bit surprised [inaudible] kid, schoolkid, [inaudible] in knickers. And my first drawing on a big paper was that small. I was so embarrassed.

DS: [Laughs.] Did Henri come in to give criticism to that class?

WG: Henri came regularly. So did Bellows, and so friends of theirs. Friends who were all, at that time, and this was in nineteen, say, '11, '12, '13, '14, '15, around the time of the Armory Show. Now, the guys who exhibited at the Armory Show, also were friends of theirs, came too. Not as students or teachers, but also as sketch — it was a sketch class.

DS: Did Stuart Davis ever come in then?

WG: Stuart Davis, I don't remember him. There are a few people who said they came there, but I don't remember. I remember some of the guys like, who maybe [inaudible]. To me, it was a lot of [inaudible]. His name'll come to me. You'll know him [or "well known"?]. Became a photographer. Man Ray. Man Ray was there. Bob Minor came there to sketch. A fellow named [Oscar] Cesare.

DS: Yeah, I remember him.

WG: Cesare used to draw political car[toons]. He came there to sketch. It was a mishmash of people from all different political views. But there was one main political view and that was really anarchism.

DS: Yeah, it was Anna Goldman's school. Emma Goldman's school.

WG: So, well, there was a publication that they got out, they didn't get it out but it was circulated there, and it was called — well, [inaudible] edited it. And it was Bob Minor used to [inaudible] covers and so on. It was free talk, about all different — but mostly an anarchist's point of view. You don't need a government if you don't need anybody — if you're fully civilized and highly developed, you don't need a cop to watch you. You don't need any protec[tion], that sort of stuff. Which was to me, at that time, highly, highly utopian, you know, which I felt very sympathetic. And from there, it was a natural for me to be into the left wing. Then I began to see [inaudible] *Masses*, began to see *Harper's Weekly*, which they drew for, *Harper's Weekly* too, and most of the journals that were all [inaudible - "that looked for"?] artists at that time.

DS: Yeah, Minor was the highest paid man in the country at that time. Highest paid cartoonist.

WG: Yeah? I didn't know that.

DS: It's in this book. It's in this book. It talks about him having finally quit, I think it was the *Metropolitan Magazine*, because they wouldn't let him do what he wanted to do. They started to —

WG: Really?

DS: Yeah. He was the highest paid political cartoonist in the country.

WG: [Inaudible - "That's very amusing"?]

DS: You come in at the end.

WG: Oh, I do?

DS: They don't show any of your things, they just that [sic - seems like a word is missing] you're one of the new group that came in, and the [inaudible] group went out. It talks mostly about the old *Masses* and *The Liberator*, and the beginning of *The New Masses*. And it picks four or five artists.

WG: I see. [Long pause.] A lot of these I don't remember [inaudible].

DS: Yeah. I know. [Long pause. Loud background noise.] So, OK. So then you were going towards the Left, and then you went to work for the *Herald*. Did you work for any paper before then?

WG: No, I didn't work for any publication. I had to graduate elementary school. And during that time — during that time, I had to bring home piecework for my mother and father to do it. And I slept on that, you know, pants, and so forth. For example, they got work in the shop, they got paid on how much they produced. And it was, if you didn't work fast enough, and so on, produce more, you didn't [inaudible]. Well, they couldn't. Number one, my father wasn't a tailor, but he was thrown into that. And my mother couldn't attend to everything, you know; taking

care of kids, and the house, and so she had to do work at night. And we helped out. So I was the oldest, so I brought home pants, a pile of pants from the factory, and I would help —

DS: Baste them.

WG: Basting. And they would sew buttonholes and buttons and all that. And they'd throw the bundle down, and that's what I slept on. So, it was practically — and those same damn pants, which were uniforms for police, the same cops beat my mother and father up on the streets. The whole irony comes right through [inaudible]. But at that time, we never thought of it. On the whole, it was a very, very active social life and ingrained revolutionary [inaudible] in every respect. So it's nothing miraculous, I was just born into it.

DS: When you first started doing work for a publication, which was it, *The Dial* or —

WG: Oh, well. I left home, that was already when I was 16; 15, 16. I wanted to go down to the Village. So I left home. My father was already, he was very sick and he was dying anyway. I left home and I moved down to the Village, like most kids, I suppose. And the Village papers, like the *Quill*, *The Pagan*, *The Little Review*, the literary little magazines. And to get acquainted with people, I used to hang around a place [inaudible], which later was three steps down, is the Washington Square Book Shop. It was run by Josephine Bell, the wife of Egmont Arens. Josephine Bell used to write poetry for *The Masses*. And Floyd Dell lived around there, all the old-timers. So I got a little [inaudible], you know, room, and lived down there and began drawing for these little journals and publications. At the same time, I also went to school. I

went to the New York School of Fine and Applied Art. I also worked in the [inaudible - "daytime"?], in a clothing store. I worked there for four years. So, somehow I won a scholarship at the New York School of Fine and Applied Art. Not the scholarship, but this fellowship. I got half; from the job, I was earning five dollars a week, I got two and a half dollars a week. [Inaudible] and so on. So I had to win prizes! So whenever they had any prizes, I made it my point to win a prize at the school. So I won a number of prizes. Well, among the prizes were a *Collier's* prize to do illustration, so it was a hundred dollars, it was a lot of money. I won that prize, and then I won another prize, Peter MacDonald [phonetic] prize, he was a cameraman at the time. The editor of the *Tribune*, the *Sunday Tribune* [inaudible], had heard about this kid winning these prizes, and said, and his name was Ralph Blott [phonetic], said, "Let's get him down to illustrate the columnists. 'Cause they look pretty dull. There's all copy and no—" And he was a drinker from way back, he used to booze it up. And was a wonderful guy. So he says, "Go ahead, take it, here's the copy" and he'd hand me the galleys. He says, "You'll find it interesting, amusing to make a picture. Make a new picture. And we'll cut out the certain part, and they'll put the picture in." So I went to town. I illustrated a hell of a lot of guys and I made the Sunday section lively. Of course, after they got furious at me, wanted to know who cut [inaudible] the story out, [inaudible] got to know these people. And I was paid a huge sum of 35 dollars a week. Well, anyway, it felt wonderful. So that introduced me to the *Tribune*. *Tribune*, it got so that I did it without the editor around, because he was always [sounds like "in the bar."].

DS: How long did you work for them?

WG: Over two years. Two or three years.

DS: And then what? Then you started for *The Dial*?

WG: They had other features. They'd have a sub-editor come in who'd take the place of this guy who's [inaudible - "sick and"?] either on a vacation or something and give me assignments. That was that assignment that I think I told you about. So [inaudible] "Let's make a story." [Inaudible.] He got tipped off that there's gonna be a raid on the Wobblies. That's [inaudible]. Those were little incidents that happened. So that got me more and more into the Left progressive movement when I met the Wobblies. And I drew for them. And I was with them for a while, quite a while.

DS: Which [inaudible] newspaper?

WG: The *Rebel Worker*. So I still have no romanticism or [inaudible] part of it. I can't think of myself otherwise, and I can't divorce myself into nuances or things — I get a kick out of abstract certain forms and so on, but that's not the main point. The main thing is something else.

DS: So then you did some work for, what's the name, Thayer Scofield? Scofield Thayer? [Inaudible] *The Dial*.

WG: Oh, [inaudible] drew for *The Dial*. Yeah. And *The Dial* was [inaudible] something. [Loud background noise.]

DS: When did you first start drawing for *The Masses*? Or was it *The New Masses* then?

WG: It was *The Liberator*.

DS: *The Liberator*.

WG: About 1918 or '19. Around 1918 or '19. I'd do little things. I sent them in, and then I brought 'em in. And I met Max Eastman. And he was a charmer. [Inaudible] he had white hair, very attractive, very sweet-talking. I liked the guy. [Inaudible.]

Through Max Eastman, they'd have meetings, and as we'd come to some meeting [inaudible]. Later on I met Art Young, and Boardman Robinson and [inaudible], all different contributors. And after that, I became a regular contributor.

DS: When did they start, when it was *The Masses*, they started giving you a full page. Or was that much later? [Coughs.]

WG: That was much later. Much later. And there was too John Reed. John Reed wanted — for example, he was covering the AF of L Convention, and Max had sent him out there for a feature story. And he wanted somebody for some reason. And [inaudible] talked to Max and told him something and said, "Send Gropper out." [Inaudible.] So I went out there. So I stayed in a hotel, a different room in the hotel, and I later found out why. He used my room to listen in on the caucus of one clique and used his room to listen in on the caucus of another clique. And he got the story out before the whole damn thing happened on the floor. He was a wonderful reporter. And we'd sit out on the beach, he and I. He says, "I know what's gonna happen." And [inaudible] out. So [inaudible] he suggested that my drawings should be the political —

DS: [Loud sound of tape recorder being moved.] Sorry, I'm just putting it over across —

WG: Yeah. Little by little, you know, you get [inaudible]. For a long time, they published the drawings [inaudible] postage stamp and everybody'd raise hell too.

But that's an old feud between writers and artists. And we never got paid. It's just [inaudible] for space.

DS: When'd you start working for the *Freiheit*?

WG: *Freiheit*, I started working about 1924, I think. I'm not sure. It was around — as far as dates are concerned, I never can keep 'em right. Those seem to be [inaudible].

DS: Yeah.

WG: I started — I met [Moissaye] Olgin, and we became friends. Just friends, through Minna Harkavy and a few people. And he said, "How would you like to draw political cartoons for a Jewish paper?" I said, "Fine. [Inaudible - "except that"?] I don't know Yiddish." He says, "Don't worry. We don't know English." [DS laughs.] It was a relationship that lasted very strong. He was a marvelous guy.

DS: Did you always have to illustrate exactly the editorial point of view, that day's editorial?

WG: No! I didn't read the Yiddish, I had to read the English papers. It was agreed upon that I'd cover generalities. And if there are any particular Yiddish themes and so on, they'd tell me.

DS: What if there was a big political event of the day, and they wrote an editorial on it. Did your cartoon have to agree with the editorial in any way, or could you do anything you wanted that day?

WG: Oh, I knew the policy. You learned that quick. I knew the policy of the paper. So I didn't have to consult with them. Sometimes, I might have consulted, if I was in doubt. But most times, I was ahead of the editorial. I was ahead of them, because the

news of the day, I would figure out two, three days in advance — the cartoons should last that long — because they'd have to get translations for their editorials and so on, on the news happenings. I had to figure out two, three days in advance because I didn't come in every day. So my work was in keeping, but ahead of them, or they caught up. And they put the captions on. And most times I asked them, "Please, don't put any caption. Let the picture speak for itself." Which they did. As far as editorial, I had a free hand.

DS: Nothing was ever turned down, or asked to change?

WG: There was a period. There was a period of, when they did not use my work, and that was when [Earl] Browder — that was much, much later, when Browder became, I don't know what they called it.

DS: Political Association, Communist Political Association?

WG: Yeah, became an association. And in my estimation, betrayed the South, and so on, and I drew cartoons against the treatment of the Southern people and so on, and they wanted to forget about some of the aspects of it. So they didn't use it. They had to follow the Party policy. But it had a lot of this breast-beating. They said, "Well, why don't Gropper breast-beat?" So I said, "I'll breast-beat." And I went down to the storage room and brought up a bunch of plates, and says, "Here, you didn't print them." And I gave it to them, the whole damn bunch. And besides, they had no right to ask me, because I wasn't a Party member.

DS: Did you ever have, do you still have any of those drawings or any of those cartoons?

WG: I got a lot of cartoons.

DS: That particular group.

WG: I might have, I don't know.

DS: Because later on, when Communist International investigated Browder, you accused him of revisionism.

WG: That's right. Yeah.

DS: Then your cartoons would have been very, very valid.

WG: Yeah. I got a whole slew of cartoons, but not arranged. They're all mishmosh, they're all — I got bunches of 'em, when I can grab a hold of them, and grab them, and some of them are battered up and so on. For example, there's a bicentennial on presidents exhibition on cartoons being exhibited now in Texas. San Antonio, Texas. So they selected five of mine, and they want another one, but I can only give 'em five. And every one of them is timely today. It fits in perfectly today. Besides, I shipped it out just last week.

DS: In the fall, Bill, I want to start photographing all the cartoons that you have.

WG: Well, you got a hell of a job, because it's a hell of a lot of them.

DS: That's all right. I'll bring 'em over to the school, they'll do it for me. I would like to have a show also of your work, in the library. But that's in the fall. Let's get back to this. So you're working for *Freiheit* and doing cartoons for *The Masses*.

WG: That didn't stop there. At the same time, I was painting. At the same time, I was also drawing for labor papers.

DS: Which ones?

WG: Oh, boy. There was the *Advance*, for the Amalgamated [Clothing Workers of America]; I had a column there. There was the Fur Workers [International Fur

Workers Union], *Fur and Leather Worker*. There was the Marine Workers. I was working on all fours. And this was stencil work, too, and no money there.

DS: What do you mean “stencil work”?

WG: You work with a stylus, a stencil, and a paper, and then you put —

DS: They’re mimeographs, that’s it.

WG: Mimeograph.

DS: That’s how I wanted to make it on the tape. Yeah, I’ve never seen any of those. Never seen any of those —

WG: And the throwaways and so on. Oh, and I was trying to, for example, in the *Fur and Leather Worker*, I was there every week, I was trying to get them interested. They have a cultural section. They had members interested in getting original lithographs. Color or black and white. And [sounds like “they’re social”]. And I was doing them on offset, but drawing originally on the plate. And Ben Gold, and I forget their names, all the top guys there, “Sure, bring it in. Let’s see.” And I brought them in. I says, “Look, I’ll tell you what. It costs so much and so much.” And I figured out it wouldn’t even cost ’em a dollar, the printing of it. They’d have a limited edition, and the members can have that. So they said, “Let’s see it.” And they all picked it up for themselves. “We’ll discuss it.” But they took it for themselves, and never brought it, never brought it up. I said, “Well, how about membership?” Finally they [inaudible] —

DS: [Inaudible.] My father was a member of the Furriers Union. I know.

WG: Said, “We cannot tax our members so high a tax.” So, you know, you get a feeling, “Oh, you guys are top guys, take it for yourselves.” They took the originals

for themselves, but for the members, not. So I went to the printer, who I promised to pay up, [inaudible - "will pay for what the cost"?], said, "Well, what about it?" I says, "They don't want it." He says, "Well, sell it somewhere else." The Museum of Modern Art wanted it. But they wanted the exclusive. No other person should have it. And they'll buy it. And I said, "I can't do that." I went to the printer, I said, "I can't do that. Give it away if you want."

DS: Who from the Museum of Modern Art wanted it?

WG: I don't remember. And they were gonna use it for their membership drive. So it's two ironic twists. Those are little incidental things that I'm bringing up for no reason, I don't know why. But besides painting and having a show regularly every year, I was pretty active.

DS: Active in what? I mean, aside from — were you active in artists' organizations like the [American Artists] Congress?

WG: Sure.

DS: You were one of the signers of the call, weren't you? ["Call for an American Artists Congress"]

WG: Of course, I was the one who started the John Reed Club.

DS: That's what I wanted to talk to you about also. When you and Louis Lozowick went to Russia as the delegates of the John Reed Club — let's talk first about, you say you practically started the John Reed Club. Let's talk about that, and then let's talk when how you went to Russia to the meeting of the —

WG: Kharkov Conference.

DS: Kharkov Conference, yeah.

WG: The John Reed Club was an accident. It was a sort of a crazy challenge. We used to have meetings at the *Liberator* office.

DS: Would this be the John Reed Club, or just a group of you?

WG: There was no John Reed Club then.

DS: Just a group of you would meet?

WG: The editorial board. You remember on the masthead, they'd have editorial boards and so on.

DS: Right.

WG: So we insisted, if you have an editorial board, you should have a function, not names, but [inaudible - "people and"?] function. So, Mike Gold was supposed to be the editor. But he wasn't. He got in a guy named Walt Carmon, who was a grocery clerk, practically [DS laughs], knew nothing about literature. And Walt Carmon out of the office somewheres on Broadway, I don't remember the address. And we used to come there once a month. And we sat there. Now, the guys who came there were the writers, the contributors, who were on the — and some of the poets. And we'd sit there and we'd discuss the issue; what would go into the next issue, or what features. Or sometimes we'd criticize the last issue. Now, Walt Carmon knew from nothing. So he would get little guys, other poets, to help him. But he also got in little Trotskyites. So we exposed him. And he was furious.

DS: This was 1920 or thereabouts?

WG: Somewheres around that time.

DS: But Trotsky was not out of favor then. [In response to faint female voice]

Hello.

WG: At that time, there was a little split between — yes, yes, it was after 1920. Jim Cannon was a Trotskyite, member of the Party. There was a split in the Party, and at the same time, Walt Carmon, well, he didn't know. And anybody came out to help. So he'd have these guys read the manuscripts, and they would reject. And some of the guys who were rejected would raise hell. Those are little things that happened at the meetings. Or times that, when some drawings that were to be featured were left out of the magazine altogether, things like that. They all began to raise hell. And then this place, we were holding — that was a point that we were holding the meeting and Walt Carmon was listening. And he says, "I gotta get a magazine out! You guys are holding up the works! Why don't you guys hire a hall?" So I said, "By gosh, we will. Let's get a place and we'll hold meetings on what the magazine should be about." So they said, "OK, we're gonna hire a hall," and we went to 14<sup>th</sup> Street and got a place. Well, the first thing we had to do is buy lumber, get chairs, so on, and we were making furniture and painting the place and so forth. And that started meetings. Someone came up with the idea, "What'll we call it? Let's call it a club." And then someone came up with the idea, "Let's call it John Reed, in the tradition of that." And before we knew it, we had a club on our hands. That was, that club, was a challenge of *The Liberator*. And all the time, the activities of the club was to show up what *The Liberator* did not do. And *The Liberator* was furious. Mike, and so on, Mike Gold and Walt Carmon, that clique there. So when this call for the Kharkov Conference came, [inaudible - "two persons"?] in the Soviet Union they invited. They invited Mike Gold, people they knew; Mike Gold, myself, and —

SG: Dos Passos. [Note: Sophie Gropper's voice here and throughout the rest of the interview is generally distant and hard to hear.]

WG: John Dos Passos. Well, Dos Passos says he doesn't want to go. Didn't want to go. He was sympathetic with us and so on. So in his place, we said let's elect two people. 'Cause they were paying the expense. I said, I'll go tourist. So I had a chance to put someone else in with us. So all the group that went was Mike Gold went first class; he didn't want to go for Dos Passos —

SG: [Inaudible - "He backed out."?]

WG: [Inaudible - "He backed out."?] Dos Passos, he had, Abe Magill was selected by the Party, and somebody else, and then with me was Harry Potemkin.

DS: How did Louis go then? Louis Lozowick?

SG: He didn't go.

WG: Lozowick didn't go.

DS: He didn't go?

WG and SG: [In unison] No.

WG: Fred Ellis was in Moscow at the time.

SG: So was Jack Kunitz [possibly referring to Joshua Kunitz?] in Moscow at the time.

WG: And so was Jack Kunitz in Moscow.

DS: But Louis wrote from, about the conference as if he had been there.

WG: Louis wasn't there at that time. He was there a number of times, but not at that conference. At that conference, we had —

DS: It was in 1929. Or was it earlier?

WG: Around 1930, wasn't it?

SG: [Inaudible.]

WG: Nineteen thirty.

SG: October 1930.

DS: When you had the meetings of the John Reed Club, when it first started, what year was that?

WG: I don't remember.

SG: It was in late '28.

WG: Twenty-seven, '28.

SG: Twenty-seven, you were in Europe.

WG: Twenty-eight. Nineteen twenty-eight. Yeah, 1928. Seven, I was in on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary [inaudible].

DS: Did the John Reed Club have by-laws, a constitution, or anything at all?

WG: Oh, boy, did we have. One on top of the other. [DS laughs.] There were laws, by-laws and so on. The John Reed Club was, was practically, it was a vital organization; it did an awful lot for the Party. But also, the Party had a great power in there. Had a fraction that ran it. And there was fighting in the John Reed Club on various principles, and that's where what's his name, with the pumpkins —

SG: Chambers.

DS: Whittaker Chambers.

WG: Whittaker Chambers was at the time spying for, well, he was with *Time* magazine and at the same time a member of the club, and —

SG: His wife [inaudible] the furniture.

WG: That's right. It was — I don't know how to describe it. It wasn't a unified organization. [Inaudible] fractions [inaudible]. For example, the artists in the club wanted to get out posters, to get out lithographs. And we wanted a lithograph press. And we were appealing to various people for a hundred bucks to buy it. And I appealed to Diego Rivera, and he gave me the hundred bucks. Diego Rivera was anathema to the fraction, the fraction of the club; they didn't want any part of him. But we took the money. And we got hell from the Party.

SG: [Inaudible.]

WG: That's, yeah, we got hell from the *Daily Worker* and so on. They did nothing, but they were ready to give you hell. Of course, with the help of Walt Carmon too. He ganged up — he'd get drunk and come in with Bill Dunn and break up meetings of the John Reed Club. Diego Rivera wanted to get back into the Party, but he didn't want to do it through Mexico. He wanted to do it through the back door, through here. And the idiots, like Bill Dunn and who's the other guy? Not only Walt Carmon, but — I forgot his name. [Inaudible] didn't want him. So, well, anyway, these are little things, those are little incidents that happened [inaudible - "at the club"?].

SG: Well, he agreed to give [inaudible] press, but he wanted to speak before the John Reed Club.

WG: He gave us the, he did speak to us.

SG: He wanted to speak before the John Reed Club.

WG: He did talk before the John Reed —

DS: Was that the meeting that they broke up, they broke it up and everybody started yelling at him?

SG: That's right, and I remember he [laughs], this is what I remember about Louis Lozowick. Chairman. He was chairman —

DS: Sixth Avenue. 1234 Sixth Avenue. Louis was chairman?

WG: Yeah, Louis was chairman.

SG: Louis Lozowick was chairman and there was a razor blade lying the table.

WG: He was [inaudible - "afraid"?].

SG: He grabbed a hold of the razor blade [laughing] and put it in his pocket!

[Laughter.]

WG: He was afraid there was going to be cutting and everything. Yeah, that was a, that was when we were having the —

SG: [Inaudible] was born. That's why I remember.

DS: Yeah. There's a story about that that's been published so much, I don't recall where I read it, where he'd given 200 dollars, the story goes, to the John Reed Club. And he came down to address the meeting, and he was shouted down.

WG: He was shouted down.

DS: By functionaries of the Party.

SG: Yeah. [Inaudible] Dunn.

WG: Bill Dunn.

SG: Bill Dunn.

WG: Bill Dunn. Who was drunk.

SG: [Inaudible - "Drunk"?] his head off.

WG: And so was Walt Carmon, and so was Engdahl. [J.] Louis Engdahl. They're all editors of the *Daily Worker*. And they were the big shots, the Central Committee and so on. They're the ones who knew that we're gonna have Diego Rivera at that meeting. They arranged it. They knew all about it.

SG: They never were at meetings before.

WG: They had to arrange the whole thing, and so on. The last minute, they pulled that there. Anyway, this is incidental.

DS: This was when the John Reed Club had already begun to expand, or was it still that it was just the only group in New York? 'Cause later on, they had 18 different clubs, I think, all over the country.

WG: That's right, all.

DS: But was this still when they were just the only club in the country?

WG: It was riding high, yeah. This was the time that we were —

DS: That's when they had the two shows, one after the other, the two exhibitions on Sixth Avenue. What was it, 434-6, opposite Jefferson Market Court?

WG: Yeah.

DS: Is that where it was?

WG: Yeah.

DS: How were those exhibitions arranged? 'Cause I know Benton exhibited in them, and so did John Steuart Curry.

WG: We had a broad, we wanted a broad base. And not only members, but people that are sympathetic, and we made a [inaudible - "call, we had a call on"?], I forget what they called it. And then we exhibited as a group, the Independents.

DS: Was it a juried exhibition?

WG: No. Just by invitation. We invited — we weren't strict at all.

SG: And then artists went down to [inaudible] some of the unions to speak about our [inaudible] exhibition.

WG: Oh, yes, that's also a function of the club. We went around lecturing to clubs, various social clubs and union halls and so on. It was very active, very busy in those days.

DS: Do you remember when John Kwait, I think it was, at *The New Masses*, reviewed the first John Reed Club show and panned it? He said it wasn't very good, it wasn't social, and what's his name —

WG: You mean Walter Quirt.

DS: He signed it John Kwait. K-W-A-I-T. I don't know who he is —

WG: I don't know that guy.

DS: We gotta find out who he is, but I don't know him. But he reviewed it, and he was answered by the guy who was a political cartoonist on the — Jacob Burck.

WG: Oh.

DS: Well, they answered in *The Masses*, and took him to task, because they accused him of sectarianism and everything else under the sun. I printed it in my book.

WG: Yeah. I don't remember that.

DS: And then Louis reviewed the second show, Louis Lozowick reviewed the second John Reed Club show, and said that a lot of progress was being made, that they were learning how to handle revolutionary art, and so on. And in time they

would learn how to do it, because what a great and noble thing they were aspiring to do. Do you remember that?

WG: Yeah. Yeah. There were various — but we were accustomed to being panned anyway.

DS: Yeah, but this was in *The Masses*. *The New Masses* panned it. See, that's the thing. And that's why Burck answered 'em.

WG: Yeah, well, Burck became the pen. The one panned himself.

DS: Well, he went to Chicago and became a Pulitzer Prize winner in Chicago.

WG: Yeah, I remember that there too. And the New York American claimed that he copied it or something.

DS: Yeah, there was something about that.

WG: [Inaudible.]

DS: So, what about those squabbles you used to have in the John Reed Club about fellow travelers, who to accept for membership? Do you remember anything about those?

WG: No. The inner politics I didn't know. I wasn't too much involved with the fraction and so on because I wasn't a member of the Party, I wasn't in any of those meetings. Generally speaking, on a broad, open I was used — and it was actually — they would have debates, oh, sometimes we were silly. We'd argue from hours about whether we should have a round or a round potbelly stove or not.

SG: And I came in and I said, "I'll solve your problem. I got a round stove and I'll give it to you." [Laughter.]

WG: It was all sorts of — it was very funny, the first meeting we had, was a complaint from the people living in the back of the neighborhood. I was chairman, and I was preparing a grand opening for the John Reed Club. I didn't call it "John Reed Club"; we didn't know the name. "We are now inaugurating a club of artists and writers in a cultural, what might turn out to be cultural center." And a fellow comes from the back and says, "Mr. President," or, and I said —

[Tape pauses briefly, resumes.]

And I said, "I'm not a president." Says, "I want to ask you a question." Said, "No, you can't. We have no laws or by-laws. I'm ruling." And he insisted. So I asked, said, "Let him talk, let's see what he wants." He says, "Will you please" — we had no toilets there, but there was a sink — "Please don't pee in the sink." [WG and DS laugh.]

They had been using it for washing their clothes and stuff. That was the first speech that was protest. [DS laughs.]

DS: Did you know Jack Conroy then?

WG: Yeah. I knew a lot of the guys.

DS: Wasn't his journal formed into the John Reed Club journal?

WG: No. He wrote poetry.

DS: Yeah, but he had the *Rebel* — he used to published a journal, I think it was also called the *Rebel Worker* — no, *The Anvil*.

WG: Yeah.

DS: *The Anvil*.

WG: He was more, he was a Wobbly. Where is he now?

DS: He's living in —

WG: Chicago.

DS: No, not in Chicago. He lives in Missouri, near Kansas City. Sedalia, Missouri. He reviewed my book last summer and sent me a review. Very, very nice letter. And he comes East every now and again, and we — maybe as I told you — this fall, at Hofstra, we may be having something on the '30s and I want to get Jack Conroy there, you and a few other people, to talk about it.

WG: He, wasn't he in Chicago?

DS: Sure, for many years.

WG: I met him in Chicago.

DS: But now he's living in Sedalia, Missouri. I've got his address somewhere. And he writes book reviews for the *Chicago Tribune* and for the *Kansas City Star*.

WG: That's interesting. The *Tribune* of all places.

DS: Well, this is what happens. The *Kansas City Star*. He sent me a review he wrote of my book in the *Kansas City Star*. But he corresponds with a gal who lives here in Great Neck who's in our English Department at Hofstra. And she keeps in touch with him. But these are the funny things which happen, you know, all over the world today. Do you remember when the John Reed Club started the art school?

WG: Yeah. I wasn't teaching. I taught a little bit once. I don't know when it started. But it was very — I tried to get it down to as little classes, small classes, possible. I had a class once, and I discouraged all of them. My philosophy, or my theory at that time was, if a guy wants to be an artist, you can't discourage him. [Laughing.] You knock him on the head and so on, he's gonna come back. And why waste time. Get rid of them.

DS: I remember you came down and said that, at the American Artists Group, which had been the John Reed Club School [of Art]. I was in the audience, I was one of the kids.

WG: Really?

DS: I remember that.

WG: I tried to discourage. And then I, for some reason, I had to go somewhere, or do something else, and I handed my class over to Fred Ellis. And Fred was a very easygoing guy with a sense of humor, and he told jokes. Did he get that class up to hundreds of kids and more pupils. He really got a tremendous [inaudible - "class up"?] I said, "What the hell is he doing?" [Inaudible - "He ruined it."?] But that was — it didn't go too far, that school.

DS: Do you remember how the John Reed Club broke up, all the clubs broke up in Chicago, that big conference that [Alexander] Trachtenberg spoke at?

WG: Well, the Party did that. I don't know how they did it, or why, but it was time. It was — I don't know. That part becomes very fuzzy in my mind.

SG: Didn't you and Joe go to London, you and Joe [inaudible], to some convention [inaudible] Chicago.

WG: Well, I know he ["we"?] went to Philadelphia also. But I don't remember —

DS: Richard Wright wrote in his book, in the book, that Trachtenberg gave a speech for the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and urged them to break up the John Reed Club, that it was time that it became a broader organization, to take in more people, and to form a Writers Congress and an artists' organization like it. That's what Richard Wright wrote.

SG: [Inaudible] that was after the [inaudible], Bill, you remember that. It was in his house, you were invited, and he came and sat there like a king.

WG: He sat on a throne.

DS: Who's this?

WG: Trachtenberg.

SG: [Inaudible] on a high chair, that I remember, because [inaudible] meeting, and that was after the Kharkov Conference.

DS: Long after. This was 1935 [inaudible].

WG: Yeah. It was later.

DS: Much later.

WG: Trachtenberg took us, Trachtenberg and Jerome, in my mind, let's say, were hatchet men. Of the Party, you know. And they had a few little guys around them. And in order to make themselves very important, they wanted that organization to become spread out, evidently. But they began taking in anybody and anything, and became a sort of a loose organization with opportunists, hangers-on, people who had no —

SG: And then they, didn't they begin [inaudible] around the time when Stuart Davis dropped out and —

WG: No, then they had another organization at the time, when Stuart Davis was brought in.

SG: [Inaudible.]

WG: And chairman of this here —

SG: The Congress.

WG: The Artists Congress or something.

DS: Yeah, well, when the John Reed Club broke up, they formed —

SG: The Congress formed.

DS: Yeah, they formed the American Artists Congress and the Writers Congress.

That's what was formed. First the writers and then the artists. That was the result of the John Reed Club breaking up.

WG: That's right, yeah.

DS: And Stuart Davis became president of the Congress.

SG: That's right.

WG: You see, in those days — it's very funny, too — you'd get in a goy, to be the front, and Stuart Davis was a goy. He was boozing it up. He was most times drunk than sober.

SG: Well, then he became very — he was a Party member at that time, and then he became very anti.

WG: Yeah.

DS: Really? He claimed he never was a Party member.

SG: Oh, yes, he was a Party member. He was a Party member.

WG: Who, Stuart?

SG: Stuart Davis was a Party member. And he —

[Tape pauses briefly and resumes; previous few seconds of recording are repeated as if tape has been edited.]

SG: Party member at that time, and then he became very anti.

WG: Yeah.

DS: Really? He claimed he never was a Party member.

SG: Oh, yes, he was a Party member. He was a Party member.

WG: Who, Stuart?

SG: Stuart Davis was a Party member. And he became anti, very anti, after.

WG: Because he —

SG: [Inaudible.] As a matter of fact, at a certain time, he gave the line too.

WG: Well, they handed him the line. That was the time around those days where there was a division. Two or three different points of view on many things. [WG coughs.]

DS: There's been some people who've been writing on the period, especially about the writers, and about the *Partisan Review*, which had been started by the Communist Party and then was taken over by people who more or less followed Trotsky. They've been writing and saying that the United Front, and the policy of the United Front, killed the idea of a revolutionary kind of art, of a real proletarian art. Do you think that's so?

WG: I don't remember it.

DS: This is what they're saying now, looking back on the period, you see?

WG: Oh, I see.

DS: Because, if you remember, the art somehow became concerned with a few different topics: strikers, people on relief, people in poor circumstances. This became the iconography, the subject matter [inaudible]. And it didn't have a real revolutionary theme. Rivera, as a matter of fact, claimed that it couldn't be revolutionary, because it wasn't a real revolutionary period.

WG: Yeah. Well, what I do remember, in a sense, is that there was — artists gave pictures — there were artists who didn't have any revolutionary — so they gave revolutionary titles. If a guy painted a goose, it was a revolutionary goose, goose for socialism. It became ridiculous. And we never wanted, most of the artists never wanted to offend another artist. If his sympathies were in the right direction, even if he made still lifes, or if he made candlesticks and so on, we said [inaudible - "his"?] sympathies. But they went one better and said, "We're more revolutionary than you are. We're doing the work of social work." That sort of thing. And then they began to resent also, resent, and that's where a lot of them came out and said, "Propaganda. Propaganda." And it's not art or storytelling, illustration. Just as much as I imagine Benton must have suffered when they called him the cornball or the old hat.

DS: Yeah, because I saw some old Bentons, early Bentons, which he exhibited at the John Reed Club —

WG: Yeah.

DS: Striking miners, that sort of material.

WG: One good thing about the club, it had a strong influence on the work around, on the thinking at that time. And if there — every May Day parade, if it wasn't for the John Reed Club, there'd be no May Day parade at all, 'cause they made the banners and everything. We'd buckle down. We had the whole floor, and everyone had a brush, and every brush was a different color, and they each one did their bit like the belt system. And then later, this is where little Quirt was [inaudible - "named"?].

DS: Walter Quirt?

WG: Walter Quirt came around, and he became a captain. He appointed himself from the Party, and came down and says, "We're gonna reorganize this year." Well, the guys were working. And he just monkey, he put a monkey wrench in the whole — so everybody, without saying a word, stopped work. It wasn't even organized. It was one of these crazy things. Then we had a fight up in the headquarters. It was like a strike. We didn't want more posters, and what do you call these —

SG: Streamers.

WG: No.

DS: Floats.

WG: Floats, and so on. And then it was, "Get this little runt outta here."

DS: You mean he'd been sent in from the Party to give advice?

WG: Well, you see, if you want to become a big shot, you appoint yourself. Then you go to Party headquarters and say, "They need this and this and this and this." They say, "All right then." And that's it.

DS: How was his Surrealism accepted in the Party? You were telling me —

WG: It was a flop. He was trying to do a comic strip at one time, and the *Daily* didn't want to print it. And he blamed it on the artists; he blamed it on somebody. Or on another artist named Dell.

[Recording stops with a little blank tape remaining on Side A.]

[Side B begins.]

PH: I'm recording the interview between William Gropper and David Shapiro, May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1975.

[Recording of interview begins mid-conversation.]

WG: [Inaudible.]

DS: Really?

WG: And he wrote me a note last week. I met him in Florida, and he wrote me a —

[Tape pauses briefly and resumes mid-sentence, as if it has been edited.]

WG: A book on cartoons. Old political cartoons. Different people. He wrote me a note saying that Crockett Johnson, Dave — I think he's named Dave Johnson, or Dave — who used to draw [inaudible] for *The Masses*.

DS: Yeah, and then also for *PM*.

WG: That's right. He's now ill, very ill. So he's contacting. Very funny.

DS: You'll have to give me his address so I can get in touch with him. Do you remember Joyce, Robert Joyce, he used to be the art editor of *PM*?

WG: Yeah. Yeah.

DS: He just wrote a book, which he asked me to read. He's retired now, he lives on Shelter Island, way out east, on the island. It's an interesting book. It's a book on — it deals with art, but mostly from the point of view of the necessity of making art. Not stylistically at all. It's interesting. And I read it, and wrote him what I thought of it, and so on.

WG: It's a name that comes from way out in the distance.

DS: Yeah, it came out from way out to me too. Somebody on my street. Rita Squire [phonetic]? She used to be the secretary of the Artists' Union. She lives on my street here in town. And she asked me if I would be willing to read his book. I said,

“Sure, why not?” And so he sent me a copy, and it’s being published soon. So, we’ll see what he has to say. [Inaudible] say something else, now it slipped my mind. Oh, yeah. Did you know Louis Guglielmi? He painted, he did Surrealism also, with social overtones.

WG: I don’t think I did. I might have met him, but I don’t remember. The name is familiar, but I don’t remember. I think he was with the AAA Gallery too.

DS: I don’t know, I don’t recall which gallery he was with. He painted mostly pictures of Italian immigrant people, women and so on, in the city, in New —  
[Tape pauses briefly and resumes mid-sentence, as if it has been edited.]

DS: He’s got a group of women inside of a bell jar in the middle of a street, and it’s called *Terror in Brooklyn*.

WG: Yeah. Yeah, I know his work. I don’t think I knew him.

DS: But that’s interesting about Quirt. Because he became an Abstract Expressionist at the end. And in the ’30s, he was doing what he called “Social Surrealism.” You don’t see any of it anymore. Every now and again, you could see one or two pieces.

WG: Well, there was a period, too — now, there’s always small break-ups or splits within any group that is alive and active. There was a period of A.J. [phonetic - could this be Abe Ajay?], if you remember the name A.J.

DS: He’s still around.

WG: Or, Hari— let’s see, is it [inaudible], not [inaudible], but — Harari.

DS: Oh, yeah. Harari. Hananiah Harari.

WG: Yeah. They're going around off in a sort of an abstract end. They were — they were supporting tendencies, or actions, that was considered by the Party people as revisionist or so on, in a direction that then would go to the extreme calling it fascist art. And when it came to a group and a vote, they held forth too. So it was — I don't know how to describe it. It was a split. It wasn't an easygoing [inaudible] unified union.

DS: You haven't mentioned Hugo Gellert once in all of this. And Hugo, I think, must have been involved in everything.

WG: Well, Hugo was always around. Hugo was acceptable as the furniture. He didn't take the lead in any discussions, arguments. He was a [inaudible], he was a hard worker, but he wasn't too active in the John Reed Club. He was around, but not too active. So was Maurice Becker. And so was — I forget his name, he was a tall guy who died.

DS: Glint? [Henry] Glintenkamp?

WG: Glintenkamp. Glint. Glint was likable, very likable. My activities weren't in that, the same — I was close with Art Young. We'd see each other regularly, often. As far as the organizations are concerned, I wasn't much of an organization guy either.

DS: Yeah. I was just interested because Hugo, I heard him the last time he was talking, he mentioned the fact that there was the Artists' Committee of Action, which he was very active in, which became part of the Artists' Union at the time. I just wondered if you knew anything about that.

WG: No.

DS: But Hugo was one of the, wasn't he one of the editors of *The New Masses* for a while?

WG: Like all of us. So was Jake Burck on *The New Masses*. Jake Burck was [inaudible] Jake Burck. He kicked out a lot of guys. But there was an awful lot of activity being done that you couldn't pin it down to one particular, you know —

DS: Let's go back to you then, Bill. Let's talk about, how'd you start a cartoon? How'd you, what was the sort of process, if you can describe a process of how you got started and played with the idea and how you finally finished up, it would be interesting.

WG: Well, there were, at first, drawings — drawings in [or "and"?] line with a thought, some thought in back that if it wasn't social or political it had some other thought. With humor, or something. I'm thinking of *The Dial*. I'm thinking of the little magazines. I'm thinking of a little humor. And then publications themselves. You would draw for a [inaudible] publication that had political tendencies, you'd naturally draw a political cartoon. And of course *The Masses* and the *Freiheit* got me into real political thinking, political cartooning way of thinking. But I was not too good, and I don't think I am good, at writing a gag line, you know, that most cartoons have today. It was more of a visual, and I think the drawing has a story. Drawing is a language itself, and that's most important with me.

DS: How'd you work out the — for instance, two of your things as I remember. The worker, the symbol of the worker, which you used a very similar symbol all the time. The unemployed man symbol, the tall man with his hands in his pockets. And

the capitalist, the bloated capitalist. Those are the three characters which you used again and again and again.

WG: Oh, that was easy. That was easy. That was a visual storytelling without even much analysis. The guy who is thin and hungry and so on is naturally thin, long, bony and hungry. So you draw him that way. And he had a long shadow in front of him. And a guy who is not hungry is fat. So is the number 10, together! [Pause.] I'm trying to recall some of the cartoons, and I can't, I can't think of them, because —

DS: But you had one big one, I remember, it was on the cover of *The Masses*, shows the worker leaping out very big against the smokestacks of the factory, and two or three little capitalists, [inaudible], are rearing back in fear of him.

WG: Yeah. That was the Party slogan, you know. But the real truth, it isn't true. I think capitalism is going to destroy capitalism. Not the worker. The worker, he's worse than, he's the guy that's going to fight the capitalism. [Laughs.]

DS: That's an interesting point of view.

WG: From what I feel, I see around [inaudible] — [using different, gruff voice] “Who, who goes out to fight for these communists and so on. The goddamn unions and workers are bloated.” But I think, I'm not sure, I think it was Lenin or someone, or Marx, who said capitalism will destroy itself.

DS: Well, I'll ask you a very obvious question. Obviously you don't feel the same way now as you did then, 30 years ago. And yet, is that because you see what's happened in life, or is it because of a change in thinking or whatever, or both?

WG: Oh, it's in everything. It isn't a change in life; change has been happening right along. I'm still strong for socialism. It's gotta happen. The only thing that I

wouldn't do now that I did then is go out with a big banner and march in the front parade and say, "Here, hit me over the head." That's the only — but otherwise, I'm still as militant in my own way. I think that we're at present in the middle of a — they're having some sort of a battle here in schools. I don't know who. Two people are running for office, and they say we're gonna keep taxes up or keep taxes down, or save the teachers, pay [or "teachers' pay"?] and all that. I'm at a loss with this here. I've been hearing this right along. Every time I hear it. And then when they get in, there's a fight that they've been doing something else, and so on. It's a continuous merry-go-round. In my naive way.

DS: Remember when you did the cartoon of Hirohito making the pact with the little girl? No, that was another one, I got it mixed up myself. The little girl's with tanks, with the Nazi tanks. But the one of Hirohito, and the State Department had to apologize. What happened there? How'd it come about?

WG: That was for *Vanity Fair*.

DS: *Vanity Fair*, yeah.

WG: Well, there's another — I did pages for *Vanity Fair*. And you know, here's something very funny. How did I get into *Vanity Fair*? It's through *The Masses*. *New Masses*. And they were bastards, *The New Masses*. They forced me to do that.

DS: Really? Why? In what way?

WG: I was making a series of drawings in Washington of the Senate in action for *The New Masses*. They were supposed to pay my fare, which was about six dollars or seven dollars or something. They never paid me for anything. And I borrowed the money, or somehow I went down to Washington, and said, "Pay it for Sophie, my

wife." I made a number of drawings, the drawings that you see in the lithographs and paintings. It's a story in itself when I was in Washington. So *The New Masses* says to her, "Oh —"

SG: I called up [inaudible] buying milk for the kids, because he didn't have any money. So I called up and somebody, [inaudible] Jake Burck at *The New Masses* —

WG: I don't know who it was.

SG: [Inaudible] editor. And I said, "You owe Bill six dollars, or eight dollars."

[Inaudible. Then using different, louder voice.] He said, "That little bit helps too?"

[Inaudible.]

WG: So she was insulted, and I had these drawings. So she says, "I'm mad. Don't give it to them." I said, "What are you gonna do?" She says, "I'm going over to *Vanity Fair*." She brought them over to *Vanity Fair*, and [Frank] Crowninshield said, "I'll take 'em." Where am I? So I was home. But she said I'm still in Washington. So he said, "Tell him to make a few more, so we'll make a double page."

SG: [Inaudible] I sent a telegram from there to Margaret Young because we didn't know anybody else.

WG: I was supposed to send —

SG: And we came home and we called Margaret Young and asked her to send a telegram back [inaudible].

DS: [Inaudible] the writer?

WG: Yeah. And [inaudible] made us a double-page spread of the Senate in action. So, from then on, they asked me to contribute every month or every other month ideas and features. And that was all through *The Masses*. Their, whoever it was,

nastiness. But I still drew for *The Masses* too. So I would submit ideas. See, before you make a drawing, Crowninshield and the editors wanted something to look at; what you were going to draw. So my ideas, the whole ideas, of the feature was “not on your tintype.” It’s unbelievable stories, unbelievable incidents. So, for example, a lot of them, most of them, were rejected, and a lot of them were accepted. And that was when, at that time, Japan was invading Manchuria. And I thought, “Jesus.” And then they get the Peace Prize for an invasion. So I thought of making the Emperor Hirohito carrying the Nobel Peace Prize on a rickshaw. Not thinking, you know, I thought it was a funny idea. Or, for example, King George and Gandhi were on the outs. There was a friction between India and — I just thought of both of them playing strip poker. And I had Gandhi wear all the uniform of King George, and King George in Gandhi’s. Or I had another idea of —

SG: [Inaudible] sitting on a rickshaw in the Soviet Union.

WG: Not a rickshaw.

SG: I know, I know. [Inaudible.]

DS: Troika.

WG: Troika. Well, anyway. So the ones that was rejected was King George. So, he would say, and this was nice of them, he said, “Look, we’re going to get into an international fight between England and India, and we have a lot of British advertising and so on.” And I said, “Oh.” So they accepted this; they accepted quite a few others.

SG: Yeah, except the Italian thing, Mussolini [inaudible].

WG: Yeah, and Mussolini, and the Umberto also, they didn’t accept that.

SG: They accepted that. Yes they did.

WG: But I don't remember. Anyway, so they made a double page on this. The military in Japan caught on this here and began to raise hell to our State Department for insulting the son of God, Hirohito. And they demanded an apology. Well, Cordell Hull couldn't give any apology, because we're a free press; he couldn't apologize for *Vanity Fair*. But *Vanity Fair* said, "We'll apologize." But the military in Japan didn't want *Vanity Fair*. They wanted the State Department.

DS: But the State Department did apologize, didn't they?

WG: They couldn't! They said, "We're sorry, but we couldn't apologize."

DS: Oh, I see.

SG: Freedom of the press.

WG: "We didn't instruct this thing to happen. We're sorry it happened, but we can't apologize." Well, Jesus, the whole country, all over the world, everywhere began to insult one another apologize demanding apologies! [DS laughs.] They made a big joke out of it. Well, that — and the press all came as, will I apologize, "Will the artist apologize." So I made a cartoon, I said, "If the military — [inaudible] — if the military in Japan will withdraw its troops from Manchuria, I'll withdraw my cartoon." And I said, "I'm gonna make another cartoon." I made another cartoon and—"

[Tape pauses briefly and resumes mid-sentence, as if it has been edited.]

WG: [Inaudible] the *New Masses*. And I did a hotter and a stronger one.

SG: [Inaudible.]

WG: Something like that. And I created an international incident. I was also under indictment, too.

DS: Then?

WG: No, for another thing, from a union guy.

DS: For what?

WG: Labor union, leader, got out an indictment, wanted me not to pay any fine, but wanted me to go to jail. Who was the guy from the International Ladies' Workers?

DS: Sidney Hillman? No, he was another one. Oh, what's his name.

SG: Not [inaudible.]

WG: No.

SG: [Inaudible.]

WG: Well, anyway, he brought the *Freiheit* and me, editor and me, up on criminal libel, and brought the evidence of the cartoons to the judge. When the judge looked at 'em, he laughed. So they were through immediately. Then I was also threatened with criminal libel by, what's the lawyer — [inaudible] very famous lawyer. I get these names [inaudible] up. Added to this, he was robbing the bank [laughing], robbing the safe of the workers' —

SG: [Inaudible.]

WG: Isn't it funny, these names just slip your mind.

SG: Amalgamated Bank.

WG: No. It wasn't Amalgamated. It was the Ladies' Garment Workers, the same bank. The Garment Workers. It was the Welfare Fund. They were using the money

for other things. I had him opening the safe. But immediately it was squashed. 'Cause it [or "Art"?] felt that if they went on with it, it would have been a bigger scandal, and they wanted to hush it up more.

DS: That's always the danger. Bill, when you did the painting of the Senate, which is in the Museum of Modern Art, did you submit that to different exhibitions?

WG: Yeah.

DS: Was it accepted or was it rejected?

WG: They rejected it all over. Everywhere.

DS: Which exhibitions did you submit it to?

WG: Well, national shows. For example, the Corcoran show. They rejected it; said "Too hot to use it." They didn't even say "too hot," they just rejected it. The National Academy of Design. All the shows. The only time I showed it was my own show. It was bought by Goodyear. And that was based on my trip for *Vanity Fair*. When I was in Washington, drawing in the Press Gallery, these guys, these senators talked to these guys in the press. And what happened, most of the guys in the press were watching me draw; they weren't watching the guy talking. And it happened that Huey Long was doing all the talking. So they were saying, "Jesus," you know, how I was drawing these guys. So they were getting a kick out of it, and down there, he was getting furious. So he had somebody, one of the pager boys, had them call me down, and I was called down on the floor. So there really is a lobby there, I didn't believe it! You know, there are guys, there are gangs. And then [inaudible - "Larry"?] says, "Let's see what you're doing." [Inaudible - "Huey Long"?] So I show him, different people there, sitting around, one sleeping, and so on. He says, [in different,

jovial voice] “Ha, that’s him! Got him, heh!” He knew every one of them. And then it came to him, he says, “Who’s this?” [WG and DS laugh.] I says, “You.” He says, [in low, gravelly voice] “You didn’t get me at all.” [Laughter.] He didn’t like it. And it was very funny. The other guys came around too. There was plenty — they recognize themselves, but they don’t recognize [inaudible]. Anyway. So I get a closer, you know —

SG: One remark from one artist who was on the jury, Sol Wilson, on some jury where they [inaudible] and somebody said, “Well, maybe if you were to put on another frame, maybe we should accept it.” [Laughs.]

WG: Oh, then, after it was rejected by all [inaudible], then when Museum of Modern Art put it — all these museums and all these people called — I should have saved those letters.

DS: You should have.

WG: They said, “Have you any Senate pictures?” [DS laughs.] That was a — [pause]. It was also ironic, it became a “Senate season.” [Whispers.] Senate, Senate, Senate.

SG: Senate season.

DS: Do you want to talk about the McCarthy hearings, Bill, at all? Or is it still too bitter an experience?

WG: No. [Inaudible - “What the hell?”?] I was called, and I think I was the only artist called before anybody else.

SG: I don’t think you were the only artist that was called before McCarthy.

DS: I don’t know of any. Maybe — was Biberman called?

SG: No.

DS: His brother was.

SG: Not that Biberman. The other.

DS: The brother.

SG: The brother. Biberman was the [inaudible over DS and/or WG coughing].

DS: I don't recall any other artist but you being called.

WG: Well, they had —

SG: [Inaudible] the Un-American Committee [inaudible].

WG: They were called before the Un-American Committee. They weren't called before McCarthy. What happened, McCarthy was calling people who had — these two guys, on that McCarthy Committee was [Roy] Cohn and —

SG: [G. David] Schine.

WG: And Schine, who had gone to Europe on a, what do you call this, binge or something, to the —

SG: [Inaudible.]

WG: To American information centers. On all these information centers, I had *American Folklore*. I had nothing to do with it. This publisher did it. I did the great American folklore. And naturally, there's nothing bad about heroes of America. So the State Department took it up, and they distributed it to all the information centers, to give our background and culture. And they discovered this in the information centers. And they connected my name, Gropper, left-wing [inaudible]. So, [loud snapping sound] immediately, [another loud snapping sound] "A-ha. Get this guy." Well, if you're called, you're guilty. No matter who you are or what you are.

There's some guilt around you. You're guilty of doing something wrong. That's how the Un-American Committee worked. That's how McCarthy worked. He said, "I have 500 names [inaudible] who were spies," you know? He had nothing. But when he said that, whoever he called. So I was called; not a lot of guys were, whoever they were called. What's his name?

SG: [Inaudible.]

WG: No, someone else was called.

SG: Oh, [inaudible].

WG: Aptheker.

SG: At the same time?

WG: Yeah.

DS: Herbert Aptheker.

SG: Charlie —

WG: Aptheker.

SG: Aptheker was called, and Charlie Kramer was called, [inaudible] something different.

WG: So, Aptheker, he gave political talks about Negroes and so on. I was being, I had —

SG: [Inaudible] the attorney.

WG: I needed an attorney.

SG: [Inaudible] Ryan somebody, something like that.

WG: I went to the same attorney that they had, and he briefed me. "You gotta be careful," he said. "If you mention any name, if you answer his questions, you're

guilty. You're found — you'll have to answer all other questions, you'll have to talk. But if you plead the Fifth Amendment and so on — you don't want to incriminate yourself, is all." It was a lot of tricky things in it. So I pleaded Fifth Amendment all the way through. And I was cited for, to be blacklisted. I officially was blacklisted.

DS: In what way?

WG: That I cannot exhibit in any public institution.

SG: McCarthy accused you of being a mapmaker.

WG: He implied that I make maps. Do I do it for the Communist Party? Do I make maps? Everything was questioned. "Do you do this for the Communist Party? Do you do this?" So, do I know anybody in the State Department who's communist that put that in, the *Folklore*? Everything was implied. So I had to plead the Fifth Amendment. "Do you know so-and-so?" Well then, "I plead the Fifth Amendment." "You know Browder?" "I plead the Fifth Amendment." But if I knew somebody on the committee, and plead the Fifth Amendment, I'd be charged with misusing the Fifth Amendment. I had to be very careful. So I'd ask the lawyer — forgot his name, too. So, he made an overture of, that he would get me this, this; you know, made promises. And I refused to collaborate with it, and I was cited by the whole goddamn committee for contempt.

DS: You were cited for contempt?

WG: Yeah.

SG: No.

WG: Wasn't I?

SG: No. You weren't cited for contempt.

WG: I was cited for blacklisting, then.

SG: You were blacklisted —

DS: How do they mean cited for blacklisting? That I don't understand.

SG: [Inaudible.] They officially said he was on a blacklist. That's all there is to it. Anybody that — I mean, those days, on people, who said they were blacklisted.

WG: It was printed in the *Times*.

DS: What would it have mattered to you if you were blacklisted? You were still working for the *Freiheit*, weren't you?

WG: No, no, I would be blacklisted, any American institution that has —

SG: Non-taxable institution.

WG: For example, a public school, or a university, or a museum.

DS: [Inaudible] a mural commission, they shouldn't give it to you.

WG: That's right. So I was blacklisted. So, for a long time I couldn't exhibit my work.

DS: But you still had the ACA.

WG: No, no, in the institutions.

DS: Yeah, that I know, but you were still exhibiting in the ACA.

WG: Private —

DS: And still working for the *Freiheit*.

WG: Yeah.

DS: But you couldn't do murals anymore like you did for the post office.

WG: No.

DS: That, I'm sure that is one of the things they did.

WG: I couldn't get a job as a street cleaner. I couldn't get any tax —

DS: Yeah, I know what you mean now. Any official or semi-official or governmental, one kind or another.

WG: Yeah.

SG: Or museums buying things.

DS: That just dropped away completely? Museums stopped buying things?

WG and SG: [In unison.] Yeah.

SG: Museums stopped buying.

DS: They frightened a lot of people.

WG: Yeah. And they did stop buying. And I don't think [inaudible - "I sold"?] any museum since.

DS: Really? Hmm. [Pause.] Were you here? Did you stay in this country, or did you go to Europe? Weren't you in Europe for a while after that?

WG: [Inaudible.]

SG: [Inaudible] traveled to Europe before.

WG: Before, but [inaudible].

SG: Came back from Europe [inaudible].

WG: I didn't go anywhere, to live anywheres.

DS: I thought you had gone — you said once to me that you had a hard time earning a living then after the McCarthy hearings.

WG: Oh, yeah. She opened up a shop. And I did mats, I cut mats. She was a framer's shop. I didn't sell a damn thing anywheres.

DS: I was in Europe when —

SG: We got it from both sides, Bill. Let's face it, we had it from both sides. Even progressives were afraid to come near, you know?

WG: Oh, when I came back from the hearings, some of the guys who were from the John Reed Club, and some of the guys who were in the same gallery, from the ACA Gallery — I walked down 57<sup>th</sup> Street to the gallery, I'd see 'em walk across the street, they almost got killed by cars, so they shouldn't be seen with me. And some of the good, good guys went around spreading a rumor that some people are taking my pictures off their walls; they shouldn't be implicated.

DS: See, I was away during those years. I was on a government, I was on a Fulbright in Italy, in Rome, for all those years. And I heard, I remember when Schine and Cohn came to Rome. I went to the information agency, the library, to see what was there. That was one of the things. And I had Italian friends who were urging me not to go back to America. So I don't really know any of it first hand. I was away for two years.

WG: It was horrible here. It was more frightening than anything else. For example, when they had to give a summons for me, they went around where we lived in Croton [-on-Hudson], to all the houses, all the neighbors, people who didn't know me or did know me. The marshall went around saying, "Where is he? What does he do? Do you see him? Who does he hang out with?" Went to stores and so on. You really were known when you got through with them.

DS: Yeah. Let's get back to the murals, Bill. When you did the murals for the Grand Coulee Dam, and the Freeport Post Office mural.

WG: Well, it was during the WPA days. I was not eligible on WPA because I was drawing for the *Freiheit*, or whatever it is, but they had open competition for commissions. Take a guy like Boardman Robinson, or [George] Biddle or whoever they were, or [Leon] Kroll; they weren't on the WPA either. So you compete, you make — for example, they ask, for a post office, open competition. Reginald Marsh competes for it, I competed for it, and so on. And those that were selected by the committee, that came the closest, got a commission. Some won, and some got nixed, and so on. And I won a commission to do a mural, and with a number of others, [inaudible], like Henry Varnum Poor —

SG: Ernest Fiene.

WG: Ernest Fiene and so on, and Benton and so forth.

DS: Benton didn't do any for them.

SG: He turned it down.

WG: Not for them, I don't think. Some of the —

SG: He turned it down.

WG: So I went to Washington. They showed me the Interior building, which was still in process of being built, and they gave me the blueprint. And it was a main lobby, a main entrance. And I read all the contract instructions and so on, and I said, "I'll follow it closely." They said, "We want you to." That's how I — so I got that commission. And it's still up there, and it's just as fresh as when I painted it. But the other murals went to pieces by the other guys. I did not do any fresco. I did it on canvas. I had asked Diego Rivera about that. He says, "Don't do it, because the building isn't even up long enough to set, and what'll happen, it'll crack all the way

[or “all away”] unless you put a frame.” And in the contract you’re responsible for the wall. And Reginald Marsh didn’t pay attention. So when he got through with his, they had to break open the wall. And the contractors cheated. They didn’t have a wall. So he had to put in a wall himself. And also you had a job because it cracked [inaudible]. Mine is up. And is there anything unusual? The only thing is that they had to put a plug in, like that.

DS: An outlet. Yeah.

WG: And I was gonna cover it up. So I went to the engineer, the superintendent of the building, and said, “That’s illegal.” I said it’s illegal. He says, “What do you mean?” He says, “I need this here outlet, otherwise I can’t wash the floors.” I said, “That’s illegal.” I take out my blueprint. I said, “It’s not on there. You’re taking my wall away. I’m covering it up.” He says, “Where are you starting work?” I said, “I’m going to start working on that end.” He got all the electricians and so on, and they fished out the [inaudible - “line”?] and laid down that floor. [DS laughs.] I did that, you know —

DS: This is the entrance to the Department of Interior building.

WG: Yeah, but when I finished setting it up — oh, I had to do a full-size drawing. Besides the sketch, I did a full-size drawing. Then they came down — engineers, everybody — they all came down and looked. “So what is that?” The bolt. “What is that?” Bolt. Two different bolts. The only thing they found wrong. They were looking for hammer and sickle. And the irony of the whole thing was that it was too big for them to see. It was right there in the front. They didn’t see it.

DS: You mean the design of it.

WG: There was a hammer and sickle right there.

DS: I don't remember. I saw the sketch about six months ago in Washington, at the Smithsonian.

WG: I'll tell you what it was. So they fished it out and so on, and they looked right at it; all right. So I said, "I'll change the bolt." They said one is going north, one is south, expansion and contraction and so on. So I change the bolt, and I finish. When I got through putting it up, this guy had it all ready. And then the whole gang came down from the Department of Art and Interior and so on, and it was approved. And they gave me a party. [Inaudible] drinking, and one guy says, "Want a job down here? We did something that would take an act of Congress to get that plug out." [DS laughs.] You would have to work months! You get scared. But I said to Ned, Ned —

DS: Bruce.

WG and SG: [In unison] Bruce.

SG: Ned Bruce.

WG: I says, "Did you see the composition of this? You see the black guy right in the front, the big black guy pulling with the crowbar, and a white guy with him, entwined?" He says [whispering], "Goddamn it!" [DS laughs.] It's too big to — because Negroes were absolutely — he was very sympathetic, Ned Bruce.

SG: I remember [inaudible] saying, "That's the most handsome mural I've seen."

DS: It is. It's a beauty. I saw the sketch in the Smithsonian. It's fresh as fresh could be, as if he did it yesterday. It really is.

WG: I made the canvas myself. I prepared it and everything. And I didn't varnish it, I waxed it, told 'em how to keep it. Anyway, that's that one. But I had another job, the Northwestern Postal —

SG: Post office.

WG: Detroit. They were bulldozing it down. And I had a big fight on that.

DS: Wayne State has it now.

WG: Yeah. And they did a nice job there.

DS: I haven't seen what they've done. I know they did it. I know [inaudible.]

WG: Beautiful job. It looks better in Wayne State than —

SG: They still have one here [inaudible].

DS: Freeport, two of them. Two panels.

WG: Yeah.

SG: [Inaudible] all of a sudden they're going around, you know, they were going to take it off.

DS: No, I don't think so. As a matter of fact, I keep track of it. Because if they are not taking care of it, we'll raise hell at Hofstra, and we'll ask for it, like Wayne State did, you see. We'll take it then, because it should be taken care of.

WG: They have no provisions for that.

DS: None. Nothing. They just — we did one for the main post office on 34<sup>th</sup> Street.

WG: Yeah.

DS: It's behind the door; they've got a machine in front of it. [DS and WG laugh.]  
You can't see it.

SG: You know what they did with the Frank Mechau [inaudible] mural?

DS: No.

SG: They gave it to an American Legion hall. And they hung it up, and then they [inaudible].

DS: Nobody knows what happened to a lot of that material. It's just —

WG: [Francis V.?] O'Connor is making a research —

DS: Yeah, he's working on it, and some girl, Greta Berman, just got her doctorate. She did her dissertation on all the murals around New York City. And she hunted them down. And then a couple of students of Milton Brown's at City University did a survey for the Archives of American Art on murals around New York.

WG: [Inaudible.]

DS: So there's, somebody's keeping up. But it's so hard to find the material. You go down to look through the City Hall it's in the basement somewhere, and it's piled every which way, and you don't know where to look, even, to find the material. And none of the stuff is taken care of.

WG: Of course, most of the easel paintings were lost.

DS: A lot of them disappeared. I was talking to Lynd Ward. He doesn't know what happened to the prints.

SG: The WPA murals, a lot of the WPA murals, were lost. Those [inaudible] are still [inaudible] Shahn had some in New Jersey, but he did it on the walls.

DS: Yeah, but that wall was taken apart, and they put it on a piece of aluminum. But that was where he lived, in Roosevelt. But a lot of the others —

SG: [Inaudible] for a long time. [Inaudible - "They saved it"?]

DS: Yeah. Well, they did it themselves. But the rest of it, nobody takes care of them. Jim Brooks had one at La Guardia [inaudible] sea plane [inaudible]. They painted over it. Painted right over it! Now they're cleaning it up. It was a good mural, too. He painted the last one done of the WPA.

SG: George Grosz did a mural, he had somebody painting his house, and he didn't have enough money [inaudible], so he gave him some money and he gave him that mural.

DS: I didn't know George Grosz had done a mural?

SG: And then he put it, the guy rolled it up and put it in the garage. And [inaudible] - sounds like "Harvard"] Gallery —

DS: Dorothy.

SG: Became, I think he sold it to her for a couple of hundred dollars, and then she sold it to the [inaudible] Museum. It wasn't [or "was"?] a big one [inaudible].

DS: Yeah, she told me that, that she'd sold a big painting of his, Grosz. But people looking into the whole thing now, they can't find records of anything. O'Connor told me that some of the stuff just disappeared. For instance, he says, you know that little sketch that Benjamin [Beniamino] Bufano did for the big Saint Francis in San Francisco?

WG: Yeah.

DS: When Harry Hopkins was living in the White House, he liked to sketch; he had it in his room. [DS and WG laugh.] A little sculptural sketch. It's disappeared; nobody knows where it is. When he moved out, he took it with him, probably. And this is what's happened with a lot of the things. Nobody knows where they are. They just disappeared. He also told me, O'Connor, while he was doing work, he was teaching at the University of Maryland, he got a call one day from somebody that had found a whole crate of stuff. It was going to be thrown out. "If you want it, come down today and get it." So he hired a truck, and drove from Maryland into

Washington, picked up the material, and it's at the University of Maryland now.

That's what was happening, it's still happening. This was just a few years ago. And nobody's kept records of it, it's so incomplete, you just don't know.

WG: Well, there were no provisions made for the keeping —

DS: Of the murals, yeah, none at all. But just ordinarily, they should keep it up.

You know, our post office here in town, the one near me on Welwyn, has a, the eagle on the outside was done on the WPA [inaudible] department. What's his name who did it? Gaetano Cecere did it. There are a lot of them around. There's one book on it; they were supposed to publish a lot of books. But only one came out on it, just one book. And they had reproductions mostly of the sketches, not of the finished murals. So there's an awful lot of work that needs to be done, and a lot of them are very, very good. Very, very good. We're just beginning to realize now how good some of the work was in the '30s. So, now I'm getting some material. As I said, I saw Lynd Ward, who sends you regards.

WG: Oh, good.

DS: He's strong as a bull. [Laughs.] He's illustrating a book of Edmund Burke's speeches. The English politician at the time of the Revolutionary War. Color engravings, wood engravings, he's doing that now. And working steadily, working hard, he's always doing a lot of work.

WG: Yeah, he was active in the print organization. I forget what they call it.

DS: The Society of American Graphic Artists.

WG: That's right.

DS: I used to be president. Yeah, Lynd is very, very hardworking. When I first met him, I was a student, an art student, and he was with the congress then, the American Artists Congress.

WG: That's right.

DS: And before that, he'd been head of the graphics division of WPA. [Inaudible.]

WG: I knew his father well. His father was a marvelous person.

DS: Well, Lynd is like that, I think. He's very straight, very honest, and very direct.

WG: Well, I imagine — [Harry N.] Abrams got a book out on him.

DS: Yeah. They finally got it out. It was a couple of years in the works and they were afraid it was not going to be finished. Abrams stopped publishing art books now, you know. They're not publishing anymore. Whatever they have to print, they'll print, but that's it. They're not doing any more.

WG: Well, they got mine, and then they stopped it and so on, and I couldn't figure out why, what, and so on. I wanna get a lot of my photos back. They want for me to sign some paper, and I don't wanna sign any paper.

DS: Does he still have it, or does Mrs. Lozowick have it?

SG: Mrs. Lozowick just has the manuscript.

WG: She has the manuscript.

DS: Oh, they've got the photos. You oughtta get 'em back.

WG: Yeah. And they're marvelous photos, some of them.

SG: No, he wanted you to sign [inaudible] they have a right to sell it [inaudible] if they wanted to. They never even volunteer [inaudible - "to give"?] back yours.

DS: Why should they take your photos? They're yours.

WG: Yeah. Some of them were my own photos.

SG: And some — [Tape pauses and resumes mid-sentence.] Took from collectors [inaudible].

DS: They're selling reproduction rights now, to some of the illustrations in the books.

WG: That's how they're doing it.

DS: This is what I heard. Just heard it the other day.

SG: Didn't I — I told you that.

DS: They're letting different companies, you know, it's not easy to have a photo of the thing sometimes, 'cause the picture is in somebody's possession and so on. So they're selling, they have the plates on some of their things, they've already printed the books, so they're selling reproduction rights. Because they were losing money like crazy for a while.

SG: See, because a lot of the books when they come out, you've got a lot of them that were [inaudible] lithographs, reproducing on the same size, you know. I thought that they would just cut 'em out and use them so they [inaudible] they would kill the market [inaudible] prints.

DS: And who is gonna do this?

SG: I don't know, some organization [inaudible]. Anyway, we are not allowed to do it.

DS: No, unless they have the —

SG: Without permission of the artist.

DS: No, they can do it. This is the terrible truth.

SG: [Inaudible] Miller is doing one, and Miller gave up —

DS: Miller?

SG: Miller.

DS: Really?

SG: Yeah. [Inaudible] reproduction of a whole book.

DS: I'm surprised. Because you see what happens, if I buy one of your prints, I do anything I want with it. It's mine. That's the way everything's set up here. You can't stop me from doing it. I can sell reproductions of that as much as I want, because I'm doing it from my own property. The artist has nothing to say, unless you copyrighted it. If you have a copyright on it, then they can't do anything.

SG: It used to be an unwritten law on that.

DS: Unless you have that little "CO" and you sent it to Washington, sent a copy to Washington for copyright, you have no right. There's a book on it now which came out on rights for artists. And they tell you to do that with everything you do. Send the photograph, if it's a painting, to Washington. And in the corner just put "CO" and the date. And that protects you for a few years, anyhow.

SG: Yeah, they get paid in Washington, they get paid for it too, don't they?

DS: Not much. I don't think there's a big — there's a small fee, I think.

SG: Usually eighteen dollars?

DS: Something like that.

SG: Something like that, yeah.

DS: But at least you're protected. Because, you know, you can do anything you want. For instance, on my book, the cover, I have Ben Shahn's *Sacco and Vanzetti*? I

didn't have to go to Kennedy to get a print, get a photograph. I could have taken it from anywhere and said I owned the print, but nothing Kennedy could have done, you see. But I was being nice about it, so I paid Kennedy 35 dollars.

SG: Yeah, [inaudible] Museum of Modern Art, there's somebody who wants a reprint of [inaudible] permission.

DS: They're just nice about it. They don't have to. They own it, you see. As a matter of fact, they are pretty nice. When I asked for a reproduction of that, they said fine. They charged, I think, five dollars for the photograph, and I had to have the credit line. [Inaudible] Museum of Modern Art, [inaudible] something like that. But that's all they asked for.

SG: Before, they used to ask Bill for permission.

DS: Yeah. They didn't at all, in this. When I reproduced the one that the Whitney owns, the drawing that I reproduced in my book, I paid 10 dollars for the photograph from the Whitney [laughs], and I had to give them a credit. They didn't ask you. It's theirs. You see? That's the way the system works.

SG: The New York Graphic Society is still selling Bill's reproductions [inaudible]. They never got permission from Bill to do it. They just got — so now they send us royalties. So they just sent us five dollars [inaudible]. [DS laughs.] Every year we get, you know, they sold 50, they sold 60, you know, this has been going on from pre-war days.

DS: Well, they all do things like that. I have a painting at the Springfield Museum in Massachusetts, and they tell me the reproduction is the most popular one they have, and they sell them like crazy. I haven't gotten a penny. You don't get anything

for these things. They do — we're in a capitalist country. Whoever owns it, owns it, that's all. Look through that [inaudible], Bill, I think you'll find it very interesting.

[Tape pauses.]

PH: That was the end of Side 2 of the interview between Gropper and Shapiro.

[End of Side B.]