BIographical SUMMARY: JUSTO DE LA CRUZ, retired Plantation Safety Security Administrator

Justo Dela Cruz was born in Laoag City, Philippines on August 4, 1912. His father was a farmer. Justo sailed to Hawaii in 1936, was taken ill on the trip and was hospitalized upon his arrival at Sand Island.

His first plantation job was that of stable hand at Paia, Maui. After a month, he joined his brother-in-law in Waialua. He worked in the field and in the mill and was active in the union from 1948 to 1954. He then spent twenty years in the Plantation Safety and Security Administration.

He was formerly married to a nurse, and they are parents of three children. He currently lives in Waialua.
PN: This is an interview with Justo de la Cruz on June 29, 1976 in his house. Mr. de la Cruz, could you tell me about your life in the Philippines?

JC: I came from a very poor family. My father was a farmer and I came from a family of seven. I was the third oldest in the family. I came from the city of Laoag, Ilocos Norte in one of the barrios there, and I sailed from Manila in April, 1930 on the S.S. President Hayes with other recruited laborers by the Hawaiian Sugar Planters Association of Hawaii. We sailed for one month. Unfortunately I was one of those that were sick on board and stayed on Sand Island for another thirty days recuperating from...in my knowledge, an unknown ailment.

The plantation that I first worked for was the Hawaiian Sugar Company at Paia, Maui. I worked there as a stableman for one month and then sailed to Waialua to join my brother-in-law.

I first worked in Waialua on June 15, 1930, as a plantation field worker. My first job was to cultivate newly planted cane. At times I go to other jobs where needed such as hapai ko, carrying cane, and then irrigation where we are needed. Later on I was assigned as yardman which is much lighter than the job in the field. After working for a number of years, I was transferred to the mill in the fireroom as a furnace worker. And then later on I was transferred to the boiling house as a centrifugal operator. Thereafter, I was promoted to the Waialua store as a store clerk and then later on promoted as a department store head. (Whistle from mill in background.) My job then at that time was to buy hardware, Philippine goods and jewelry to be sold by the store to employees and other customers.

In 1946, Waialua Union under the ILWU was organized. I was then approached to help in organizing, and we succeeded in organizing the employees under the ILWU. By December 1st, 1947, I became a full time union official. My first job then was a division director of the ILWU in the sugar industry. Later on the sugar and pineapple union and the miscellaneous subsidiaries merged.
As a division director I was then leading a number of business agents here on Oahu. I went through the strike of the sugar workers in 1946 and also the pineapple workers' strike in 1947. I worked for the ILWU in those years and I also represent the ILWU to the CIO convention in Manila in 1949, and became an international executive board member for two years.

Within this period of time, starting from my early employment at Waialua, I also was active in the community activities starting before the union came in. I became president of the Waialua Filipino Community, became an active member of the Waialua community at large, and had a number of dealings with leaders.

To go back, the record of Waialua shows that I was only a sixth grader when I first came to Hawaii. It was hard then for the well-educated to come to Hawaii because the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association avoided recruiting the well-educated Filipino to come in. They only wanted workers. During my early time, Filipinos just had the hardest time of associating themselves to other ethnic groups.

One handicap of the Filipinos at that time was that many of our group were illiterates. Quite a large number of Filipinos could just sign their name by making a cross, and had someone to witness their checks for the mere reason that they could not read and write. For this reason, many many times Filipinos were in trouble; they were misunderstood.

The only defense of Filipinos those days because they were physically small in size was to defend themselves in some other means. There were even times when Filipinos were called "poke knife". They were even discriminated and called "bayaws" rather than being called by name. "Bayaw" means "brother, brother-in-law" in the language of Tagalog. But "bayaw" was a slang to underrate Filipinos those days.

Many many times before the union came in, Filipinos were doing the hardest job in the plantation. I, too, had experience being sent home without any cause from the place of work without any transportation.

During my early childhood the pay was a dollar one day. And if any person worked 23 days a month, they would have ten cents bonus per day. That was an incentive for the people to work.

The Hawaiian Sugar Planters' particularly here in Waialua employed somebody whom they called camp policeman and his duty was to check those that laid off and find out why they laid off from work. Whenever he comes into somebody's house that laid off, he does not merely knock on the door but instead kicking the door and make a lot of noise until the person meets the policeman at the door. Many, many times, they found the person sick. However, the door was kicked by the policeman. Many times the employee might get tired and just not feel like working, but this employee gets to the office and get warning from the industrial relations department of the plantation that if he does lay off again, he will be fired.
For a Filipino it was hard. I think they were on the dirty end of the totem pole. The reason why I say this is when I was hired in the store, I out sell, I out produce many of the other ethnic groups working in the store and was even awarded prizes for being one of the most, if not the most, productive salesmen. Yet I knew that I had the lowest pay of all that was working at the store at that time.

The ILWU was really instrumental in bringing all ethnic groups to understand one another, and they work for the same purpose of being treated equally; that other person, regardless of race, creed and color is a person and needs to be treated just like any other person. That was the beginning when people started to know each other by name. The union, in my opinion, is instrumental in breaking the paternal system by the plantations. The 1946 strike showed for the first time that the mixed ethnic groups here in Hawaii could work together harmoniously and live together alike. That's when there was no discrimination in the promotional system. The type of jobs in the plantation was straightened out through collective bargaining. Everybody could apply and get the job, based on their knowledge, ability, and experience.

One problem in the early days of Filipinos here in Hawaii is that the male people without their female company--their wives--came to Hawaii with the feeling that they will stay here for a number of years under the sugar agreement and go back to their respective places in the Philippines with their hard earned money, and make a better life for their families. However right today, the dreams of going back to their native country did not materialize. A large number returned to the Philippines but others remained. They had the hardest time of having their children get the needed education to compete in the labor force.

As the days go by and unions become recognized and stronger, the Filipinos got the benefits just like any other races based on ability, knowledge, and qualification. Right today, Hawaii, with each ethnic group--ethnic groups has got a different climate--people working together. People of all races go to the same school without any difficulty. However I should say this in passing—that at the present, schools have problems of young boys that migrated from different lands. It's quite a problem that not only the Filipinos or other ethnic groups have to solve by themselves, but this is the problem of all people in our state.

I say this in all people because the oldtimers have labored so hard to bring the ethnic groups together into one common goal. By any means, discrimination is not at all ended. We still find discrimination just like probably in any country. As I have stated on the outside, those people that were used to the life of yesterday had all the benefits they had, they don't want to part away from the old habits. But the sons and daughters of the immigrants, the working people, are getting to be educated just like the rulers of yesterday, the Big Five and that the life of yesterday will never come back.

PN: Can we talk more about what your life was like in the Philippines?
You said your father was a farmer. What did he raise?
JC: My father was a farmer. We didn't have any lands to cultivate. The land that we have to cultivate was owned by other people who were living actually in town. We have to have animals to till the soil, like buffalo. We owned one. We had a small hut to live in the country and fifty percent of our crop belongs to the owner and fifty (percent) for us.

PN: What did you folks raise?

JC: We raised rice, corn and vegetables. Being a big family of nine--including my father and mother--the fifty percent of the crop that only my father raised was inadequate for our support. Mainly rice.

PN: You folks gave the land owners fifty percent of the crops. What did you do with the other fifty percent? You sold it?

JC: No, the fifty percent is for us,

PN: Just to eat?

JC: For our support, yeah, just to eat. Of course, I came from a family of seven children and therefore, it's a family of nine including my mother and father. We didn't have enough lands to cultivate, so there were times when we eat rice only once a day.

PN: That was your chores, to help your family take care of the farming?

JC: I was the favorite son of the family and I did not work so hard in the farm.

PN: So you went to school part time?

JC: I went to school; my mother had the hardest time to find adequate means to buy books for me.

PN: So how did you find out about Hawaii?

JC: During the Depression, 1930, many many students wanted to sail for the Mainland United States. I had an uncle that came from Hawaii who was kind enough to lend us money for me to sail to the Mainland. But then I got sick in Manila, and I returned back to the province again. The money was not enough then for me to go back to Manila again and sail for the Mainland. So the left-over money that I did not spend was the money I used to come to Hawaii.

PN: So HSPA recruited you?

JC: Yes, HSPA recruited me, but then you still have to have money to spend. I was courageous enough to come because if I did not, I would just stay in the Philippines and, not be able to pay the debt of my mother from my uncle.

PN: You were going to school on the Mainland?
JC: That was my ambition. However, when I reach here, I still have high school books. Because we didn't have any night school those days, I correspond in a number of high schools. I don't know whether they are credited or non-credited. I still have those two sets of books. Studied them and then when I was in the union, I had the opportunity to gain experience. At the same time, I was sent to a number of schools by the union. I studied some non-credit courses at the University (of Hawaii), such as report writing, unemployment compensation, labor laws, which was much needed in my work when I was in the union. When I came back to the plantation, I studied industrial safety. The instructor was from Washington. I think Federal government and I studied industrial relations from the Hawaii Employer's Council.

I associated with the late Governor Burns who used to come many many times at our union halls and also Senator Dan Inouye, who is a personal friend of ours, also Spark Matsunaga. I was active, too, in the Democratic Party and tried for political office once to represent Waialua in the House (of Representatives) but failed.

I met my wife in 1944. She was working at the hospital here in Waialua. She's still. She's still working at Wahiawa Hospital with the same type of job. She's a licensed practical nurse.

My eldest son is married. He is still in Michigan State University taking his Ph.D. in Labor and Industrial Relations. My second son is a plumber in the Air Force. My third son is with the Army, met a girl in Washington--not Washington, D.C. They are living in Tacoma, Washington.

PN: When you came over on the boat, you said you got sick. What happened?

JC: A number of people died in that boat. I think there was an epidemic, and that's one of the reason why we could not land in Honolulu. Instead, they took us in a small boat to Sand Island. I don't know if the hospital is still there but they had a hospital there before. I stayed there for a month.

PN: How often did they feed you on the boat?

JC: Oh, the feeding is just like others, three times a day. Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

PN: But you don't know what kind of epidemic, flu or...

JC: I just don't know.

PN: And when you recovered you went to Maui?

JC: I went to Paia, Maui. I don't recall the name of the plantation. It's now dissolved; actually carried over by HC and S, I think. Hawaiian Commercial Sugar Company.
PN: How did you get transferred, or how did you move from Maui to Waialua?

JC: I did it myself. Those days, since I was supposed to be coming to Waialua, I told the Hawaii Sugar Planters Association recruiters at that time that I would like to come to work for Waialua. Probably by mistake, I was sent to Paia, Maui. I told the plantation officials there at Paia that I would like to be transferred to Waialua. That was not too much of a problem, but I had to pay my own transportation. Those days there were no airplanes yet.

PN: You remember how much the boat ride was?

JC: I don't recall.

PN: When you came to Waialua you began working in the...

JC: Sugar fields.

PN: Hapai ko?

JC: I did all kinds. Hapai ko, seed planting. Because those days, when you are not a hardworking individual, you have to move like a utility man. Where you are needed, they send you. And you have to have cane knife; you have to get hoe; you have to have all kinds of tools. Like those canvas for hapai ko, you have to bring that in the morning because you don't know where you are going to work. And that's what happened to me.

PN: What time you folks start working?

JC: Those days, to my knowledge, we have to get up at about three-thirty or four o'clock in the morning to start cooking our meals to bring to work.

PN: You did your own cooking?

JC: Yes, those days, they had rail. They furnish you with firewood, and all you have to do in the morning is line up your pots. Put it on the rail and built fire underneath.

PN: What kind food you cook?

JC: Those days, because of one dollar a day, things were so cheap. One codfish which you might be paying about six to seven dollars now was only 25 cents those days. But there were lots of abundant vegetables in the fields. Filipinos were farming. Going on Sundays picking vegetables, pick up seaweeds on weekends. Enough for them to last for the coming week. Filipinos just used to buy bagoong. Before there was no dried shrimp. They used iriko from Japan.

PN: So you make breakfast and lunch?

JC: Yes. You eat your own breakfast, you cook your food; that's why you have to get up early, eat breakfast, put your lunch in your lunch
can and your water, and then leave enough for the afternoon. So the workers only cooked once. Then before they go to sleep, they have to have the things ready again to cook the next morning.

PN: Cook you own dinner, too?

JC: No, you cook them in the morning. You eat your breakfast, fill your lunch can, leave enough food in the pot for that afternoon, supper. That way you don't have to cook dinner.

PN: What camp you used to live in when you first came here?

JC: They call it Spanish camp, right in front of the Waialua High School. The old plantation homes that you see here, some of them are still here.

PN: With other single men?

JC: Yes, we had a three bedroom house, and I think eight of us were living there in that house.

PN: They just assign you to that house?

JC: Well, if you have a relative here that is working for the plantation and you come from the Philippines, naturally your relatives would bring you into his house. Yes, I used to live with my brother-in-law.

PN: And you said you get sent home one time, why was that, again?

JC: Not only one time. I was sent home a number of times. The first time, I was sent home by the supervisor. He is still living today.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

JC: When I was sent home, I guess, it was my third day of work. They used to plow the side of the furrow, the line of the cane here. Young cane and then they plow this side of the furrow. You had to cover the cane stem, so that the roots would grow again.

There was a big lump of dirt, and when I pulled the lump of dirt with my hoe, went on top the cane. So naturally, the stack of cane broke, three of them. The supervisor was there, standing by my side. He said, "Eh, googoo." They call you googoo and all kind of names, you find. I just went ahead and worked. He came, touch my shoulder and say, "I'm talking to you." And I said, "Gee, I thought you were talking with someone else because googoo is not my name."

I was still fresh from school then, because I just arrive from the Philippines. He said, "So you know how to talk English, eh?" I say,
"Yes, sir, I happen to be going to school in the Philippines before I came here." Then he said, "How did you come to Hawaii then if you were a student? We just want workers to come." "Oh, I came from the farm and I know I can work, but I can understand English and speak English. Not much but enough to understand you."

And then he said, "You know about this cane? This is an expensive cane. If this cane grow and became a full grown cane, you know how much this would cost." He asked me and I said, "I wouldn't know, sir." But I said, "It was not intentional." "Do you know this lump of dirt here? Our job is to cover the sides of the cane so that they will grow faster." "But it was just an accidental." He said, "Accidental, eh?" "I would say it is." Then he said, "Because of this, I will pick this cane and when the big boss come, I'll show it to him." And then he said, "You talk back." I said, "No, I don't back, sir, but I'm just telling you how it happened." "See, you are talking back again." He said, "You take your lunch can and go home."

(PN laughs)

JC: And at one time I was—you know by that blinking light, just above... (JC points to area near Otake store). I was cutting cane again. Oh, it was really so hot. And I was in front of the other cutting fellows. Then I went under the tree. The supervisor just saw me under the tree. (Chuckles) And then ask me why I was not working. I said, "It was really so hot. I just came down. I came under the tree for a while to get some fresh air." Then he told me, "Since this is the way you want to work, you just as well go home." Again I was home.

PN: (Laughs) Do you remember who the supervisor?

JC: I just as well don't mention name because he's still alive. He is still within Waialua.

PN: What about the other luna? The first...

JC: Oh, they sent many, many Filipinos home, you know, because there were a number of Filipinos that...well, I use the word "were", because, probably, some of them died. Some of them are not here anymore. Could not stand too much of hard work. They were sent home many, many times. Just like me.

PN: What kind of luna was working back then?

JC: Most of the supervisors those days were Portuguese. There were a number of Japanese, your own race, before, that became supervisors. During the early days, race is something to do. I presume, because haoles first and then comes the Portuguese. Then, naturally, you were the second group. Chinese were very very few then. Many of them were old already. Some of them were in business already when I came here.

PN: You know, you mentioned that they didn't want anybody educated to come to Hawaii.
JC: That was really true. Yes, because when the doctor examined people to come to Hawaii, even during my days, they have to feel your palm first whether it's rough or not. And believe you and me before I went for physical examination, I have to break wood to make my palms rough. And the doctor ask, you know. He was a Filipino doctor, but he ask. In Filipino he would ask, "Are you working in the farm? Have you ever gone to school?" Education was a handicap to have before. They want real hard working people.

PN: You didn't tell 'em you was going to school, then?

JC: No, I did not.

PN: (Laughs) That's how you came over?

JC: Yes.

PN: After all this field work jobs, you went to the mill?

JC: Yes.

PN: Somebody transferred you?

JC: I went to apply. Of course, my brother-in-law was working in the mill, then. Probably "pull" that I went.

(Laughter)

PN: What did you do as a furnace worker?

JC: Before, they don't have any carrier to actually... pour the bagasse in the furnace so as to build up heat for their generator and produce electricity. The bagasse used to be shovelled to the furnace manually. That's the first job that I had. It was really tough, too, you know.

PN: What about the pay?

JC: I think the pay was $1.10.

PN: So, little more than the field?

JC: Little bit more than the field. Those that could work in the field on contract basis could make more money, but that was back-breaking job. I could not work on that so hard as the rest.

PN: Then you went from there to the boiling house?

JC: Yeah, the boiling house which is much cleaner, of course, the job was hard, too, because you have to deal with centrifugals, turning. Actually to dry molasses. When there is a cycle--it's probably one hour, I think--and then you discharge the dried molasses again. It goes to the boiler to be boiled again, and to crystallize into sugar. It was a promotion and then I went to the molasses centrifugal drier.
PN: What was the pay at the boiling house and the centrifugal drier?

JC: I think, I had a dollar quarter then at that time when I went there.

PN: Did the lunas... how did they treat you?

JC: The supervisors there were better for the mere reason that I was one of those recognized Filipino leaders then. As I told you last night, the leaders of the community were recognized by management. They have Japanese leaders, too. They had Puerto Rican leaders, and Filipino leaders. Fortunately, I was one of them that talk with management once in one month or once in one week, depending on the problem; that's how they handle their public relations those days.

PN: The racial leaders meet with the managers once a month?

JC: Once a month to talk about problems.

PN: And how did they solve the problems?

JC: Well, they just hear what their complaints were, and made, probably, some changes on their policies accordingly. But those days, they have the upper hand. Politically, they were well entrenched. Big Business. Republicans.

PN: How did you become selected as one of the leaders?

JC: As I told you last night, I went to the theatre and buy a reserved seat. I was pulled out from the theatre by the industrial relations man because I sit where the haoles were sitting.

The reservations were haoles only. That's only for haoles. The other side were for Japanese and Portuguese. There were three rows, you know. The middle row is for haoles only. Because it was facing towards the sea, the one on the left was for Filipinos only. Other races would not sit there, anyway. Just strictly for Filipinos. The one on the right against the wall were for Japanese and Puerto Ricans, I think. Other ethnic groups. But the other side was merely for Filipinos.

PN: What theatre was this?

JC: They call it the Waialua Plantation Theatre.

PN: The one by the gym?

JC: No, it was burned. The burnt one.

PN: The reserve seat cost more?

JC: It cost more, but not much. And the person that was taking care of the theatre was a Portuguese man. I did not ask for a refund nor they... ask me that they give me the wrong ticket. They accepted my
money. However, I would still sit on the Filipino side (JC meant haole). I was taken out from the theatre, never refund my money, and I was told not to work the next day. But would go to the office to further discuss the case.

PN: And who did you see?

JC: First, the person that took me out from the theatre. Industrial relations head. Later on, I was escorted by him to the manager's office. That was John Midkiff then, and that's when I first saw him. I stated my reasons why I insisted that I should sit on the reserve seat for the more reason that I paid for it. And told him that I have heard a lot about the United States. That there is equality and there's justice. I was stubborn, I told him.

I was really stubborn, because I wanted to find out how true the equality and justice is that is rumored in the Philippines and which I happened to learn through books; that this is a country of opportunity, equality, and justice.

Because of that, he probably recognized me. Before that, they have heard a lot about me, because I was then elected president of the Filipino community.

PN: What did he say to you about the theatre incident?

JC: He did not answer me directly. He just said at the end to go home and go back to work the next day.

PN: But you lost out one day pay cause...

JC: I lost out one day pay. Those days, there's no such thing as lost one day pay just like now, because there was no unions. There were no people to take care...your rights, so to speak. Because, though we have a Filipino Commissioner before, he could not say much anyway. He could not help out.

As you probably know--maybe, the books at the University (of Hawaii) will show that there have been number of struggles by...ethnic groupings. The Japanese had their strikes only to be broken by other ethnic groups. Filipinos, the same thing. When all the racial groups get together through the ILWU, that's when the Big Five listen. I was a member of the negotiating committee. I was vice-chairman when the first state-wide contract was negotiated.

PN: This was in....

JC: '46. They had a sugar contract in McBride, I think, before this. I was not active then. I didn't know much about unions.

PN: At that time, you were working for the plantation store?

JC: Yes, I was working then at the plantation store.
PN: So, you left the mill to work in the plantation store? How did you get from there....

JC: There was a vacancy. A Filipino left for the Philippines. So, they needed a Filipino, I guess.

PN: What store was this?

JC: Waialua Plantation store. The main store. I had two choices. To go up the boiling house and boil sugar or to go to the store and be a store clerk. I pick up the store clerk. (Laughs)

PN: Just applied for the job, and....

JC: Yeah, I put an application. Not written application but verbal application.

PN: What was the pay then?

JC: I started at $35 a month, and then when I became a department head, it came up to fifty dollars. And then, later on, my pay came to $75. That was pretty big money those days. When I left the store, I had $105. I can tell you, though, based on the life that I had from the Philippines and when I came here and saw the hardships of the working people....even today, I don't admire the plantation too much.

PN: Why is that?

JC: I have the greatest of aloha to the unions for the mere reason that, even right today, I don't believe that....they believe in unions, yes. But I think, I still feel that if unions give up their rights and they are not actually aggressive, the plantation would not mind bringing the hard days back. That's my true feeling.

PN: So you felt that the unions have helped out working people?

JC: No doubt about that.

PN: Could you tell me how many people were working in the plantation store?

JC: I think, about 25 people.

PN: And what nationalities were they?


PN: Almost even number of people?

JC: I would say yes.

PN: What about the type of customer? Wait on their own race and stuff like that?
JC: During my time when I became somewhat popular--because I went to
the camps and all that--I used to...sell to any nationality. But
naturally, more for Filipino.

PN: Oh, you would go out, take orders?

JC: Yeah, we used to go out on weekends to take orders. But we were not
paid. (Laughs)

PN: All on your own time to go out and take order?

JC: All on my own time, our own time. At the same time, your own car,
your own gasoline.

PN: Oh, you had your own car?

JC: I had my own car. A small Plymouth.

PN: When did you buy the car?

JC: When I was working at the store because when I was working somewhere
else, I could not afford to buy that.

PN: So you delivered the goods also?

JC: No, because what we actually order on weekends will be charged during
the work day.

PN: When did they pick it up?

JC: We deliver them during the working hours.

PN: To their house?

JC: They used to have a deliver man. Somebody else delivered.

PN: So, you said you had an award for selling most...

JC: Oh, yes. Unfortunately, I lost my precious watch when I got married.
It would cost over two hundred dollars today. That was a very nice
Bulova watch.

PN: What happened?

JC: Well, somebody pick it up, I guess.

PN: Somebody stole 'em. They give you a watch for selling the most
amount of goods.

JC: Yes. And some groceries, too, depending on the type of contest
they sponsor.

PN: There were contests among the workers?
JC: Yeah.
PN: And who was....
JC: You mean the manager of the store? A white man.
PN: And he would make the contest and give out the prizes?
JC: Yeah.
PN: The contest would last about a month, or....
JC: Not necessarily.
PN: You talked about incidents where they sent you home from the fields couple of times and then...the theatre incident. Is there any other incidents that you remember like that?
JC: Oh, there were many, many social incidents, but it's worthless to mention them, because those days, a person is not actually treated as a person, I think, because they had control in the camps. They had control of your recreational activities. They have camp police, and the City and County Police cannot get in. So, it's more like a concentration camp any way you look at it. Those days, they were so powerful. When I say they, meaning the plantations.
PN: No, but could you tell me about any other incidents that may have happened in....
JC: Well, there again, I have a relative. That's why I don't want to include this, if possible.

If you have a relative that comes from the other plantation, you have to get a passport, first, before you could entertain them in the house. Those were the days, boy. That's really true.
PN: Where did you get the pass from?
JC: The office. And if you don't have the pass for them and they go beyond the time limit, they could fire you out, too.
PN: They specify at a certain time you have to go?
JC: They ask you, "What time will they be going?" A copy of that (pass) goes to the camp police and they come around.
PN: And they check?
JC: They check.
PN: They ask how many people coming over and things like that?
JC: Yeah. Your relative could not sleep in your house before.
PN: This was in the '30s?

JC: Yeah.

PN: You told me people couldn't stay on the beaches at night.

JC: Here at Waialua--I don't know if it was City and County ordinance or not--but the only thing that a Filipino can catch is fish on the shoreline with a hook and pole. They were not allowed to use net in accordance with regulations. They were not allowed to use a spear skin-diving. The only thing that a Filipino could get naturally, was seaweeds, pick up seaweeds. Some of the oldtimers are quite smart on...fish and pole. So, they catch fish enough for the coming week again. And they catch Filipinos.

I di'n t know to the other nationalities if it was true, but I happen to know that a Filipino could not stay on the beach when it gets dark. You have to come home before sunset.

PN: And the thing about spears and stuff like that is only for Filipinos, not for other races?

JC: I don't know. But Filipinos were forbidden.

PN: Who came around to tell you all this?

JC: No, it actually happened in the beaches.

PN: Oh, you knew individuals that happened to them?

JC: This is true. Witnessing other people and through experience. At one time, the sun was setting. Somebody came told us, "You better go home, otherwise we'll take you to the police station."

PN: This was in the....

JC: Early '30s.

PN: Speaking of camp police, you said that they would come and knock on people's doors if they were sick. They did not report to...

JC: They just don't knock. They kick your door, boy. And when I say kick, I mean kick.

PN: Did that ever happen to you?

JC: Oh, yes, it happened many, many times, because I told you I was not so healthy. I was not a good worker. That's probably the reason why I'm a....I don't know whether I have the feeling of anti-plantation, but.

PN: They came in and kicked your door down?
JC: They just kick until you come out. Say, "You got to come out. I know you are in the house!"

PN: And then what do they do? They check to see if you sick?

JC: Yeah. "Are you sick? Did you go to the hospital or you just laid off?" And lot of times I said, "I am going to the hospital now." "You say you go to the hospital now, how come you are not dressed."

Those were rough days. And when the union say they bring dignity to the working people, it's really true.

PN: You mentioned an incident about continuation school. What is continuation school?

JC: They have a continuation school, before where the people... because even the Japanese and other races, they have only until ninth grade here, I think.

PN: Oh, Waialua Intermediate.

JC: Waialua Intermediate. They call it Waialua Intermediate and High School, now. And even at those days, ninth grade is enough for even Japanese, too. They just go to ninth grade and started helping their families.

There was a continuation school behind the mill. They had regular ordinary school teachers. They had two. I think the name of the principal teacher there was Sanjumi.

Well, lot of beautiful Japanese girls attended the school. I attended the school, too. There was continuing how to converse in English. And math.

There was a dance sponsored by that continuation school students, too, at the Waialua Elementary auditorium here. So, I happened to have gone because I am a member of the class. They know me, because I was one of their classmates. "Could I dance with you?" And all that. I did not even have any dance from them. All of them did not like to dance with me.

PN: They were mostly Japanese?

JC: Mostly Japanese. (Laughs) Not too odd, eh?

PN: No. You also mentioned about a church. The church ministers come around...

JC: There is still a landmark of these ministers, especially among your own race, because they have a church here, and they still have a church in Kawaiola, I think. This ministers were subsidized by the company. They have a certain amount of salary from the company. I'm pretty sure of that. And they have gasoline allowance to visit the camps.
PN: From the plantation?

JC: Yeah, from the company. And I think, the car was also... from the company. In other words, they give it to them for use.

And so are the Filipinos. That's why lot of Filipino ministers before that did not go to university, but were sent to practical school, I think, and became ministers. They were actually used as tools of the company to guide their own race in their public relations.

PN: You talk to the ministers or how did you...

JC: Yeah, talk to the ministers, and then the ministers call the leaders and so on.

PN: How you found out about them getting....

JC: It was through our minister here.

PN: (Chuckles) He told you?

JC: In the long run, we came to find that out. Then when I became a leader of the union, that's when I found out more, that they were being--they were really used, too.

PN: To help out the plantation?

JC: To help out the plantation. Not the people. They used to even divide the Filipinos, you know. Like, say here, for example, there used to be a Spanish camp. And this used to be a Portuguese camp where we are now. There's even a rivalry created by the plantation within the groupings. Camp by camp.

PN: What, for instance?

JC: Well, in Rizal Day, they might build float here. They have another float there, because that was initiated by the company. And there is rivalry between camps. There were times when camp leaders would be fighting against each other because of that. But those were created by the company to divide and conquer, so that the people could not get along together.

PN: You talk about Rizal Day, because two people build different floats?

JC: Yes. Competition there.

PN: Some other examples of how the company....

JC: Play one man against the other?

PN: Yeah.
JC: We used to have a leader here that used to be working in the industrial relations department. They have also a leader, a camp police, that used to be at Kawaiola. These two persons could not get along together, because they are being fed indifferently by the company. I presume that was the case. In 1930s, there was no such thing as safety, you know.

PN: What do you mean by "safety"?

JC: "Safety", meaning, if people got hurt in the field, they get hurt, they send 'em home. No such thing as workman's compensation before.

PN: What happened, then? For instance?

JC: You know, those loading rails because locomotive was used to pull the cane. There were people that lay rails in the field. If you are a weak man, you better not be there, because the other one just throw the rail and two has to handle the one rail. If the other one is weaker, the stronger man take advantage over him and if he get pinch, he just get pinch. That's all...

PN: You saw this happen?

JC: Oh yes, I saw that happen. There were two gangs. They still have two gangs here at Waialua. During the olden days, they have a gang at Kawaiola and they have a gang here. At the end of the harvesting season, these two would meet together. They try to hurt one another.

PN: They fight each other?

JC: No, not actually fight, but when these two get together--Waialua railmen with the Kawaiola railmen--they handle the rail. They try to destroy each other.

PN: Kind of bad.

JC: Bad.

PN: Did you see anybody, like, cut their finger off or get big cut...

JC: Oh, I saw a number of them; some of the oldtimers still have marks today. But they cannot do anything now, because the law provides for ten years limitation.

PN: Did you get any hurt?

JC: Fortunately, no, I did not. The best job that I have ever since I came from the Philippines is the store. We had a very, very understandable assistant manager, a Korean. He taught me how to budget. He taught me how to mark up goods. I learned hell of a lot from him. He taught me how to get along with people, and he used to take me when there are business meetings in town.
Second, which I will never forget, is the union. I learned hell of a lot within these two jobs that I have had. The store is one which I will never forget. And the union.

Actually it should mean hell of a lot when I became Safety Administrator for this company which deals directly with accident prevention. And you can put this that I say so. Many, many companies still today—and I am talking as a Waialua individual that work for Waialua—many, many of their safety programs still lip service.

PN: Why you think Waialua does a lot to prevent accidents?
JC: I think much of their program is still lip service. I believe so.

END OF SIDE TWO

SIDE THREE

PN: You became Safety and Security Administrator 1955?
JC: Yes.

PN: Could you explain what your job was?

JC: Assist the Industrial Relations Director in the Accident Prevention Program and also take care of security in the plantation meeting. People that would be watching the plantation area on nonworking days...placing chain blocks—because we didn't have any chain blocks those days—as to the best place that they would be located. And, there again, I have to work with not only the Industrial Relations Director, which is Genji Santoki now, but, of course, working with other department heads as well as supervisory personnel. In this job, I have to be an instructor in first aid, also, which I'm still an instructor today. Of course, public relations is one. Helping the company to explain the program. It's a hard task because...actually, safety within the plantation are in the hands of the department heads.

Say, you go to the mill, highest safety administrator just cannot go over there and say, "You have to fix this. You have to fix that. This is outdated, or hazardous and so on." My job is just to point out what I saw, and does not have the authority to enforce it.

PN: That's what you mean when you say they do only lip service?
JC: I would say yes.

PN: You told me last night that they were hesitant on hiring because you came from the union. What kind of treatment did they give you?

JC: This is what actually happened. I was really...instrumental in union programs. I was really influential throughout the state.
I be honest with you. By taking me out from there and come and work here would be an asset to the sugar companies. I'm not only talking for Waialua but throughout.

I had my three children before which I would not... a young three children before which I hate like hell because it hurts me a great deal. They were very young. My wife was taking care of them. Of course I had a meager salary. At that time, I could not stay home and they red-baited my wife.

PN: When was this? Early '50s about?

JC: I think I married in '44. This was on the '40s. They red-baited my wife. The plantation officials used to call my wife, you know. Their wives.

PN: What did they say?

JC: Say, "You watch out. Your husband might not be Communist now, but he's Communist influence." It hurts me, when I hear about this. My wife left me, you know.

PN: Because of this red-baiting?

JC: Yeah. She left me twice. With my three kids. If it were not for that, I would still be a union man. That's how I return. That's one of the reasons why the ILWU leadership kind of disowned me at the present time, because I left them when they most needed me.

What hurts me is the plantation promised me more or less the world when I came back. Because I told them that I'm not well-founded when it comes to safety work. I know that it involves lot of study, and at the same time, experience. They told me that it's just a stepping stone; that I would be trained on the job that I am used to in the union. Those did not materialize.

PN: All the promises they made you?

JC: Yeah. All their promises they made did not materialize. Instead, when I came back to the plantation, they waited. They were nice only after six month, because that's what I can still go back to the bargaining unit, to the union. But then, when the six months was over, hoo, I had the rough time.

PN: What did they do?

JC: Oh, you can just feel the push and the pressure. All the pressure was really so great until I retire.

PN: You retired from this job as Safety and Security Administrator?

JC: Yeah. That's why I retired early, because the pressure was so great.
PN: Can you tell me who made the offers, promises to you?

JC: As a matter of fact, the first guy that give me an offer is the present manager now. Midkiff, too.

PN: Midkiff, too?

JC: Yeah. John Anderson. I think, if John Anderson would be the manager today, here, it probably materialized. There were changes of manager at the time, then. Anyway, I didn't have any written agreement. Even if there is written, what would that be to me? Nothing. I just relied on their words.

And believe you and me, it took me three years, even if my wife was being red-baited and I think she was red-baited. I only knew the truth then when I came back to the plantation. They started giving me the pressure, and my wife started to feel it, too. I would not be even telling this on the tape recorder, but there were times when we had meetings at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. I don't know who tell my wife, but my wife start to call me from here to the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. Nobody know.

PN: Union kind meeting like that?

JC: Yeah, union meeting. But then they say, oh, I was meeting somebody, someone else. Then my wife told me now that it was the wife of the Assistant Manager. The wife of the Personnel Manager had been telling her all of this, where I was.

PN: They would tell her you were meeting some other wahine or something?

JC: Yes.

PN: But you would be at a union meeting.

JC: I was at a union meeting. All of this happen in my life. Well, those were days of the past and I would not even be bringing this, because, as you see here at Waialua, we don't have any other facilities. Not the plantation facilities. We have a partying that's still plantation owned. We have picnic that's still plantation owned. We have no other facilities. I could be still blackmailed. They say, "Sorry, it's all filled."

PN: You think that's one of the reasons why people hesitate to speak? To be interviewed, like that? We've run across, you know....

JC: It is possible. Even there is a better life or more progressive life here at Waialua, the fact remains that most of the benefits.... that would derive through social activities would still come from the company. Even now, if you want to borrow a truck, you have no other resource but to borrow from the company. And even the Waialua Community Association, which Leong....

PN: Belongs to?
JC: His office is located....that's still ninety percent company influence. So it is tough to talk here yet.

PN: So it's not that much change from the past, then, where almost hundred percent was controlled by the plantation?

JC: Well, your livelihood is no longer controlled by the plantation, because this is now my house. If you have make a party, say, for my child, if I don't make a party here at home, there's no other recourse. You still have to go to the plantation. That's one of the reason. Now, if I want sand, for example, or if I want stones, rocks, where would I get it? It's still the plantation.

PN: They still have a bit of control over you?

JC: They still have a bit of control over you.

PN: You say you speak English, Visayan, Ilocano and Tagalog.

JC: A little Visayan and a little Tagalog.

PN: But mostly Ilocano?

JC: Yes.

PN: You learn that from your parents? Or....?

JC: My parents are Ilocano.

PN: I guess you speak that with your parents, so that's where you learn Ilocano.

JC: Yes.

PN: How did you learn English?

JC: In school.

PN: And the Visayan and Tagalog?

JC: With my dealings with these Visayans and Tagalogs.

PN: On the plantation?

JC: Not only the plantation, but I'm active on the state wide community, Filipino community affair. As a matter of fact, we are preparing a convention for a state wide and we will be having a meeting tomorrow afternoon. I am one of the framers of the convention proceeding.

PN: So you didn't go to any kind of school to learn these languages, then?

JC: Yes. Actually (learned) dealing with people. I have little books of Tagalog here and there. And by mixing Tagalog and Visayan, they can understand. I could converse enough to be understood.
PN: Another thing I wanted to ask you is some people, they talk about differences between the Visayan and the Ilocanos; that they had differences among them. Were you aware of such incidents?

JC: That gap has been closed to a very, very narrow one, because Visayans and Ilocanos work together now when they have parties. Of course, you could still feel the rivalry and so on. To me, it's no longer a problem, because of the intermarriages.

PN: Do you think it was a problem in the past?

JC: During the '30s, it was a problem, yes.

PN: Could you tell me of some examples?

JC: You know, the Ilocanos, as I told you, when they came here, they did not bring their wives along with them. Very, very few, if there were. But the Visayans brought their wives along. Because of that type of population, the Visayans were grouping among themselves, and the Ilocanos were grouping among themselves. But, then, their children came; the Visayan children came up. Then the Ilocanos were courting their own children.

The Visayans had a different type of diet before. They don't know how to use bagoong before, you know. They learn that from the Ilocanos.

PN: What else is different between the Visayan and Ilocano?

JC: Well, the Ilocanos are more productive, more hard worker. The Visayans, not so much of hard working people. As a matter of fact, my wife is a Visayan. To me, it's not a problem, though. I think the problem that we have is (between) the immigrants and the Filipinos that are born here.

PN: Well, let's wrap it up here and then we pick it up next time, and I can talk to you about the union, things about the War, and other things like that. Would you be willing to be interviewed another time?

JC: I'll be more than willing to help, because after all, you people are actually trying to... I don't know what influence I would have after you interview a lot of people here.

PN: No, I think you gave us a lot of information, and lot of good things that you went through. You've lot of experiences that help us learn about what happened in the past. That theatre instance, for example; we never heard about that until now. People never told us there were sections for certain races of people.

END OF INTERVIEW
This is a second interview with Mr. Justo de la Cruz on August 12, 1976. Mr. de la Cruz, you came here during the Depression. Do you remember the bonus system? Was it in effect then?

Yes. If you work 23 days a month, they give you a ten cents bonus per day.

Did they cut that out during the Depression?

No, it was in effect just to give incentives to the working people.

The other thing I wanted to talk about was your job at the store. What were the different departments in the store?

They used to have a hardware department, a butcher shop, a grocery shop, a warehouse, and a gasoline station worker.

You were working in what department?

I was working in the overall department, first as a general salesman. Then I was promoted to the hardware department, a buyer. Also the buyer for Filipino goods, groceries and other items coming from the Philippines. Also I was buying jewelries. I was a department head then.

You went out and bought this from some salesman or something?

The salesman were calling once a week.

They would come to the store?

They would come to the store. We buy the necessary needs in accordance with the stock we had.

When you first got your job in the store, you said that you went out to the camps to take orders?

Yes, that was one of the requirements. On weekends--Saturdays and Sundays--we solicit or we ask the employees as to whether or not
they will be buying groceries in accordance with their needs. The most important item in a contest before was to sell iceboxes, ranges, and watches.

PN: That's how you got your prize for selling the most?

JC: Yes. I used to outsell all of the employees in that store.

PN: Do you remember how many iceboxes you sold?

JC: I don't remember, but I think I average about eight to ten iceboxes a month.

PN: You used to go out to the camps in your car?

JC: With my own car.

PN: You write that person's name down and what he ordered?

JC: Yeah. And the camp in which he or she was living.

PN: When did you stop going out to the camps to take orders?

JC: That was a long requirement. That's part of the requirement of a store employee, I guess.

PN: Did they do this all the time you were working there?

JC: Yeah, we used to do that all the time when I worked there.

PN: What about the credit system? Did people charge to the store?

JC: The credit system is for all employees. If they have a number or bango in the plantation before, they could charge, and those days were so hard, that most of the employees used the credit system since that's a plantation store. Those that could not buy are those that have a lot of balance. Lot of balance is in accordance with their earnings, and their buying power have to be regulated. Their names are listed for the clerks to look at first before the employee could buy again.

PN: You would look at the name and determine how much credit they had?

JC: No, not determine the credit they have because we have that available in our bookkeeping department.

PN: The bookkeeper would know how much money a person owed?

JC: Yes.

PN: Was there any limit to how much a person could...?

JC: It depends on the balance they had then at that time.
PN: What would happen if somebody didn't pay back?

JC: Well, they had to hold their earnings to pay for the balance. That's what made it hard before for the low income people, because those like me were earning one dollar a day. If they have too much balance at the store, they could not buy anything at all.

PN: Besides the contest you had, was there any other commissions you folks earned?

JC: None at all. Since those days the plantation was not unionized, it's just the employer that made the decision on how much a person earns. You don't know how much the other person is earning. Even if persons working in the same department and working the same job, you just don't know the other person's salary....

PN: After a while, people began coming to the stores to buy goods?

JC: Oh, they have been always buying, because they have no way to buy their goods outside, anyway, because of the low income. But those people that can afford to buy are buying from outside stores.

PN: What about like insects, ants, cockroaches, rats, like that? Was that a problem in the store?

JC: No, it was not a problem at all, because the plantation have rat traps and all that to control rats. Since this is a sugar cane plantation, they had to control rats. They had rat traps all over the field areas.

PN: So, there was not much cockroaches or rats inside the store?

JC: No. To me, it was a good store. Clean store meeting health regulations.

PN: Would there be a inspector that would come around?

JC: Yes. They used to come monthly.

PN: What were you doing on December 7th, 1941 when the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor?

JC: I was a head clerk then at the store. We were told then that some Japanese may have landed, so we were told to guard the store. We slept two nights after the attack.

PN: In the store?

JC: Yes.

PN: They gave you any weapons or anything like that?

JC: (laughs) Only available weapons that we have were pistols and shotguns.

PN: So you didn't see the planes coming to bomb Pearl Harbor?
JC: Well, I saw the plane. As a matter of fact, I was coming home from town during the attack at Pearl Harbor, and I had the hardest time of coming home.

PN: What happened?

JC: Well, we could hear bullets flying all over down Waipahu, near Pearl Harbor. But we just didn't know what it meant at that time. We just drove. We were just fortunate that we were not hit. I saw the airplane station at Schofield burning.

PN: So what did you have to do after they said to guard the store? Was that your job during the War?

JC: No, we have been open for the employees. We were working at the store daily then. It was just the two nights that we were on guard.

PN: Did they ration out the food in the stores?

JC: No. There was no rationing at all in those days. The only ones that was rationed later was poultry feed and animal feed, I think. Meat. But insofar as groceries and rice are concerned, we had abundant rice and grocery items.

PN: What did you do during the blackouts?

JC: We used to guard the beaches. I was a master sergeant then in supply. We used to train every afternoon in one of the parks here by the military. They said that in the event the Japanese landed, it would be our job to guard the beaches and to defend Waialua.

PN: This would be all Waialua employees?

JC: Yes. It so happen that the Japanese were not trusted and Filipinos were. That's one of the reasons why there were Filipino batallions before. And they would train us.

PN: Were there any Portuguese batallion or....

JC: No. As a matter of fact, only Filipino batallions were organized.

PN: How did you become master sergeant?

JC: I became master sergeant on my training at the store, because I would be supply master sergeant then. Our orders were in the event the Japanese would land here, for us to bring all the store contents, supplies, food supplies to the mountain. This mountain here (pointing to area behind Otake Camp). We were told that there were storages ready, but we have not gone there at all. Underground storage.

PN: Going into the unions, how did you get involved with the union?

JC: Through election procedures. When the union was organized here, I became one of the officers. Got involve and then later on, I was recognized to be one of the leaders.
PN: What was your first reaction to unions being formed on the plantation?

JC: Oh, I was all in favor for it. However, there were fear before organization that we might get fired. The union organizers from the Longshoremen's here in Honolulu told us that we have to be very careful of not actually identifying ourselves to the union leaders or identifying ourselves in favor of unionization, because we might get fired before the union got organized.

PN: Was it a Longshoreman that came to talk to you to join the union?

JC: Yeah. It was the ILWU Longshoreman here. They were the ones that organized the sugar plantation.

PN: Where did they talk to you?

JC: We have to meet them on a designated place after working hours when it's dark.

PN: What kind of difficulties did you encounter from the company?

JC: Well, actually, those were hard days, because we just didn't want to be identified. The plantation had the spies to find out who were attending those meetings and all that. But then, we had the majority of the people in favor of unionization. So, when they found out that I was one of those leaders that wanted to be in the union, it was not so hard then, because we knew then that we would win the election.

PN: You say you were on the negotiating committee?

JC: Yeah. When that territorial wide--territorial wide I said, because it was not a state yet--came in, I was elected as one of the committeemen.

PN: What were your duties as a negotiating committee member?

JC: The duties of a negotiating committeeman is just like what they are doing today. They have to formulate demands and find out from the working people as to whether or not they would go all out. When I say, "all out," even to strike for their demands. And naturally, we would meet with the employer negotiating committee to enforce our demands.

PN: You held a job as the division director, also?

JC: Yes, I was a division director for this island, meaning that I was the highest officer for this island at that time.

PN: What were your duties?

JC: Well, our duties is to see that our contract are enforced and that the--when I say enforce, that the employer has to let the union
members, union working people work in accordance with the contract. In other words, the contract is being abided and to see that the policy of the union is adhered to by the workers.

PN: You called yourself a "troubleshooter" for Jack Hall. What did you do?

JC: Whenever they had problems--because most of them were working people in the plantations. Maybe even, holds true that they were Filipinos. We have to go there and explain the position of the union and what we should be doing as workers. I flew from one island to the other, traveling from one island to the other and settled problems.

PN: Do you remember any big problems that you had?

JC: Well, the Ignacio Revolt in Hawaii (Big Island) is one of the big problems that they had. The Pahalanaliho problem which lasted for only a week. They did not agree with the contract at that time. They just did not go to work, so I went there again to settle it.

PN: When was this?

JC: Gee, as to the month or year, I forgot. And, of course, the Dole Corporation Company, their strike in Lanai. Their leader then was a long distant relative of mine, Pedro de la Cruz, who became a representative. Passed away two months ago. I went there to help settle their dispute, and finally ended--that was a six or eight months strike, I think--on Lanai.

PN: What did you do in the '46 strike?

JC: As I told you, that was one of the hardest thing. We were actually fighting the employers because they had the Broom Brigade and so on. That's when the "Red-baiting"--Communism was really at a high level. We were actually protecting the interest of the working people. Those were hard days. I testified, too, for the good conduct of the Reineckes and many, many other items that the union was fighting at that time. I could not mention many, many of the things that I was doing. There were too many things that I was involved with. I was involved, too, in the pineapple strike.

PN: This was the '47 pineapple strike?

JC: Yes.

PN: What happened then?

JC: Oh, that was a hard strike, too because at the cannery they had too many union breakers and also, outsiders working in the pineapple field. We had to really organize and make the public fully aware of what we were doing; what the union intention were at that time. We act as public relations man and so on. Explain the issues to the general public. I remember there was a meeting of school teachers in Wahiawa where I was assigned to explain the issue to the school teachers.
PN: Did the school teachers support the strike?

JC: Well, the school teachers just don't know where to stand at that time, because... I think, they were not allowed to organize as a union. I'm not so sure about the law, but I think that was it. They could not belong to a union. Therefore, they had to be very careful, for fear that they might be fired.

PN: In 1949, you said you were a delegate to the Philippine Islands for the Congress of Filipino Labor Organizations? What did you do there?

JC: Well, as I told you, I was a fraternal delegate and that CLO organization was also "Red-baited." They were considered the arm of the Communist party in the Philippines.

And those days were hard. Being a Filipino born in the Philippines, I was able to get the visa to go to the Philippines at that time. Jack Hall and myself was supposed to be going. I think Jack Hall could not come, because of travel restrictions. My duty there was to convey the congratulations of the working people here in Hawaii to their first convention.

PN: What other countries were there at the convention?

JC: I think I was the only fraternal delegate, because those days, restrictions to enter the Philippines was so rigid that other foreign labor union leaders could not come in.

PN: Going on to the Smith Act trials, how did you become a witness?

JC: I was a character witness for the Reineckes. I think that still my name and my participation with those cases were still in the court records. It was unfortunate that they had that last public hearing for the Reineckes to have their claims to have some money from the government for their services. I would be willing to testify for them. I think they are good people. If you want me to elaborate, I think this couple could see how the working people are being oppressed. They can see far ahead, and that's one of the reasons why they took that position. That's why the working people and other segments of our population in Hawaii today has got a better life. Because they took the stand that they did. I admire those couple.

PN: What's your reaction to the American system of justice?

JC: I have no question on that. That I don't doubt.

PN: The Smith Act 7 were found guilty, but do you think that was good, bad, or....

JC: To me, those people could see, maybe, ten, fifteen to twenty years ahead. And those laws that they had that was oppressing; those people was not really Communism. If they were Communist, that I
don't know. But, to me, the position that the Reineckes took were really in support of the poor people and many are actually enjoying the benefits of their labor today.

PN: Weren't you afraid that you may have been put on trial like the Reineckes for testifying for them?

JC: I was in the labor movement, and I know that I would get the backing of other union members. That's the difference. But, like the Reineckes, as I told you, they were not members of the union and for persons to take that stand is really a hard risk during their day. That, to me, is a tough decision to make.

PN: Going on to the Robert Pagdilao Incident, could you tell me more about it?

JC: Oh, he was a supervisor and, just like any people--when people are getting old, then the plantation want replacements to a younger one. I know that was unfair, because here comes a person that's getting old and just replacing him to a younger one without any cause is something that's very unjust. Even if they were not in the bargaining unit, the strength of the union was put behind him. I was really instrumental to do that here.

PN: How did you become a spokesman for the Kawailoa Filipino Community Association and the Wai'alea Filipino Association?

JC: On the Pagdilao's case, because we could not use the ILWU union to fight his case being that he was a supervisor so, in lieu of that, the name of the Filipino community associations was used.

PN: Did the men just walk out on their own or did somebody suggest to them that they should walk out and support Pagdilao?

JC: There was no walk out at all, but they call the attention of the company that what they did to Pagdilao unjust.

PN: Oh, I thought I read that in the newspaper or something that they walked out for a day or two.

JC: (Laughs) I don't remember if we walk out or did not. That was quite long.

PN: What happened to Pagdilao after that? Did he get back his same job?

JC: Well, they told him that if wanted to go back to his job, he is welcome to do so. However, we advised the old man that since he is getting old and that the intention of the company was to find some of his mistakes, it will not be good for him to be transferred for a cause. So he worked on that job the plantation assign him until he retired. I think we didn't work for two days, but I don't remember.

PN: There was a '53 strike, the slow-down protesting the new incentive pay. Could you talk more about that?
JC: Yes, that was a controversial issue, because we stood for that. This plantation was actually a progressive plantation. We had higher pay as compared to the other companies throughout the entire territory at that time. And we wanted to maintain them. That was during mechanization days also; introduction of modern mechanization at the sugar company. We stood firmly on our demands. It was really a slow down. Why I could not say it here that it was a slow down. There was a dispute as to incentive earnings in the harvesting field.

Because of that strike, the harvesting employees are still getting the benefits because of that until today. I was talking to one of the harvesting crane operators as to how much he is getting in two weeks. He told me that their average is eleven hundred dollars in two weeks.

PN: What were your reactions to the '58 strike? You know, you were a safety administrator, then, and you weren't union anymore.

JC: That was a just strike. I think it's just one of the struggles of working people to better their financial conditions and working condition.

PN: How did you feel that once you were a union man, now you on the other side of the fence?

JC: That was one of the hardest thing to think of. Because even if I was on the side of the plantation, I still felt then that the working people should share the benefits of the employer; once their profit gets high, the employee should also get the share of that benefit. It is still my position right today. If their profits get high, the employee's salary should also get higher in accordance with the profit. I'm not saying that the working people should take all, but after all, they are the working people and they are the arms of the employer. Why cannot they get the equal benefits? (Laughs)

But when you say how I feel and all that, not because I was working under the company that I was not a union man then. To be a safety man is also working for the safety and good health of the employees. That's the way I look at my job at that time. In other words, I was working for not only the company but for the good of the working people.

PN: In 1954, the Democratic Party rose to power. What was your reaction?

JC: That was the beginning of a real democracy in Hawaii. Not only in times of political activity, because as I told you, the Democratic Party could not even hold meetings on plantation properties. When the Democratic Party came strong, that was the beginning when the working people were also recognized in political and economical activities of the state. If there's no union today, in my opinion, the Japanese in government would not be in power today. I think the haoles would still be dominating the government.
PN: What role did the union play in terms of aiding the Democratic Party?

JC: At first it was the feeling of the unions—not only ILWU...

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDETWO

JC: ...the union leadership came to find out that they were at the tail end of the Democratic Party. So they said it is better to work independent so that we could be recognized. They changed their strategy to become independent. In other words, they would endorse the candidate of their choice regardless of party. But, as we see that today, most of the ones that are endorsed are Democrats.

PN: Could you compare the union in the beginning and the union now?

JC: Well, the union are recognized by the employers now—in other words, the Big Five—as here to stay. At first, during my days in the union, they feel that they could still break the union. That's why many of the leaders, even in the "Red-baiting," feels that that was a instrument of the employers to actually divide and split the working people, and eventually, break the back of the union. But now, the attitude of the employers, regardless of what employer they are, in my opinion, is different now. They know that unionization or unions are here to stay, because it's spreading in hotels. It's spreading in the government. Those such as the police, the school teachers, and even the nurses' associations are here. Working people understand that without a union they cannot actually fight against their own employers, so that the attitude is different now. They know that somehow, even the union realize that without an employer, there is no union; and the employer realize that if there is no worker, there would be no company.

PN: Would you say that the ILWU was stronger before than it is now?

JC: In terms of struggles, ILWU was leading the fight here in the state. But insofar as strength, to me, any labor union today has the strength. This is just my own evaluation as I see the...labor and employers operate. They have mutual respect to one another.

PN: What was your reaction to statehood?

JC: Well, the union's position—and that was my position also—the union's position is for statehood.

PN: You felt it was good for the people of Hawaii?

JC: Good for the people of Hawaii because federally, they would have representation. I think Hawaii's economy has proven that statehood is better. The only ones that were fighting it were against statehood were the few people who were reaping the benefits of the economy of Hawaii. That was the Big Five and the Dillinghams.
PN: How did you meet your wife?

JC: I was working at Waialua Hospital and I met her there.

PN: You had a Filipino wedding?

JC: Yes. Filipino wedding. Was well attended.

PN: Could you describe what the wedding was like?

JC: Oh, it's typical Filipino wedding. (Laughs)

PN: Oh, we'd like to know, cause not very many people know what is a typical Filipino wedding.

JC: Well, I think it's still one of the biggest wedding party ever held at Waialua. We had Filipino bands. Filipino leaders here in Waialua took care of us.

PN: Where was this held?

JC: This was held in Waialua Filipino Clubhouse which is not here today, because they demolished the club house.

PN: Oh, I meant to ask you about your family back in the Philippines. What are they doing now?

JC: In the first place, my father was so sick during the War that he died. Then in '51, I think, my mother passed away.

PN: What about your brothers?

JC: Oh, I have one brother here. He's working here. He's working for the Waialua Sugar Company as a warehouseman. I had two brothers in the Philippines. Both of them are farmers. Actually, I came from the farm. My father was a farmer there planting rice and corn.

PN: In '46, you know, the Philippines became independent. What was your reaction?

JC: Well, just like any other person who studied their economics the hard way. I believe that the Philippines would someday be free. The Philippines was fortunate to have an independence without having fought in a battle.

PN: Did you become a citizen or....

JC: I was already an American citizen, I think. I was naturalized.

PN: One other question. Somebody mention to us the company used to bug people's phones or anything like that. Do you remember or know anything about that?
JC: I don't know if they bug my telephone.

(Laughter)

JC: Once, I was at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, because we had a political meeting. I think it was at a meeting. Come to find out, there was a request for me on the telephone. I just don't know how she got that information.

PN: Do you know how they got it?

JC: Either they bug my telephone or what, I don't know. If they tap my telephone, I never did know it.

END OF INTERVIEW
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