

PERKINSON

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CSEA INTERVIEW

of

GARY PERKINSON

September 22, 2008

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PERKINSON

1 THE INTERVIEWER: This is Monday,
2 the 22nd of September 2008. We're in Washington,
3 D.C. and we're with Gary Perkinson who had a very
4 interesting career with CSEA.

5 Gary, why don't you tell us a little
6 bit about your background and how it was that you
7 came to work for CSEA.

8 MR. PERKINSON: Well, Steve, I was a
9 veteran of the Korean Conflict and came back and
10 went to Siena and left -- when I graduated from
11 Siena in '59 I took a job with the Troy Record
12 newspapers as a reporter, and then later I was
13 hired by the Associated Press in the Albany
14 Bureau. And as I told you earlier, my wife kept
15 having babies and I couldn't afford them so I had
16 to get out of the journalism business and into a
17 real job.

18 And somebody at the AP Bureau had
19 been approached by a CSEA rep to come to work
20 there and she decided she didn't want to make the
21 move but told me about it and I went and
22 interviewed with Phil Kirker, the first PR
23 director as I recall of CSEA, and he hired me as
24 his assistant and the rest is history.

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1 THE INTERVIEWER: What were some of
2 the things that you did?

3 MR. PERKINSON: Well, when I started
4 I was doing brochures for the county out of --

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5 well, the first one I ever did was for Irving
6 Flamingbaum of Long Island, the county --
7 president of the county chapter of CSEA in Nassau
8 County, and he wanted some brochures and so Phil
9 assigned me. That was my job for about three
10 months, writing brochures for Irv Flamingbaum, a
11 delightful guy by the way.

12 And then as Phil was getting up
13 there and decided to move on and I was named
14 director of public relations and remained there, I
15 believe, as I recall, I must have -- six years I
16 think I worked for CSEA.

17 THE INTERVIEWER: So this was the
18 early 1960s.

19 MR. PERKINSON: Early sixties. I
20 think I joined in '62, maybe '63.

21 THE INTERVIEWER: M-m h-m-m.

22 MR. PERKINSON: And I left -- when I
23 left there I went to work for the Teachers'
24 Retirement System.

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1 THE INTERVIEWER: Okay. Can you
2 tell me, when you went to work for CSEA was CSEA
3 kind of a well-known quantity for you in the
4 Capital Region in particular?

5 MR. PERKINSON: It was getting
6 there. The State emp...of course, I think the
7 first members were State members and they were
8 starting to make noise like a real union would do.

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9 It was never foreseen in the early days as a
10 union, nor did they want to be as I recall. It
11 was an association and good association members
12 didn't act like union members, but they learned
13 later that that's what you were supposed to do.

14 So, yeah, it had a -- it had a good
15 reputation. It -- they didn't negotiate, of
16 course, in those days for the State employees. I
17 recall meeting with Nelson Rockefeller with Joe
18 Feeley, Joe Lochner, Jack Rice and myself, and
19 probably Bill Baum, the former research director,
20 and you would sit down and Rockefeller would treat
21 you like state employees were treated and you'd
22 get up and there'd be no commitments to anything
23 but then you'd go and meet with Al Marshall, who
24 was the budget director --

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1 THE INTERVIEWER: Sure.

2 MR. PERKINSON: -- one of the
3 brightest men I've ever met and a tough
4 negotiator, but a very fair administrator.

5 THE INTERVIEWER: H-m-m. What
6 did --

7 MALE VOICE: (Inaudible) find a wire
8 real quick like.

9 THE INTERVIEWER: Where were the
10 CSEA offices at that time?

11 MR. PERKINSON: 8 Elk Street. It
12 was a build...I don't know who built the building,

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13 but it had black, shiny material on the front of
14 it. It was not a very imposing building. The
15 best part of it was it was right next to The
16 watering Hole where most of the legislators went
17 and most of the public employees went on Elk
18 Street, directly across from the north entrance of
19 the State Capitol.

20 THE INTERVIEWER: And what -- how
21 many staff were there, do you remember? Was it a
22 handful of staff or --

23 MR. PERKINSON: Well, when I went in
24 -- went to work there, there were probably 20 to

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1 25. Most of them working on the -- in the mail --
2 not the mailroom necessarily, but on developing
3 mailing pieces for the -- to solicit new members
4 and that type of thing. And Joe Lochner, of
5 course, is -- he and I discussed this, the
6 Executive Director, and he was -- he was a heck of
7 an employee.

8 He really believed in unionization.
9 Eventually -- I don't think he lasted until the
10 unions came in but he treated it like a union and
11 he expected everybody else to. He was a great
12 leader, Joe.

13 THE INTERVIEWER: M-m h-m-m. Now
14 tell me a little bit about the dynamic in those
15 days of the role of the executive director versus
16 the elected president of the union.

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17 MR. PERKINSON: well, like most
18 associations there was always a disagreement on
19 who was the top boss. Joe used to say that he let
20 the president think he was the boss because Joe
21 was actually calling all the shots, which wasn't
22 actually true. We had some very good presidents
23 in those days and they understood how to work with
24 the paid staff. I think back to Joe Feeley and

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1 Ted Wenzel -- I'm not sure if I was there for any
2 other president, but there was a clash at times
3 and -- but nothing ever serious while I was there.

4 THE INTERVIEWER: M-m h-m-m. Now
5 the presidents were not fully-paid staff. They
6 were just kind of there, elected by the membership
7 and would spend some time at the association?

8 MR. PERKINSON: Exactly. They would
9 not be there full time. They had generous leave
10 time from their agencies. Joe Feeley worked for
11 Tax & Finance, and they understood that as
12 president of the union -- actually the State CSEA
13 when he first came in -- that he needed time off
14 and they gave it to him but he worked. He went to
15 work every day in his State job, within reason, so
16 it was a -- I mean the employees at Tax were very
17 proud to have Joe Feeley, a fellow worker, as the
18 statewide president of the Civil Service Employees
19 Association.

20 THE INTERVIEWER: well, tell me a

1 little bit about Ted Wenzel because my
2 understanding is that Ted Wenzel was like a
3 long-time presence of CSEA before he had -- before
4 he was actually elected as the president.

5 MR. PERKINSON: Well, he was totally
6 different from Joe. Ted once told me that his --
7 one of his first jobs was -- and I'm sure it
8 was -- was working on the construction of the
9 George Washington Bridge in New York City as a
10 young man fresh out of college. Very proud of
11 that, talking about putting the casings into the
12 underwater and how they did it. Ted loved that.
13 He was a detail man and he was much more reserved
14 than Joe Feeley. He was not a touchy-feely people
15 person.

16 He was a fair boss. He was -- he
17 loved being president. He was more autocratic, if
18 you will, than Joe Feeley and he treated it like
19 the presidency of any other entity, and he
20 eventually left and -- for the Teachers'
21 Retirement System. I'm not sure if he came to the
22 presidency from the Teachers' Retirement System or
23 from the Education Department, but that was his
24 thing, education, and he was up there as the

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1 assistant executive director of the Teachers'
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2 Retirement System and kept his hand in CSEA and
3 then I think he lost the presidency, or his run to
4 be re-elected as I recall --

5 THE INTERVIEWER: In the mid-
6 seventies.

7 MR. PERKINSON: In the mid-
8 seventies, right. And that bothered him a lot, I
9 know that but, you know, he was a good president.
10 He expanded the membership rolls like he was
11 supposed to do.

12 THE INTERVIEWER: Tell me a little
13 bit about the dynamics of the organization. I
14 mean there was -- obviously it was a membership-
15 driven organization. What kind of -- I mean I
16 assume there was kind of like an annual meeting,
17 because we're having our 90th -- 98th --

18 MR. PERKINSON: Yes, there sure was.

19 THE INTERVIEWER: -- annual
20 delegates meeting.

21 MR. PERKINSON: Right.

22 THE INTERVIEWER: Was that the main
23 event of the year or was there --

24 MR. PERKINSON: Oh, Lord, yes.

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1 THE INTERVIEWER: -- events
2 throughout the year?

3 MR. PERKINSON: Yeah, but there were
4 meetings, events, especially as the local
5 government side of CSEA began to expand, and when

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6 people like Irving Flamingbaum from Nassau County
7 and the rest of the county people, strong leaders,
8 and they wanted to be treated just like the
9 members of the board who were State employees.
10 People like Sol Bendet for the insurance company,
11 one of the toughest leaders anybody ever met, and
12 he was -- he demanded that they be treated the
13 same as the Albany employees of the State and of
14 the Association. He used to think that Joe Feeley
15 was loading up a little bit too much on locals,
16 but Sol was a great member of the board and he was
17 smart and he was tough. He did a lot for CSEA.

18 THE INTERVIEWER: And the board
19 would meet regularly and established the policy
20 direction?

21 MR. PERKINSON: Oh, absolutely, and
22 they would fight with Joe Lochner, as you and I
23 discussed, was really the -- he was the second
24 official executive secretary or whatever we called

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1 it at the time, after a gentleman, Earl Kelly, who
2 was the head of the Classification Department of
3 whatever State agency that was done for State
4 employees, and as you and I discussed, Joe
5 succeeded Earl after a tug-of-war between the two
6 of 'em who was gonna be the paid -- the lead paid
7 staff guy. Joe Lochner won that battle.

8 THE INTERVIEWER: Tell us that
9 story. Was, as you've heard it --

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10 MR. PERKINSON: I heard it directly
11 from Joe Lochner. Earl -- Joe was in the -- the
12 both of them had been in the Army during world war
13 II. Joe got out earlier than Earl did and Joe had
14 worked for CSEA before he went in as an -- and
15 Earl had seen himself as the executive director.
16 Whether or not he was, in fact, was apparently a
17 debate among several people.

18 But he came back and Joe was in his
19 off...the executive director's office, and Earl
20 came back and the evening he was first there he
21 moved Joe -- Joe's stuff out and Earl sat at the
22 executive director's desk, daring Joe in a way to
23 say something and Joe didn't say a word. He just
24 came back that next night himself and moved

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1 everything of Joe's out and upstairs and sat there
2 and Earl walked in and looked at him, shrugged his
3 shoulders and walked away and that's how Joe
4 became the executive director of CSEA and he was a
5 great executive director. Tough as nails and
6 brooked no interference from anybody, but treated
7 the employees very well.

8 THE INTERVIEWER: Okay. Now there
9 was another power center in the organization at
10 that time, too, that we haven't talked about yet
11 and that would be the General Counsel, so to
12 speak, the --

13 MR. PERKINSON: Exactly.

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14 THE INTERVIEWER: -- the attorney
15 representing -- and that seems to have been almost
16 a direct line of succession --

17 MR. PERKINSON: It was, very
18 definitely.

19 THE INTERVIEWER: -- to the law firm
20 of DeGraff Foy.

21 MR. PERKINSON: DeGraff, Foy, Conway
22 & Holt-Harris. And I'm sure John DeGraff was the
23 original Of Counsel to CSEA, assigned from the law
24 firm, and he was succeeded by -- I mean George Foy

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1 had a lot to do with it. George Foy was the -- if
2 not officially, he was the lead counsel for
3 DeGraff, Foy, a very tough guy, and did all the
4 negotiating with the Legislature for CSEA when --
5 and then Harry Albright, Jr., whose father was
6 president of a leading Albany bank, was assigned
7 to succeed John DeGraff as the formal Counsel.

8 And Harry was a totally different --
9 Harry worked behind the scenes. He -- a very
10 quiet, self- effacing, got the job done very well,
11 and then he broke in Jack Rice, John Carter Rice,
12 as the Counsel and Jack was a totally different
13 personality, who did a wonderful job. He led the
14 negotiations with George Foy and the CSEA and its
15 members did wonderfully, in my opinion, when they
16 were running it and it -- I had left by the time
17 Jack Rice stepped down and I don't know who

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18 succeeded Jack but, yeah, that law firm was very
19 instrumental.

20 Harry Albright -- as a matter of
21 fact, he left to become Superintendent of Banking
22 under Nelson Rockefeller, so that was a -- that's
23 the kind of influence the CSEA had.

24 THE INTERVIEWER: People talk a lot

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1 about the political strength that the organization
2 had back in those days in kind of an informal way.
3 For example, they didn't do actual endorsements of
4 candidates --

5 MR. PERKINSON: No.

6 THE INTERVIEWER: -- but there was a
7 lot of involvement in the political process. What
8 do you remember about how all of that worked?

9 MR. PERKINSON: Well, just as you
10 said, there was a lot of back-room stuff going on
11 and the candidates -- not local candidates,
12 statewide candidates -- would play up, if you
13 will, to our elected officers. Joe Feeley loved
14 politics and a lot of candidates understood that
15 Joe liked it and they played to that part of Joe
16 in the best possible way. I'm not suggesting that
17 anything other than a politician getting an
18 influential member of the community and his group,
19 whatever it was, and that's what they did. They
20 would come after our officers, the statewide
21 candidates, and they'd meet with certain ones and

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22 ask for, if not an endorsement because we didn't
23 endorse in those days, I assume they still don't,
24 at least some background pressure, and it worked

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1 and a lot of people got a lot of votes out of CSEA
2 because -- and it was tit for tat. We support
3 you; we hope you support us.

4 THE INTERVIEWER: And there was, of
5 course, always every year legislation that would
6 be advanced --

7 MR. PERKINSON: Oh --

8 THE INTERVIEWER: -- for the most
9 part addressing the terms and conditions of
10 employment through the legislative process or
11 through Civil Service reform and I would assume
12 that the Board had a very direct role in helping
13 to move a lot of that along.

14 MR. PERKINSON: Oh, no doubt about
15 it. As we discussed, particularly you take Nelson
16 Rockefeller. He would not negotiate. You didn't
17 negotiate for your salaries on the State level in
18 those days. They had no part of that, but he
19 would meet with the leadership of CSEA and he
20 would play up to everybody and then escort you
21 out.

22 And Al Marshall, one of -- his
23 budget director and a very, very bright, tough,
24 amiable guy, he was the contact in those days, and

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1 they would negotiate with Al and it wasn't a
2 formal negotiation. We'd sit down with the budget
3 director and his staff and try to work out
4 particulars and obviously the salaries and the
5 fringe benefits, and then on the State -- on the
6 local level we'd meet with the top people in the
7 big -- particularly the big agencies.

8 I mean we had -- of course we had
9 officers from the Motor Vehicle Department,
10 Taxation & Finance and all the name agencies, and
11 we would go in and meet with them on employee
12 matters. Of course, they were employees too, so
13 they didn't mind that too much.

14 (Laughter.)

15 THE INTERVIEWER: One of the things
16 that I think is almost a, you know, misunderstood
17 part of CSEA's history is how important the
18 organization's insurance program was in the growth
19 of the organization in terms of signing up new
20 members and the offers for the insurance and the
21 savings that you would get that usually offset the
22 cost of the dues.

23 What do you remember about how that
24 program worked?

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1 MR. PERKINSON: well, it worked just

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2 about as you say. There was a -- I thought it was
3 a good benefit. They had a lot to say within CSEA
4 because they were taking a lot of money out of the
5 employees to pay for the insurance benefits, and
6 it's -- again it was you rub my back, I'll rub
7 your back, in the best sense of that, and it's --
8 I belong to the American Legion and I kid with my
9 wife all the time: Is this an insurance company
10 that I belong to or is this -- is this somebody
11 who represents veterans?

12 It's a big part of any organization
13 and it pays the way and they sell it and we sold
14 it that the more the insurance benefit permeates
15 the membership, the less the members are gonna
16 have to pay in dues or in other costs. And again,
17 that's common sense, but they had good programs in
18 those days, as far as I was concerned.

19 THE INTERVIEWER: Now, tell me a
20 little more about the communication operation
21 because I know that there was a relationship back
22 at that time with the Civil Service Leader and
23 that that was the official publication. How did
24 that relationship work and how effective was that

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1 vehicle for communicating with the membership?

2 MR. PERKINSON: well, it depends on
3 who you talk to how effective it was. It predated
4 me and it was a -- I almost said an incestuous
5 relationship, but I shouldn't use that term. It

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6 was a close relationship that had been sold to the
7 original -- some of the original officers of CSEA
8 and it wasn't really, in my opinion, a good deal
9 because we paid too much for it and got too little
10 back. It was not only every member got the Civil
11 Service Leader and -- but it was also sold to
12 other membership groups in the New York City area
13 in particular, and a lot of the ad revenue went to
14 the New York City part -- or to the owner of the
15 Civil Service Leader, and I don't even know when
16 they ended the relationship. It was after I left,
17 but there was -- there were a lot of things
18 brewing then and a lot of members Upstate didn't
19 think that it was worth what everybody was paying,
20 quite frankly.

21 THE INTERVIEWER: M-m h-m-m. It was
22 actually 1978 when they ended --

23 MR. PERKINSON: Oh, it was that
24 late.

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1 THE INTERVIEWER: -- and we began
2 publishing our own --

3 MR. PERKINSON: Yeah.

4 THE INTERVIEWER: -- publication,
5 but how did it actually work. Did they -- would
6 they send out reporters to cover the stories or
7 did they have people assigned to it?

8 MR. PERKINSON: Oh, no. There were
9 no reporters, so to speak. There was an editor.

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10 His name was Paul and, quite frankly, I can't
11 remember his last name; a very nice guy and a good
12 salesman, good PR person, and he would wine and
13 dine as much as he could the leadership of the
14 CSEA, including the public relations director, and
15 he would do 95 percent of all their reporting that
16 was done and he would get material from us in the
17 Public Relations Office and we would inundate him
18 with material that we wanted in.

19 We would not always necessarily get
20 it because they had a bigger, more influential
21 group of New York City employees who were always
22 also in the same editions that went out. They
23 would -- as I recall, they changed the front page
24 for the Upstate State employee editions, and

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1 everybody got a copy of the Civil Service Leader
2 as I believe every Thursday. But then people from
3 out -- from the membership complained bitterly
4 that it wasn't worth what we were payin' and we
5 were payin' a lot.

6 Jerry Finklestein was the publisher
7 and you never saw Jerry 'cause he had a lot of
8 things going in New York City, a lot. I mean he
9 was an entrepreneur of the -- like the highest
10 kind, but Paul, whose last name escapes me, he did
11 everything. He was the business person, he was
12 the cameraman, he was the reporter. They didn't
13 have a big staff. They got paid like they had a

14 big staff, but they had about two people as I
15 recall.

16 THE INTERVIEWER: M-m- h-m-m. What
17 were some of the other vehicles that you had for
18 communicating with the members directly?

19 MR. PERKINSON: Well, it was mainly
20 newsletters and speechifying, if you will, out in
21 the -- I mean I spent a lot of time around this
22 state of New York speaking to chambers of commerce
23 and other local groups. I went every place and it
24 would pay off because I also was part of the

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1 lobbying operation for CSEA and, as you know, I'm
2 sure, you meet these people, these politicians
3 back on their home ground and then when they see
4 you in Albany they kind of think that you're from
5 back home, or at least they met you back home.

6 And it was a -- and we would meet
7 with local newspapers. Their people would get us
8 introductions and we used -- at that time I think
9 we had 2000 small members in Upstate New York,
10 clothing stores and drugstores and things like
11 that, and then we had the State employees. These
12 were -- I'm talking county employees for the small
13 members Upstate, and they knew everybody.

14 THE INTERVIEWER: M-m h-m-m.

15 MR. PERKINSON: And you'd go out and
16 they'd arrange for you to speak to the Chamber of
17 Commerce and they'd have their Legislative

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18 representatives there and it -- I and two of the
19 people who worked for me spent a lot of our time
20 just goin' around the state speakin' to groups
21 along with legislators and it was -- and it
22 worked. It was a really good way to meet your
23 people who determined your future.

24 THE INTERVIEWER: M-m h-m-m. One of

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1 the things as I've looked through the history of
2 CSEA and looked through the newspapers and the
3 different materials, it seems like very early on
4 there was a real public relations mindset, kind of
5 an understanding that a lot of the organization's
6 ability to leverage action dealt with trying to
7 move public opinion and have greater understanding
8 about what our interests were really all about.

9 where did that come from?

10 MR. PERKINSON: Well, I think it
11 came, number one, from a recognition that we in
12 some instances weren't doing too well for our
13 members and that we had to get out and we had to
14 reach out to the publics that work on influence
15 and I spent all my time, most of my time, trying
16 to get our members to get involved locally with
17 the politicians in our area and with the
18 administrators and the press in their area, and a
19 lot of our members did a great job. They were
20 naturals. It was their life, and particularly on
21 the local level.

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22 On the State level is the Albany
23 people and the people like Joe Feeley who were
24 wonderful because they were articulate and they

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1 believed in what they were doing and they were
2 good public employees and they spent a lot of time
3 meeting with not only the statewide reps in Albany
4 but the local people because that was -- Mayor
5 Erastus Corning, the man with the longest tenure
6 of any mayor in the history of big cities or large
7 cities in the United States, was a personal friend
8 of Joe Feeley's and they'd have lunch many days in
9 the Fort Orange Club and, I tell ya, CSEA could
10 get practically anything within reason they needed
11 or wanted in the city level because of
12 relationships like that.

13 THE INTERVIEWER: H-m-m. You must
14 have been at CSEA during the time when they were
15 starting to move towards the Taylor Law and full
16 collective bargaining rights.

17 MR. PERKINSON: I certainly was.

18 THE INTERVIEWER: What do you
19 remember about those times and the movement in
20 that direction?

21 MR. PERKINSON: Well, only that the
22 time had come where that relationship had to be
23 formalized. You couldn't keep -- continue to meet
24 with your hand out, so to speak, and that's how it

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1 was, and a lot of the leaders so-called on the
2 state side, for example, would treat you like, you
3 know, here they come in with their hand out.
4 we'll give them something and then that's
5 exactly -- that's why you needed -- most of us
6 came on to the Taylor Law and other advances in
7 formal collective bargaining long before some of
8 the members did. I mean we just -- you just
9 couldn't continue the way we were going and it was
10 a lot of infighting in that.

11 A lot of people wanted that. Oh,
12 they liked that old relationship. Gee, the
13 Governor knows my first name. Well, that didn't
14 mean anything. It didn't get you any fringe
15 benefits or any salary increases, so I think --
16 Joe Lochner, very strong on going for a formal
17 type relationship, but State employees and county
18 and county groups, and I think the paid staff was
19 there before the membership was.

20 THE INTERVIEWER: Um, there was --
21 certainly CSEA was an independent organization at
22 that time. It was not part of the AFL-CIO. Do
23 you remember anything about the relationship with
24 the AFL-CIO unions?

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1 MR. PERKINSON: There wasn't much of
2 a relationship. I mean there were no meetings

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3 between the two. There was -- who was the first
4 AFSCME, the tough AFSCME --

5 THE INTERVIEWER: Jerry Wirth.

6 MR. PERKINSON: Jerry Wirth held
7 tremendous influence for public employees, I mean
8 a tough, smart, intellectual. I don't know if you
9 know him, if you ever met him. He was what I
10 always thought was the prototype for the head of
11 the union, head of a big union like ours. But
12 they -- there was never any big move to bring the
13 two groups together. Certainly our -- the AFC --
14 the CSEA wasn't ready to join something like the
15 AFSC -- or ASC --

16 THE INTERVIEWER: AFSCME.

17 MR. PERKINSON: -- AFSCME. Because
18 they were, you know, they had a wonderful
19 relation...life. They were treated like
20 celebrities by the State -- head of State
21 Departments, other politicians, and they thrived
22 on that. Not that they weren't -- they were good
23 negotiators but they loved the attention they got.
24 AFSCME on the other hand wanted -- they wanted

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1 formal relations with whoever they were
2 negotiating with and they wanted to do it the way
3 a union did it and they were bumping their heads
4 for the years I was there about whether or not
5 these two groups could ever get together.

6 THE INTERVIEWER: H-m-m. Certainly,
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7 especially in the early years, CSEA was a very
8 male-dominated organization. Do you -- what do
9 you remember about the role of women at that time
10 and how was that changing?

11 MR. PERKINSON: well, you're right.
12 It was male-dominated, but then women started to
13 get elected, as I recall, out in -- well,
14 certainly in the state agencies, within the
15 agencies themselves. The CSEA played a big role,
16 a big social role, if not necessarily in a
17 business role, but a big social role, and we had
18 -- we always had three, four, five women, maybe
19 two, three or four women on the board, but
20 certainly it was dominated by males, no doubt
21 about that.

22 THE INTERVIEWER: You know, I don't
23 know whether you have any recollection of this at
24 all, but there was one woman in the history of

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1 CSEA, Beulah Bailey Thol (phonetic) in the 1930s.
2 Do you remember her being around at all --

3 MR. PERKINSON: No, I wasn't --

4 THE INTERVIEWER: -- in the sixties?

5 MR. PERKINSON: I was just a child
6 then.

7 (Laughter.)

8 MR. PERKINSON: No, I remember
9 hearing about her, yeah. I'm a little older than
10 you guys but I'm not that old.

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11 THE INTERVIEWER: Because there's a
12 story that she apparently was at the cornerstone
13 laying when they were building 33 Elk. I was
14 curious if you had ever met her, you know, an
15 event like that.

16 MR. PERKINSON: No, I heard about
17 her all the time but I don't think I ever met her,
18 but she was certainly a famous person in the
19 movement, if you will, but Joe Lochner'd never let
20 her in the door because she would have taken his
21 job.

22 THE INTERVIEWER: M-m h-m-m. Tell
23 me a little bit more about the dynamic among the
24 staff. What was the, you know, the interaction

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1 between folks and were they mostly based out of
2 Albany?

3 MR. PERKINSON: Mostly based out of
4 Albany because we didn't have that big a staff.
5 You know, we had the director of research,
6 director of public relations, the executive
7 director, the assistant executive director, one
8 Henry Galpin, who may not have been there when you
9 were there, and then we had assigned counsel from
10 DeGraff, Conway & Holt-Harris, so it was a small
11 group of people trying to run them and, I tell
12 you, Joe Lochner brooked no interference. You
13 were a top-notch executive as long as you agreed
14 with Joe. The moment you didn't, then you had a

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15 problem.

16 I mean Joe was tough. He -- but he
17 was fair and he let you do your own thing. I mean
18 nobody -- he never interfered in the public
19 relations side of it, but he'd insist on seeing
20 news releases, for example, because he was
21 responsible for it, for that kind of thing, but
22 there was just a small group, and people like Joe
23 Feeley deferred to that small group for the
24 minutiae, for the detail stuff.

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1 Everybody got along pretty well. I
2 don't remember any clashes while I was there, any
3 major clashes. As long as you did what Joe said,
4 then he cut you a lot of room. No, he was a tough
5 boss.

6 THE INTERVIEWER: CSEA is closing in
7 on its hundredth anniversary. I mean you
8 certainly were there for a portion of the time and
9 had a chance to see the organization from a
10 distance in subsequent years.

11 why do you think this organization
12 has been able to survive that long?

13 MR. PERKINSON: Because it's been
14 well-run and because they knew what they wanted.
15 In the early days they really didn't know how to
16 get there, so they invented a way to get there and
17 they knew that they were dealing with politicians
18 on behalf of employees who didn't get much in the

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19 early days.

20 I mean retirement was the big thing.
21 Other things, the benefits came along. Salaries
22 always lagged, but then they began to understand.
23 If they couldn't have formal negotiations, they
24 were gonna have informal and they were gonna get

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1 this done and they did.

2 So I think in the early days, the
3 people who were there in the early days, made the
4 organization what it is today.

5 THE INTERVIEWER: M-m h-m-m.
6 Anything that I haven't touched on that you think
7 is particularly important, looking back? Anything
8 coming back?

9 MR. PERKINSON: Well, not that I can
10 think of. You know, a couple of --

11 THE INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

12 MR. PERKINSON: -- thinking I was
13 there a hundred years ago.

14 THE INTERVIEWER: You started to say
15 that there were a couple of things that --

16 MR. PERKINSON: No, I was kidding
17 about what you said about how long ago I was there
18 and how old I am today.

19 No, I loved working there, but I
20 made a career decision to move on and move on I
21 did, and actually went to work with Ted Wenzel at
22 the Teachers' Retirement System.

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23 THE INTERVIEWER: H-m-m.

24 MR. PERKINSON: And was a member of

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1 CSEA.

2 THE INTERVIEWER: Very interesting.

3 Any other personalities that we
4 didn't touch on that you know, real characters?
5 Obviously we've been populated by characters over
6 the decades. Is there anybody else that comes to
7 mind?

8 MR. PERKINSON: No, you know, not
9 offhand. Irv Flamingbaum was a great character
10 out of Nassau County, and Sol Bendet of the State
11 Insurance Department in New York City. Tough,
12 tough guy. Good guy, fair guy. And then the
13 Lochners of this world and the Feeleys and Ted
14 wenzel in his way. All characters in the best
15 sense.

16 THE INTERVIEWER: M-m h-m-m.

17 MR. PERKINSON: You had to be, to
18 run an outfit that big and still keep your job.

19 THE INTERVIEWER: All right. That's
20 great.

21 MALE VOICE: And we're stopped.

22 (Conclusion of interview of Gary
23 Perkinson.)

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