

Oral History Interview
with
DAVID A. MORSE

In the Truman Administration served as Director of Labor for the Military Government Group in Germany; general counsel to the National Labor Relations Board, 1945-46; Assistant Secretary of Labor, 1946-47; Under Secretary of Labor, 1947-48 (Acting Secretary June 9-August 2, 1948); and as U.S. Government member, International Labor Office, Geneva, Switzerland, 1946-48. From 1948 to 1970 was Director-General of the International Labor Organization.

Washington, D.C.
July 25, July 30 and August 3, 1977
by James R. Fuchs, Harry S. Truman Library

The Harry S. Truman Library
Independence, Missouri
October, 1980

NOTICE

This is a transcript of a tape-recorded interview conducted for the Harry S. Truman Library. A draft of this transcript was edited by the interviewee but only minor emendations were made; therefore, the reader should remember that this is essentially a transcript of the spoken, rather than the written word.

RESTRICTIONS

This oral history transcript may be read, quoted from, cited, and reproduced for purposes of research. It may not be published in full except by permission of the Harry S. Truman Library.

Oral History Interview
with
DAVID A. MORSE

Washington, D.C.
July 25, 1977
by James R. Fuchs, Harry S. Truman Library

[1]

FUCHS: To start, would you relate when and where you were born and something about your education, and how you happened to come into the Government?

MORSE: Well, I was born May 31, 1907, in New York City and at the age of one was moved out to Somerville, New Jersey where I was raised in a small town, went to public school, and then in 1925 went to Rutgers College, as it was called then, in New Brunswick, New Jersey. I graduated in '29 and went then to the Harvard Law School

[2]

from which I graduated in 1932. In 1932, I went to Newark, New Jersey to work for a law firm as a clerk and was admitted to the bar immediately thereafter. In 1933, I was recruited by Nathan Margold, who was then the Solicitor of the Interior Department, to come and work on his staff as a young lawyer. I was then about 26 years of age. I'd been recommended to him by one of my former professors at the Harvard Law School, Felix Frankfurter, and a classmate of mine who was a very close friend, Herbert Marks, who was, at that point, working in Washington. I worked in the Interior Department from '33 until '35 when I became the General Counsel of the Petroleum Labor Policy Board in the Interior Department. This was rather interesting because the petroleum code of the NRA had been turned over to Harold Ickes, the then Secretary of the Interior, by Franklin D. Roosevelt for administration. As part of the petroleum code,

[3]

he had to set up a Petroleum Labor Policy Board which was one of the early efforts at implementing the labor code at the time, later incorporated in the Wagner Act. I became General Counsel of that outfit working under the chairmanship of Dr. William Leiserson. As a result of that, I was asked by Francis Biddle who was the first chairman of the National Labor Relations Board, and Calvin Magruder, his General Counsel, who'd been a professor of mine at the Harvard Law School, if I would join the NLRB and be the first Regional Attorney for that organization in the New York City, Connecticut and New Jersey area to be among these young lawyers at the time who would help test the constitutionality of the Wagner Act or the National Labor Relations Act as it was called. I agreed and moved, therefore, from Interior to New York to work for the NLRB for that purpose, and I stayed with the board until 1937. I left in 1937 because it was in April of that year that the constitutionality

[4]

of the Act had been determined by the United States Supreme Court, and I handled one of those cases which went to the Supreme Court called the Associated Press case. Charles Fahy was then the General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board.

In 1937, when I resigned from the Government, I went back to Newark, New Jersey and became a partner in my old law firm with which I'd previously clerked. It was called Coult, Satz, Tomlinson, and Morse. We had an interesting group of men. One was Walter Sauer, who later came to Washington to become General Counsel, Chief Executive Officer, Vice President, Vice Chairman of the Board of the Export-Import Bank. He's still with them in a consulting capacity although he's now over age. I stayed with the law firm, practiced law, became one of the first impartial chairmen of the milk industry for the metropolitan area for New

[5]

York.

When Pearl Harbor occurred I enlisted into our Army, went to a training school in Florida in the Air Force. That was in April '42, and I became a lieutenant after finishing my course, went into the Air Force. I went overseas shortly thereafter to North Africa and was soon asked to act as the Chief of the Manpower Division of the Military Government operation that was going into

Sicily, and was given the responsibility for preparing the decrees for General Eisenhower which would abolish the Fascist corporative syndical system. I did that job and went in on the invasion of Sicily, which was in '42; went up into Palermo, from there continued to Naples, and always in the same capacity, Chief of the Manpower Division of the Allied Military Government, the British and the Americans.

About 1942, some months after the invasion

[6]

when I was in Naples, I was ordered to England. I went to Shrivenham, which was an artillery school outside of London, to become part of a group that was preparing for the invasion of the continent of France. Again, because of my previous experience, they asked me to become part of the unit at the Supreme Allied Headquarters, called SHAEF, to advise on the labor aspects of what would become the Military Government in the occupied areas, on the theory that we were going to succeed in our invasion. Bob Murphy, I remember, Ambassador Murphy, was the political advisor to the Supreme Commander, Eisenhower. I was labor adviser to the General. We organized ourselves and some days after D-Day, sometime in 1944, I went into France, then Paris, and from there moved on up to Versailles; and from there to Frankfurt where I was the acting head of the Manpower Division of the Allied Military Government, what they called the Control Council

[7]

of Germany; composed of U.S., British, French, and the Russians. We were grouped into a Control Council, and I was dealing with the labor side as acting head until they could appoint a general to take over these responsibilities, which they eventually did when General Clay came over, sometime in '44 or early '45, I don't recall. He (General Frank McSherry) became then the head of the labor side or manpower side of the Control Council. I was then a lieutenant colonel and prepared at long last to return to the United States.

FUCHS: Was Leo Werts over there at that time? He was probably in a much lower capacity.

MORSE: Yes. Leo Werts was in the picture and my recollection is that he was part of my team and then stayed on after I left. A lot of people came in at that time, very good men for this operation -- a lot of whom came from

[8]

the Government on the civilian side. I had been through the military side. Joe Keenan came over just about that time to act as a labor adviser in this particular area. He was a trade union leader sent over by the Government. But I returned to the U.S. in '45, as I'd received a request from the Secretary of War, Robert Patterson, to return from Germany to become General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board, which was a very sentimental journey for me due to the fact that I'd previously acted under Charles Fahy when he was General Counsel.

FUCHS: Who was Chairman at that time?

MORSE: Chairman of the National Labor Relations Board was Paul Herzog, and he had with him Gerard Reilly, who's now a judge here in the District of Columbia, and Jim Reynolds. It was interesting, this particular move on my part, because the day after I agreed to become General Counsel

[9]

and return to Germany for that post, I received a communication from Herbert Lehman, former Governor of New York, later Senator, then the Director General of UNRRA [United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration], asking if I would become General Counsel of his organization. But I had to refuse that since I had, the day before, accepted the NLRB offer.

FUCHS: Were you chagrined about that?

MORSE: Well, I was happy at both opportunities. Of course I loved the Governor, so I was sorry not to have had the opportunity of working with him. On the other hand, the NLRB post was something that was very consistent with my experience. So I was pleased to do that; yet I was very honored to have had both opportunities, and happy that I was to leave the Army and return home. As a matter of fact, it was rather interesting when I came back, I received the Legion of Merit.

[10]

I don't mention it because I received the Legion of Merit, but it was rather nice because I was called over to the Pentagon and I was decorated there by General McSherry, who came back for that purpose and who had been the man who actually succeeded me as head of the U.S. Control Council Manpower Division.

My work at the NLRB was extremely interesting. It was for me an innovative period. It was a postwar period. It was still the Wagner Act, before the Act had been amended to be called the Taft-Hartley law. I made a tremendous effort with the Chairman to follow out President Truman's wishes, which were rather clear, and that was to improve the National Labor Relations Board's services to labor and management. I recall that very vividly because it was in connection with that objective of the President that I called the first conference that had ever been held by this agency or any other agency in Government

[11]

of the attorneys that practiced in the labor field and before the NLRB. This was good because it gave the bar on the management side and on the labor side and the Government side, a chance to know each other, to exchange views with each other, become familiar with their respective problems and interests and the machinery and procedures of the National Labor Relations Board, and to try to weld that into some cohesive relationship that would have a positive impact on the public interest that we in the Government were attempting to serve; and that was, I think, a very good development. As a matter of fact, we received at the Board a great deal of positive support for that effort.

FUCHS: Did President Truman deal directly with Chairman Herzog or did he go through the General Counsel? How did his wishes become known other than through his speeches?

[12]

MORSE: They became known because he worked directly at that time with the Chairman of our board, Paul Herzog. It was an extremely important period for the labor side of the administration and as far as the NLRB was concerned we had to build a legal staff which had been practically decimated by World War II, and I remember I added more than sixty lawyers that were selected on a merit basis but with special preference for veterans. Rather interesting that point, because the President insisted and the chairman of the Board insisted that the recruitment be a merit recruitment, and there were absolutely no politics in it at that time. We picked men on the basis of their professional qualifications. I don't recall one instance where I had been asked by the White House or by the Chairman of the Board or by the trade union movement or employers, to place someone on my board for political purposes. That was

[13]

very satisfactory. Paul Herzog did have very close relations with the President, yes.

FUCHS: What was Mr. Herzog's and your feelings about veteran's preference?

MORSE: Well, you have to look at everything in the light of the circumstances of the time. We'd just finished a bloody war, a very difficult one. A lot of men had gone abroad who had high professional skills, been overseas for a number of years and came back into a situation where they had to rebuild their careers and I think it was justified that we give preferential consideration to those men many of whom would come back handicapped and most of whom had a very difficult time re-orienting themselves. None of them were brought in, however, simply because they were veterans. We looked at them first because of the veterans' position, but if they didn't have the other qualifications, we

[14]

didn't take them. That's about it. We had no problem at that time about it. That was in the spirit of that particular time.

However, one thing that did happen at that time, Mr. Fuchs, that is rather interesting. You know we didn't have in our Government at that time any program to deal with international labor problems. I was working on the domestic side but I recall very vividly, I had been asked to come over to the Labor Department after I returned, while I was General Counsel of the Labor Board, to talk with various people about the labor aspects of Europe, about international labor problems: the politics of it, the Socialist developments, the Communist, the progressive developments, the liberal developments, the conservative developments; what this would mean to the future of Europe and to our relations with Europe. I remember talking at great length with a fellow called Dan [Daniel W.]

[15]

Tracy. Dan had been former president of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. But at this time, when I was General Counsel, he was an Assistant Secretary of Labor under Lewis Schwellenbach who was the Secretary of Labor, and who came from the State of Washington. He had been a Federal judge, a United States Senator, and was very close to Harry

Truman when he was in the Senate. He was one of the Senators referred to as a "young Turk" and very much in support of the New Deal and its legislation. I talked with Dan and then had a number of talks with Mr. Schwellenbach. I talked with the Secretary about the importance of the labor movement in Europe and especially to the United States and our future relations with the Western European countries from an economic and political point of view. I told him that I thought that it would be necessary and helpful, really vital, for the United States

[16]

to have someone in the U.S. Government authorized to be responsible for monitoring the labor developments in Europe and elsewhere in the world and if possible to influence those developments. I saw this very clearly as a result of my work during the war with the new free labor unions that were developing in Italy, in Germany, and in other parts of Western Europe; and I could see how important they would be to our future political relations with Europe and, of course, to the development of democracy in those countries. Actually, I recall having a long talk with Isador Lubin. He came to Frankfurt when I was there toward the end of my tour of duty in the Army. He'd been sent over by our President, Franklin D. Roosevelt. He had an ambassadorial rank, and he was doing a study there for the President. On that occasion I talked with him about this particular problem. I asked him if he wouldn't convey the issues to President Roosevelt,

[17]

which he said he would because he agreed very much with my views.

I mention this because, interestingly enough, a year after these conversations, sometime in 1946, I was in my house on 16th Street in Washington and the phone rang at night and it was a fellow by the name of Sylvester, who was the Chief of the Bureau for the Newark *Evening News* of New Jersey, in Washington. He said, "Dave, I just saw on the ticker that you've been appointed by the President of the United States to be the first Assistant Secretary of Labor for International Affairs. What have you got to say about it?"

I said, "Well, the first thing I've got to say about it is that this is the first I've heard about it. I'm really quite surprised and pleased, of course, because I think it's something which we need. Actually, I've been talking about that to various people in

[18]

the Government."

He said, "Well, the ticker says that you're going to be asked to establish a Division for International Affairs by the President."

I said, "Well, I'm delighted." I think I must have been recommended for that, Mr. Fuchs, by the Secretary of Labor, Schwellenbach, as a result of the talks I'd had with him before about the general problems. But obviously the appointment, as I learned later, had been made in consultation with the president of the American labor movement, William Green.

FUCHS: Now this was part of the reorganization which took place in the Labor Department after Mr. Schwellenbach was appointed, and I believe there were two others appointed Assistant

Secretary the same time you were, "Mr. [Phillip] Hannah and Mr. [John] Gibson. Were you acquainted with them prior to this?

[19]

MORSE: No, that was a whole new team. There was one other chap; there was Governor Keen Johnson. He was a former Governor of Kentucky. He was appointed as part of this reorganization by the Secretary of Labor as Under Secretary of Labor. He was the first Under Secretary of Labor in the Department of Labor. John Gibson was appointed at the same time. He was from the CIO and Phil Hannah from Ohio, from the AFL. You recall that at that time the labor movement was split and I gather this was part of the effort on the part of the Administration to see to it that both sides of the labor movement were properly taken into account in the administration of our affairs. All of us were sworn in at the same time.

FUCHS: Have you reflections about Mr. Schwellenbach?

MORSE: Yes, I can tell you about that. I spent a

[20]

lot of time with him privately in his office. You see, I was the neutral, so-called public member of those chaps who were then made Assistant Secretaries of Labor. So if he had something that he wanted to discuss that involved both sides he would talk to me and, of course, talk with the Under Secretary. Even though my responsibilities were primarily international, I got drawn into discussions of the domestic scene. I was asked by the Secretary to deal with many ad hoc matters in areas not related to international affairs. My impressions of Schwellenbach are very personal. I thought he was a wonderful human being. I thought that he was a man that was better one to one than in groups. When you sat down and talked with him quietly he gave you his great experience. You could tell that this was a man who had been through a lot in his life as a judge, a Senator, and as a politician. When you got him before

[21]

larger audiences, he clammed up. It was a great effort for him, at this period of his life that we're talking about. I think it's mainly that he was very nervous. His hands would tremble. We'd go down to talk to large groups and it was a terrific effort for him. I began to see that this was because his health was failing him. I found that from the time I took office until I left, which was the day when he died -- which we'll talk about a little bit later -- he was a man in declining health. So he was not able to go to as many Cabinet meetings as he should. When he got to Cabinet meetings, I don't think he was as effective as he could have been. I think he isolated himself a great deal from his staff, even from the trade union movement, because he was conserving his strength. He would spend large periods away from the office and it was all a matter of health and nothing else. So, I think

[22]

one must consider him from a very compassionate point of view. He was a wise man; he was a very good man. He was not a very strong administrator; he was not even a good administrator. He didn't know how to dialogue with his top people. He didn't really know how to bring them together as a group and talk to them and hammer out policies and fix programs and delegate

authority. I think the way you had to deal with Lew Schwollenbach at that time was to take initiatives yourself. Say, "Well, I've got this idea and I've got that idea, I think we ought to do this, I think we ought to do that and then move." If you would do that and if he liked the idea he'd give you the green light and you'd go ahead. But if you were the kind of fellow that didn't want to take initiatives, nothing would happen. The result was that Congress was taking things away from the Labor Department at that period; it was being

[23]

decimated. It was going through a very hard time. The morale of the Department was not good. Keen Johnson subsequently left as Under Secretary. It was, I think, 1947 when he left, and I was in Geneva at the time that I was called back then to take his place as Under Secretary. I became Under Secretary of Labor in 1947 -- that must have been in June of 1947.

We had very close relations. But then increasingly, his health deteriorated so that from the time I became Under Secretary, I doubt that he went to very many Cabinet meetings. I went to the Cabinet meetings on his behalf and tried to do the best I could to serve the interests of the Department and country at these meetings. I'd like to, if you don't mind, Mr. Fuchs, go back a little bit to how we went about creating this international department.

FUCHS: Who was handling international labor affairs

[24]

when you were having these conversations while you were still General Counsel?

MORSE: Well, that's a very good question because there was a complete vacuum. The Labor Department was not handling international affairs. When I was appointed Assistant Secretary of Labor for International Affairs to create the division, the first thing I did, of course, was to investigate just that question in the Department: who was handling international affairs?

FUCHS: How were relations conducted with the ILO into which we had entered in '34?

MORSE: Well, I went over to the Labor Department and, interestingly enough, I brought with me a fellow who had been my legal assistant at the National Labor Relations Board, Millard Cass. He stayed with me right on through my whole

[25]

period at the Labor Department. There were six people that I surrounded myself with professionally in order to get this division started and Millard Cass was one of them. The ILO, that you refer to, I couldn't find anybody that was handling that until I finished a couple of weeks of exhaustive study. We found that the representation was in the hands of an official by the name of John Gambs who was down the line in the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Women's Bureau (he worked with both of them). He had been going to ILO conferences. So when questionnaires and requests to go to meetings came into the Labor Department, they got routed to this chap. He'd answer the questionnaires and he would go to the meetings, or he would tell people there was a meeting and maybe he ought to go to it. It was hit or miss.

FUCHS: Did he attend the conferences?

[26]

MORSE: He went to them or he would suggest people to go. And then they would pick people ad hoc to go. But there was no system, no bureau, no real procedure. It was handled ad hoc. Just one man. So we had not a very great impact in the work at that time. Of course, before the war we may have had. But I'm talking now about the postwar period. As far as that period is concerned that I'm talking about, there was nobody.

Now, actually it was just at that point that the Government began to have a labor attaché program. I recall that the first labor attaché had been appointed previously. It was Dan Horowitz. He's still in the Labor Department as Special Assistant to the Secretary of Labor for International Affairs. He was appointed in 1943. He was proposed by Isador Lubin. I often wonder if maybe that wasn't some kind of a direct result of the talk that I had

[27]

with Lubin when we were in Europe at that time; but it may have been before.

FUCHS: Was Lubin head of Labor Statistics at that time?

MORSE: Lubin then was still head of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and acting as the adviser to the President in the White House. This was under Francis Perkins. The program of labor attaché, which now is a very important program, was actually started as an experiment in Chile back in 1943 with this fellow Horowitz. It was developed as a program in the Truman administration. It was never developed as a program in FDR's administration. They put a fellow here and they put a fellow there, but as a program it was not until Harry Truman came in. This program was actually resisted by all the Ambassadors except Claude Bowers who was our Ambassador in

[28]

Chile. He accepted the program. It later developed that when I came into the Labor Department and began emphasizing the importance of this program that the State Department agreed that they would beef the program up. It was agreed by myself and State -- it was then Dean Acheson - - that appointments would be made by State for this program after consultations with myself as the Assistant Secretary of Labor for International Affairs. It was actually in 1945 that Sam Berger, who later became one of our Ambassadors in Vietnam, became a labor attaché in London. He was actually with Averell Harriman who headed the coal-steel mission in England. That's the way this labor attaché program began and it is now a going program administered by the State Department in consultation with the Labor Department.

FUCHS: You considered this one of your more significant

[29]

enterprises while you were Assistant Secretary?

MORSE: I think a significant thing was the creation of a proper unit to effectively service the International Labor Organization. Another was the strengthening and development of the

program of labor attachés. The next development, I think, that was significant was becoming the first member from the Labor Department of the Foreign Service Board in the State Department, where I tried to play a significant role in formulating policies for our Foreign Service officers -- recruitment and selection of people. Another, I think, significant activity had to do with the Marshall plan.

The Marshall plan came along in the postwar period and Paul Hoffman, you remember, was appointed the administrator of it. And the President himself, and Dean Acheson, who was

[30]

Under Secretary of State, asked me if I would use my good offices to help Paul Hoffman become fully accepted by the American labor movement, so that we could have the support of the American labor movement for the Marshall plan. I arranged for Paul to be invited to most of the large AF of L and CIO meetings throughout the country, the executive committee meetings, where he addressed these people, got acquainted with them, and talked with them about the Marshall plan. Through that I think I did make some contribution to the work and the political support in this country of the Marshall plan. I think otherwise the labor movement support would not have been quite that great, and it was one of the key elements in the support of the Marshall plan.

I also created something called the Trade Union Advisory Committee on International Affairs. I found that with the labor movement being split between the CIO and AF of L, it was

[31]

extremely difficult for me to function in international programs or to help the President. I hit on the idea of setting up an advisory committee and I consulted with Phil Murray, who was then the head of the CIO and Bill Green, who was head of the AF of L, on the concept. They agreed this was a good thing and they put their top people in this committee which I chaired; and we would meet regularly to discuss problems together with the CIO and the AF of L. This may not seem like a very significant step to you now, but it was a great step forward then when they were hardly talking to each other. They came, their top people, people like Jim Carey on the CIO side, Matty Wohl on the AF of L side. I would ask what position we should take on issues in the ILO, what position should we take on the Marshall plan, what position should we take on the development of free trade unions

[32]

throughout the world, what position should we take on labor attaché programs, what position should we take on the Truman Doctrine in Greece and so on. Through this mechanism we always got a unified labor movement position on the international side of President Truman's efforts. It was very interesting. At this time I brought in with me more and more good people. A fellow by the name of Thatcher Winslow became one of my assistants with Millard Cass. Philip Kaiser was one of my assistants; I brought him in. You know Philip, he's now our Ambassador to Hungary and so on. I'll talk a little bit more about him later. So I began to build up a good staff to help me on these matters. At that time the CIO was not the representative at any of the ILO meetings. It was the AF of L. There was a big fight going on constantly about representation. Through this advisory committee I got them to understand the procedural and legal aspects of this and accept

[33]

the problems, even to the extent that they would send some CIO people over along with the AF of L people to various ILO meetings. That went a long way toward creating a better atmosphere in the Labor Department and in the labor movement of our country.

Another thing that happened during this period was interesting. I got the agreement of the Secretary of Labor and the President that I should invite periodically the labor commissioners from all the different states of the United States to come to Washington to discuss their problems. Now, again, that doesn't seem like much to you now, although I'm not sure how much of that is being done now. But at that time it was considered quite a revolutionary step to get these chaps together. They all came, and we discussed their problems. They learned from each other; they got to know each other; they got to know the

[34]

differences in their techniques of administration. They examined whether certain ILO conventions should be ratified or shouldn't be ratified. Very much to their surprise they found that the minimum standards of the ILO reflected in conventions or recommendations were in most instances much higher than the legislation in the respective states of our own country. So they went back stimulated to try to improve their own legislative position. This was particularly true in the areas of occupational health and safety. Which was a problem then as it is today.

I mentioned before the question of the Truman Doctrine. Would you like me to say something about that?

FUCHS: Yes, I would.

MORSE: It comes to my mind as something rather interesting. You know, again, with the split labor movement -- and the CIO at that time was

[35]

supposed to be very, very radical. They were members of the WFTU, which was headed by Louis Saillant, a French Socialist who was oriented toward the Communists, and the Russians were in it. Of course, the AF of L wouldn't have anything to do with that body and they would have liked very much to see the CIO get out of it, which the CIO eventually did, of course. Now, at the time, Mr. Truman was thinking of launching his doctrine which concerned the vacuum created by the British withdrawal from Greece. Dean Acheson asked me to see him. He was then Under Secretary of State and he said, "Dave, I've got this problem. The President is going to launch this doctrine and it's absolutely vital that we have the support from the day it's launched of the American labor movement, and that means the CIO and the AF of L. You have to get this done for the President."

I said, "Well, Dean, that's not easy.

[36]

You'll have to help me."

He said, "What do you want?"

I said, "Well, I'll get them together at the Labor Department but I want you to come secretly to this meeting so the press doesn't learn about it and explain to them as Americans the significance of the doctrine to the American public and to the world and to our foreign policy. See if you can get them to agree that they will endorse it."

"Well," he said, "you've got yourself a deal."

I fixed the date and I got the Trade Union Advisory Committee together. I told them this was an emergency meeting, very secret, I remember Dean Acheson coming over and coming in through the back door of the Labor Department so the press wouldn't see him. He addressed them, talked with them, explained the President's "Truman Doctrine," briefed all of them, and we

[37]

got their support. I think that was an interesting example of a technique in Government that worked. I considered that a major achievement. Another important achievement at that time -- you've got to remember we're talking about a period when Europe was in a shambles -- was the reconstruction of Europe with the Marshall plan. We were people who reckoned that we knew about all there was to know at that time in the free world about productivity and productivity techniques. So we got the Europeans, through the Marshall plan, to develop productivity councils and committees -- the French, the Belgians, the Dutch, the Italians, the devastated countries, the British -- so that workers and employers would organize teams to improve the production in their countries, latch on to the Marshall plan, and help it to accomplish its objectives. As part of that we got them to come to the United States on a systematic basis to meet with our

[38]

labor and industry people, to take advantage of our technology and see if we could learn from them and they, particularly, from us. I thought that this productivity committee program for the development of Europe as part of the Marshall plan effort, was a very significant thing. They were the sort of thing, Mr. Fuchs, that wouldn't really happen if you didn't have a branch in the Labor Department that was worrying about these problems. Because it's not the kind of thing that Foreign Service fellows in the State Department would be thinking about -- it's not in their discipline or experience -- nor would they have the contacts for it; which demonstrated the value of the establishment of this division in the Labor Department. I started the program with the agreement of the Commerce Department, the Secretary of Labor and the State Department. I talked a great deal with Bill

[39]

Foster then. He was the Under Secretary of Commerce at that time. He was a Republican in that spot and a very good chap. Of course, he had a great career afterwards, as you know, but he was Under Secretary of Commerce at that time, I think, working originally with Averell Harriman. Averell was the Secretary of Commerce. So all of this was a rather unique role which did not exist before the creation of the office of Assistant Secretary of Labor for International Affairs. I'll tell you one thing, though, Mr. Fuchs., that your question brings to my mind. I think that if we in

the Labor Department, or if I or Schwellenbach or any of us, were able to make a contribution in the areas that I've been referring to -- and there are many others where I think we did make a contribution -- it was because I was given direct access to and had very cordial relations with President Truman himself, Secretary Marshall himself, Under Secretary Acheson, Bill

[40]

Foster, Averell Harriman, with Forrestal of the Defense Department, Secretary of Defense, other top officials of the Government. You see, this was a new animal that had been created, and I'd come into it and, because Schwellenbach was the kind of man he was and not so available, not so accessible, I was given the mandate to get things going. I got it going and there was no problem about cutting across lines. It was welcomed and they became my friends and the President himself gave it the signal by saying in the Cabinet, especially a bit later, when I was under Secretary of Labor, that he wanted full cooperation on these efforts by the members of the Cabinet. Jim Forrestal, for example: I used to go up and spend hours with him. He'd say now, "What is the American labor movement? What kind of a guy is Bill Green? Who is George Meany? What do they do? Are they subversive? Are they good Americans? Are they patriotic?

[41]

Are they going to have strikes and bring our country down? What is this animal?"

I explained that these were great Americans, salt-of-the-earth people. Bill Green, George Meany, Phil Murray, all these fellows are great American citizens that believe in our system. They are trying to improve and strengthen it. The best thing you can do Mr. Forrestal in Defense is to get to know them, work with them, help them, cooperate, and these chaps did. So, I was doing that kind of a job. Of course, I was much younger then. I talk with a lot of enthusiasm now, I know, but I had a lot more then, and all of this rubbed off and I think was useful. Nobody questioned this activity on my part; that was a great help. There was nothing bureaucratic about any of this.

FUCHS: Schwellenbach really didn't interfere at all with your foreign relations activities?

[42]

MORSE: No, not a bit. Just so long as I kept him informed. Every time I came back from a meeting I'd run in to see him. He'd be stretched out on the sofa in the back office, tired. He was a sick man. I'd sit next to him and he'd say, "Well, Dave what's happened?" And I would tell him. He'd say, "Well, that's just great. Keep it up." Everything I did, I did in his name. My problem, and I think it was the correct thing, was to make sure that what I was doing was in the Secretary's name. It was in his name. It was not a phony. It's just that he couldn't -- well, it wasn't for him to deal with actually. After all, he had me there. I was doing it on his behalf and that I think was appreciated by him, and, I think, by the President.

So that would, then, bring me -- just going telescopically through things rather rapidly -- up until about 1947. Some of what I've been telling you includes 1947 because it was then

[43]

that I was appointed Under Secretary of Labor, in which position I continued until the Secretary's death in 1948, which was sometime in June. Then by operation of law I became Acting Secretary

of Labor. I was elected Director General of the ILO the day before he died. I went over to Geneva and took up my duties as Director General on about the 7th or 8th of September, 1948.

FUCHS: Do you have any further observations about your attendance at Cabinet meetings? I imagine these were all either as Under Secretary or as Acting Secretary?

MORSE: Yes, I have quite a few observations about that. In the first place, it was interesting to observe the President in the Cabinet, very informal but dignified. We always assembled in the Cabinet Room, waited about 15 minutes, then the President came in. We stood until he was seated

[44]

and then we sat down. He would start off one of two ways, as I recall -- and I went to most of the Cabinet meetings during this period, a couple of years -- either he would talk about something that was bothering him, a particular subject and that would take up practically the whole meeting; the revolution in Colombia or some kind of uprising in some other part of Latin America, problems in Europe, just talk about it. What do you think about this? And Secretary Marshall, if it were foreign affairs, might talk about it. If it was a large enough issue that was the Cabinet discussion. Always on Friday. He didn't necessarily go around the table saying, "What do you think about it?" If it was a big issue on foreign affairs he would say what he thought and the Secretary of State would say what he thought. He wouldn't say, "What do you think, Jim," or "What do you think, Dave," or what do you think -- he called everybody

[45]

by his first name. When he didn't have anything that aggravated him particularly, although there was always concern about a lot of problems, he'd go around the table. He'd come to me and he would say, "Well, what about the labor situation? What have you got that you'd like to say as far as the Labor Department is concerned?" I generally was briefed on the economic situation in the country as it related to labor, unemployment, employment. I always had a good briefing from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In addition the President was very much concerned about labor-management relations in the country. He would ask about our statistics on strikes and what it looked like on the horizon in terms of basic industry and disputes. Here we had a bit of a jurisdictional problem, because John Steelman was in the White House as his adviser. John had been head of the Federal Mediation Service and went over to the White

[46]

House; a very good man, John. He became Labor Adviser to the President, as well as other things. So Truman was getting advice from John and he was supposed to be getting advice from Schwollenbach and Schwollenbach was getting it from me. But I had one advantage over John and that is that I could speak at the Cabinet meetings because I was a Cabinet officer. But John had a greater advantage over all of us because he could see the President every day, being one of his advisers in the White House. It was not good. I think, as I look back, that this duplication was a mistake. As I say, I had tremendous respect for him; he did great work, very loyal to the President, very effective, a great mediator. But I think it created a perfectly natural tendency for all the labor leaders and industrial leaders wanting to go directly to the White House. So when there was a dispute that was major why go to the Labor

[47]

Department, why go to the Mediation Service, when you can go right to the President. And John being an old mediator found it very difficult not to engage in preventive medicine, and that is to call the boys in and say, "Look, don't create a problem by striking," so you got him into this thing. That would cut across the Labor Department, cut across the Federal Mediation Service and everything else, and that was not much appreciated. Now what we did, however, on our side was try to deal with that. You know, when you have a heart attack what happens is that the blood vessels, I suppose, try to get around the damaged area so that you can live. That's what we did. As a result of this I recommended to the Secretary of Labor, Mr. Schwollenbach, that we ought to create in the Department-- and I consulted Paul Herzog, I remember, on that-- a committee composed of Chairman

[48]

of the Labor Board, Chairman of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, Chairman of the National Mediation Board, and the Secretary of Labor, with myself, as Under Secretary, acting in his place when he couldn't be there, and when he was there acting like the secretary of the committee in order to coordinate the labor policies of the country. Now that, I thought, would help us vis-a-vis John, because then we could keep John filled in, get him kind of coordinated into that and it would make our position stronger at the Cabinet. We were the only members of that group in the Cabinet. So that when we spoke in the Cabinet we could not only be speaking for the Labor Department but for all these agencies. I think that was useful. We got to know each other better. We did rationalize our policies to the extent that you could. You couldn't rationalize a quasi-judicial body but you could get their

[49]

input in terms of overall policy. So that was the problem and that was what we did to try to overcome it.

FUCHS: Did you agree with the decision to move the Conciliation Service out of the Labor Department? I think that was at about the time you went into the Labor Department.

MORSE: Yes, it was just about that time.

FUCHS: Did you think that was a good move?

MORSE: Well, I didn't think it was such a great move, no, because I thought it was unnecessary to create an additional bureaucracy to cope with labor-management problems and I thought it would make coordination more difficult. As it worked out it hasn't been so bad because, you know, it's a highly specialized unit and if you've got a strong Secretary of Labor it has to deal with the Secretary of Labor anyway,

[50]

and if you follow this concept of coordination you overcome the difficulties. I think it becomes a personal matter and I don't think it has been proven to be a bad thing. But at the time, as I recall, I was against it. We were having so many problems anyway. They were taking the Bureau of

Employment Security out of the Labor Department, they were taking the Mediation Service out of the Labor Department, Schwellenbach was sick, John Steelman was over in the White House. We were becoming skeletonized, atrophied, and yet we had the Cabinet responsibility for dealing with the labor problems in the United States. We finally came to the conclusion the best thing to do about that was to bring all of the agencies in periodically, which we did. I think that served a certain purpose, but there were great difficulties in that, yes.

FUCHS: Did you find opposition in any of the Departments

[51]

to your programs? I gather that the State Department cooperated quite fully with you. Did any of the other Departments?

MORSE: The State Department cooperated fully, Agriculture and Commerce fully, and that's because of personal relations. We had Bill Foster, who was Under Secretary of Commerce; he was great in respect of Commerce. He was really left to run the Commerce Department. He was marvelous. He never did a thing without consulting me as Under Secretary of Labor. Then he'd have conferences with industrial leaders at White Sulphur Springs or wherever they have them every once in a while, and he would call me and I'd go over and have lunch with him. We'd talk about his agenda, what should the labor input be, what would be the labor-management thing, what did I think about it from a national manpower point of view, and so

[52]

on. We had the head of the embryonic HEW at that time in the image of Oscar Ewing who then headed the Federal Security Agency. I worked very closely with him, which reminds me of something else I must tell you about in a moment.

We had all of these relations established and working, and I must say, Mr. Fuchs, we had, all of us, very good cooperation, and very good cooperation from labor. The difficulty was on the political side. I'll talk about that later when Harry Truman decided to run for President, but that's a little bit later. Now, I can say this to you; all of us were working awfully hard to give the President the kind of political support he needed and what we hoped would help him become President again, and I'd like to talk to you about that a little bit.

FUCHS: Are you speaking of the policy group that

[53]

you met with?

MORSE: Oh, you're familiar with that? Well, you've heard all about that; I needn't go into it.

FUCHS: I'd like to talk about that, and I'd like to ask questions.

MORSE: Well, this might be a good place to stop for today. Because that's going to take an hour to talk about.

[54]

Second Oral History Interview with David A. Morse, Washington, D.C., July 30, 1977. By James R. Fuchs, Harry S. Truman Library.

FUCHS: Mr. Morse, if you'd like to pick up the thread, all right; otherwise, I have a lot of questions.

MORSE: Well, I think what we were talking about was that special ad hoc group that was chaired by Clark Clifford.

FUCHS: Whose idea was that?

MORSE: My recollection is that it was the idea of Clark himself. Also, my recollection is that it wasn't so much to give the President a direct view -- actually we'd never had direct access to the President from this committee -- the idea was to give Clark Clifford our views. This committee was to help him help the President. I don't even know if Clark ever told the President directly that this committee was functioning, although I assume he did. It would have been

[55]

very difficult not to, knowing the composition of this committee. But Clark had the responsibility for overseeing the speeches of the President. He was responsible for coordinating the Cabinet's input on programs to the President; he looked at the budget documents that had to be approved by the President; he was responsible for drafting or for final overview of the President's State of the Union message, etc. He wanted to have some way of getting a cross section opinion to educate himself better so that he'd better understand what to give to the President and how to give it to him. So that, broadly speaking, was the idea. To help Clark and through that help the President. So we'd meet once a week and the committee was rather interesting. I may miss one or two people, but my recollection is that Clark sat as the sort of chairman of the committee, although it was very informal. We met at dinner once a week

[56]

or maybe once every two weeks, depending upon whether we were all in town at the same time, at the old Carlton Hotel on 16th Street near the Hay-Adams.

FUCHS: Whose room was that there?

MORSE: That was the room that was, I think, set aside and paid for by the Democratic National Committee. Because I know none of us paid for it, and Ed Flynn of the Bronx was one of the ad hoc participants of this committee. He came in now and again. He was a great political figure, great supporter of the President from New York. Then there was a chap, Frank Stanton, who came from time to time. He was not a permanent member but very useful. He was then President, I think, of CBS. He's more recently resigned from CBS; just recently, actually. A very attractive man, very intelligent.

[57]

FUCHS: Now, if we're talking about the same group, and I believe we are, it's been said that they met, well variously, on Monday and another person said on Wednesday at Oscar Ewing's apartment.

MORSE: Well, we did meet at Oscar Ewing's apartment from time to time; the meetings I'm talking about were held at Oscar Ewing's apartment, that's right, but more regularly at the Carlton.

FUCHS: The same group?

MORSE: Yes, I remember we had steaks and baked potatoes, every time, and that's what makes me remember it. But Oscar was a regular participant and if you would identify anyone as kind of chairman of the group, pulling it together, making sure it was there in attendance on time, etc., it would have been Oscar. That was before the HEW; he was Chairman of the

[58]

Federal agency for welfare of some kind at that time. Of course, very active, very close to the President. In addition there was Leon Keyserling, who was the economic adviser of Chairman of the economic advisory group to the President. Charlie Murphy, who was then with Agriculture. I think Charlie was either Deputy Secretary of Agriculture or maybe he was an Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, I'm not clear. He later went into the White House and after that I think returned to law practice. He's still living here in Washington. Then there was Jebby Davidson who was I think Assistant Secretary of the Interior. Don Kingsley used to come. Don is dead now. He worked with Oscar Ewing and later went with the IRO [International Relief Organization], that relief organization, after the Second World War.

Then there were people that were called in from time to time but that pretty much represents

[59]

the group. Each one of us was responsible for certain sectors. My responsibility was to advise Clark on how the labor movement was feeling about things, about programs. What their aspirations were vis-à-vis the President and the Administration. How they felt particularly about the proposed amendments that were coming along then of the Wagner Act, the so-called Taft-Hartley amendments. To tell them how the labor movement was feeling about him politically, and to advise on strategy vis-à-vis the labor movement and industry from the point of view of labor-management relations. I also gave my input on wage questions, cost of living questions -- anything that would touch on inflationary tendencies; and then, of course, anything in the international labor area. But it wasn't so much that; we were more concerned with the domestic situation, and also advised on the split in the labor movement. How this affected the position

[60]

of the President politically and what could or should be done to bring them together to help the President. It was that kind of an input. Some of these inputs cross-fertilized with Leon Keyserling. But while we each had a sector, we all participated in each other's sector, so that you got a complete integration of thinking, rationalization. It proved, I think, very helpful indeed, and often we would look at drafts later that Clark was preparing for the President, whether it be a

speech, whether it be a message, and we'd give our input at that time. But he always reserved the final decision. He did not consult us on getting a consensus with respect to the document. He only consulted us with respect to our political or technical views. He never committed the President; never committed himself. When the whole thing was finished he made his own judgment, gave it to

[61]

the President, gave the President options; the President made his own decision. That's how it worked.

FUCHS: I've heard that Wayne Coy attended some of these meetings.

MORSE: Yes, he came in and out, but was not a regular member.

FUCHS: What about David Bell? Did he attend any of the meetings?

MORSE: He may have, but I don't recall. I didn't know Dave Bell.

FUCHS: I have seen a reference that he was at some of the meetings; that's why I ask.

MORSE: I don't recall that he was at any of those meetings, but that's easily checked and verified.

FUCHS: What about the awareness of the more

[62]

conservative members of the Administration, John Snyder and some of the others from the Cabinet? Did they know of this?

MORSE: Well, none of us ever talked to John Snyder about this or to anyone else. We just kept it all to ourselves. We left it to Clark or to Oscar Ewing to do what they wanted about it. We never talked to the press about it. It may have leaked. I don't recall of any press articles on this subject. I think it's only become known recently. Actually, we had a reunion about a year and a half ago of this old group at Leon Keyserling's house. Oscar came up; Clark was there. One of the things we talked about was the fact that this group worked with complete anonymity. That was, I think, also anonymity as far as John Snyder was concerned, but he may have been told by Clark, he may have been told by Oscar. But I'd be inclined to doubt it.

[63]

I think maybe John Snyder would have been consulted separately by Clark after Clark had our inputs.

FUCHS: Keyserling would have been chairman of the Council by this time.

MORSE: Yes, he was chairman. Avery, very powerful voice and a very powerful personality; very clear thinker and clear articulator.

FUCHS: This was primarily aimed, as I understand it, at influencing the '48 election properly, and you did not get into the foreign affairs in any way.

MORSE: Not really. We were really concerned about domestic questions and we wanted to make sure that the President had the best input on domestic factors. We wanted to make sure that he got elected. Of course, we all were very keen about him and committed to him, and we

[64]

thought that he was what the country needed.

FUCHS: Do you recall Bill Batt being at any of these meetings?

MORSE: Do you mean the old gentleman?

FUCHS: No, Bill Batt, Jr. who organized the Research Division for the Democratic National Committee.

MORSE: Yes, young Bill Batt, the chap who's now dealing with productivity issues and so on. No, I have no recollection of Bill at these meetings. Now, again, there were people who came in and out. I think if Bill had been on the committee he would have been at our reunion last year, unless he was out of town. It would be worth checking with him because he's such a splendid fellow.

FUCHS: I don't think he was there regularly. But

[65]

some people came there occasionally.

MORSE: Some did, like Flynn, like Stanton, like one or two others whose names I don't remember right now. If there was a special problem we'd call them in. But I tell you, we tried to keep that very, very much to the minimum because we didn't want to expose this committee and have it become a public thing. We wanted to keep a low profile so we could do a good job for Clark and the President. So we kept participants to a minimum. That I'm very clear about, but it doesn't mean that some of these chaps were not invited. I just don't remember.

FUCHS: Do you recall the turnip "session" or call back of Congress being discussed? This was not actually revealed until the President made his acceptance speech.

MORSE: No, I don't.

[66]

FUCHS: Are you familiar with the long memorandum that was written about how the '48 election should be conducted?

MORSE: Yes, I am familiar with that.

FUCHS: Generally, it's been attributed to Mr. Clifford, but there is considerable evidence that it was done by James Rowe. Do you know James Rowe?

MORSE: I know him very well and he, of course, was doing a lot of heavy thinking at that time and has great talent. Jim was in the picture. I would have thought that it was Clark that did it with probably some help from Jim. But that could be turned around very easily. Jim could have done it with Clark having done the final editing. It's too far back, I don't know.

FUCHS: I was just wondering if you might have

[67]
some insight into that?

MORSE: No, sorry, I can't help you.

FUCHS: What are some of the major things you recall being ironed out, if you can at this late date, in this policy committee?

MORSE: Well, I remember that we decided to recommend to the President that he oppose the amendment of the Wagner Act, the Taft-Hartley amendment, the National Labor Relations Board amendment which was one of the big issues at that time. We had a very long and difficult session on that more than once, two or three. We finally came to an agreed view and position on it, and this committee made a recommendation to Clark, actually, who then, as I know, did recommend to the President that he oppose it, which he did. Actually, on that point, it's rather interesting because I remember that after the

[68]
proposal was put to the President by Clark, the President wanted some more input and I was called over, then I think as Under Secretary of Labor, to the White House with Paul Herzog who was still Chairman of the National Labor Relations Board, and Bill Foster, who was then Under Secretary of Commerce and who, as you know, is a Republican. The three of us were constituted by Clark at the request of the President to take a look at the final part of the message that he was going to deliver on the Taft-Hartley amendment, and it was very interesting because Bill Foster, being a great public official and a Republican, had to address himself very objectively to this aspect. He was called in because he was so-to-speak "the spokesman for industry," coming from Commerce. I was so-to-speak the "spokesman for labor," coming from the Labor Department. Paul Herzog was a fellow who was the trustee of the National Labor

[69]
Relations Act. The three of us finally agreed that it would be a mistake for the President to do anything other than to oppose the Taft-Hartley Act. I remember that because here we were three different kinds of people coming to this final view and I think it's because all of us felt that this would help the President politically, as well as the fact that we thought it was the right thing in terms of development of labor relations in our country, But there were always those two factors. If we had thought that it would have been a wrong thing for the country, even though it would

have helped the President politically, we would have put it to him that way so that he would have known clearly that he had those nuances in his option. But I remember we did feel that it was the right thing for him to do as far as the country was concerned and from the political point of view.

[70]

FUCHS: I'm sure you know that it's been written that all the Cabinet members, with the exception of the Secretary of Labor, were urging the President to sign the act.

MORSE: That's right, that's right. Events subsequently proved that we were right and they were wrong. He would have lost a lot from the labor movement in the '48 election even though at that time they were less than happy with him. His political fortunes were very low as far as polls were concerned. I think this decision helped him very much. After all the same thing happened when it came to his recognition of Israel. His Cabinet, as you know, gave him a bad time and he again was very lonely. He had [Jim] Forrestal against him; I think he had Marshall against him. These were powerful members. I talked with Jim Forrestal about this a lot myself, and with

[71]

Marshall, and the President had to make his decision really against the advice of those in his Cabinet who were responsible for that portfolio. This was also a question we discussed in our Clifford committee and our view was that he should not only recognize Israel but he ought to be the first to do it. We felt that we were voices in the wilderness because we didn't know what the President was going to do. After all we were giving this view to Clark -- but a very interesting coincidence: my wife -- Mildred -- and I were with the President the night he decided to recognize Israel. There was a dinner being given by the Democratic National Committee at the Mayflower. I was there as Acting Secretary of Labor. Schwellenbach, as I've told you recently, was ill. All the members of the Cabinet were there and we assembled in an anteroom to await our marching on to the dais. Mildred and I were talking with the President and Mrs. Truman about

[72]

Margaret. I think he was telling my wife how much he approved of Margaret's using some sort of a system for doing her own hair.

MRS. MORSE: It was a Toni.

MORSE: It was a Toni system, and he liked that.

He said, "That Margaret, she's a fine girl. That's an economical thing to do, and she looks nice doesn't she Dave, doesn't she Mildred?"

Of course, we thought she did anyway, so we did say yes; and at that point someone came up to him and I don't recall just who it was. He turned to us and he said, "Well, you know, Dave, I've just decided finally to confirm my decision on Israel." Of course, you may get other versions of this, because this is a very interesting thing to look into. But that's why I'm glad my wife is sitting here while I'm taping these because if I'm wrong about this, she can refresh my recollection. But it was

[73]

then that he said that he had confirmed his views and made his decision. Of course, it was announced and he did come in just before the Russians, who I think came in just before midnight or something and this was -- I think we were gathered there about 8 at night just before going to dinner. I'd be fascinated myself, to get further illumination on this point, but actually this is what did happen. But there again, it was a problem that we had hammered out.

Now, of course we had had a great number of debates we'd hammered out in this Clifford committee. We also had a number of debates in the committee on the implementation of the full employment side of the Full Employment Act which Keyserling had the responsibility for; and there, of course, we were rather strong in support of whatever needed to be done to implement in a positive manner that

[74]

legislation. Keyserling, of course, was a very strong advocate of it. These were the kinds of things that we did.

One other thing that I told the committee about -- just comes into my mind when we're talking -- which has a certain national significance. David Lilienthal, as you recall, was one of the first directors and General Counsel of the Tennessee Valley Authority and then later became Chairman of it. He succeeded Norris, and was asked by the President to set up the Atomic Energy Commission. He became the first head of the Atomic Energy Commission. One of the things that disturbed Dave when he came in was what do you do with something like an Atomic Energy Commission from the point of view of labor relations. It's a public agency; it's a kind of agency that one would have been more comfortable with in a socialistic country. It was a public agency. It was not, properly

[75]

speaking, a private sector employer. You're dealing with a very volatile, sensitive subject. What kind of a labor policy should you have for such an agency so as to avoid strikes and at the same time insure that the workers and the management had their just rights protected? He came to me and asked me, since we were old friends, if I could give him a proposal on the kind of regulations that he could promulgate that would be acceptable to the nation, to the President, to himself, and to labor and management meaning the NAM, the Chamber of Commerce, and the split labor movement. I said, "Yes, Dave. I'll do that for you." It's rather interesting. I got together a committee, which I chaired, to help me on this. I remember Lloyd Garrison; I appointed him and George Taylor, who was a prominent professor at the University of Pennsylvania and a great expert in labor matters, and we addressed ourselves to this issue. We

[76]

proposed to Dave Lilienthal how this should be done. I don't have these documents before me, of course. This was a very long time ago, '46-'47. But suffice it to say he accepted these proposals and, of course, they did not have any strikes. They've gotten along just fine, within the framework of that labor policy that we had proposed to Lilienthal. The interesting thing is, a fellow named Oscar Smith, who had been in charge of administration at the National Labor Relations Board when I was General Counsel, was the fellow that I recommended to Lilienthal to

be moved from the NLRB over to the Atomic Energy Commission to be responsible for the implementation of this policy. They called him Labor Management Director or something of that kind. That I think helped very much because he was a very good man. Now, this policy was discussed a great deal amongst ourselves, this group, because it was in the forefront of our thinking

[77]

at that time. This could have been very explosive. But I consulted the labor movement. I consulted employer organizations. I explained to them what it was. I finally got their agreement in principle, so that when it was promulgated there would be no quarrel about it. I got the trade unions to agree that they would act with restraint in something as important as this and educate their membership to that. They did a very responsible thing. Now, I was fortunate in this. I was with the Government in the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration back in the early thirties and I was General Counsel of the Petroleum Labor Policies Board. Billy Leiserson was Chairman of that, and Billy Leiserson who had been a professor at Antioch and Norris was then the head of TVA and Norris called him to TVA. He said, "Could you give me a policy to help me deal with labor relations matters

[78]

in the Tennessee Valley Authority, because this is a new animal. This is a kind of a specialist thing." Billy Leiserson said, "Certainly I'll do that." He did it by himself, with me as an assistant, and I dug back, when the atomic energy challenge was put to me years later by Dave Lilienthal, to that TVA experience and used a lot of it with adaptations in the proposal that we finally made to Lilienthal for the Atomic Energy agency. Rather interesting, that connection. There again, I learned from Billy Leiserson that you don't do these things just like that; you've got to consult, and we did, all the partners of industry in the private sector before we promulgated it. That, I think, is an interesting flashback. I don't suppose there are five people who know about this. I'd even forgotten about it.

FUCHS: I have one more questions, at least, about the

[79]

policy committee. You indicated that you did, at least in the case of Israel, advise on foreign affairs to a degree. Do you recall Oscar Ewing speaking to the point that he had conducted an individual private study about Israel to enlighten the President about the background of the international law applicable to the problem.

MORSE: Yes, he did do that. I do remember. He did do that. He was very concerned about this problem and, of course, it was a big issue for the President and his Cabinet. He was very concerned. He did make it. He did polls on other things, too. But certainly on that one he did.

FUCHS: Going back a little ways, the President called a Labor-Management Conference right after the war, either '45 or early '46, which was when you were still in the NLRB. Do you have reflections about that? Of course, it was rather abortive, I guess.

[80]

MORSE: It was abortive; I do recall it. My recollection is very dim. One of those things that I don't recall produced very much. In my time it was the beginning of an effort to bring labor-management together. But I think one of the problems there, too, was the split in the labor movement. But it didn't take hold. Of course, I just want to say this, Mr. Fuchs, you've got to remember also that during this whole period despite everything I'm telling you, the fact is that Harry S. Truman was having a hard time with the labor movement. It's funny, but it's true. Here this man was fighting their battles but he was having a hard time. I don't know if I told you this last time, but I used to go to speak on behalf of the Secretary of Labor since he was ill. I went in my capacity of Acting Secretary of Labor, to national conventions of great international trade unions in this country. Let's take the Amalgamated

[81]

Clothing Workers, for example. I remember going to speak there on behalf of the Administration and that was in Atlantic City. I made a talk to the ACWA; that was the communications workers, I think. There were others. On these occasions, I was actually advised by friends of mine in the labor movement, "Well, talk about what you're doing but don't mention the President's name because you may get booed."

Now that stuck in my mind and I never forgot that. Of course, I did mention him and didn't get booed, but didn't get any applause either. So he was at a very low political ebb with these chaps at that time, but not with the members, as the '48 election showed. This is something I can't comment on more than that at the present moment, but I think it's historically important to look into.

[82]

FUCHS: There were strange situations which developed. He had the support of the railroad unions so strongly when he was running for Senator and they thought he would lose in '40, but by '46 actually, because of the draft of strikers and so forth, they were swearing they'd get him.

MORSE: They'd get him. Yes, he had all of these things. So it was very interesting. But he was the best friend they ever had.

FUCHS: Do you have any knowledge of the rapprochement, so to speak, in '48 with Whitney and Johnson, the principal railway union leaders?

MORSE: No, because I was then on my way to Europe.

FUCHS: What about the President's view on fact-finding boards; how did you look at that?

MORSE: Well, I thought he was right. We discussed that also in our group. I was very much in

[83]

favor of it. As a matter of fact, I think it's been proved since that this whole fact finding apparatus is very useful and now, of course, an acceptable formula.

FUCHS: You mentioned the labor attaché program and that the Ambassadors resisted that program. Just why would they? Because of vested interest or what?

MORSE: Well, in the first place labor was always, at that time, the lowest thing on the totem pole. Domestically, in terms of national public opinion, certainly the Labor Department was always at the low rung of the totem pole. Internationally, the Foreign Service just thought it was a lot of nonsense, and they looked at the entrance of the labor attaché as an incursion on some kind of normal function of theirs. They thought it would be just an unnecessary duplication of something that they were very

[84]

sophisticated in themselves. They figured that if there were political implications in the labor movement they would be the chaps who could evaluate that; and after all, these labor fellows who were coming in were not properly speaking Foreign Service people. They didn't seem to fit into the establishment. They also feared the fact that it would kind of create problems by having split authority between State and Labor. It would involve unnecessarily the labor movement, things of that kind. So they didn't like it. It was new; they didn't like change, except for this Ambassador I referred to the other day in Chile. Well, now, of course, it's accepted. It's become a very potent part of the Foreign Service in terms of information gathering and intelligence, as you know. But at that time it was not appreciated at all.

FUCHS: I have read that you found that in Italy

[85]

you couldn't foist American principles of labor upon them. That you needed to preserve some of the finest points of the syndical system.

MORSE: In Italy I proposed that the Fascist corporative syndical system be abolished entirely. That was my own personal view, my political view, and my technical view; and it was my policy view, which I made clear to my superiors. This view in Italy was accepted. I said that what we ought to do is abolish them, give the labor movement the opportunity to come back on a free basis. I remember right after the liberation of Naples -- up that far -- that we had the first meeting of the free Italian Labor Movement in Bari, Italy. What we did do, however, was examine what the implications of this were and we found that there were certain things of a technical nature which had nothing to do with the ideological aspect of the labor movement which would be good to retain from an

[86]

institutional point of view. For example, social security, unemployment benefits, the administration in those areas. There we made a great effort to try to retain those institutions, keep the best people we could, and work them into the new national institutional setup rather than the trade union movement. So we had the job of sorting these things out -- what belonged to the free labor movement, what belonged to administration, what was purely political. But the trade union movement was completely liberated and the Fascist corporative syndicalist system was completely abolished, except for these certain technical aspects. I think it was like President Carter today saying that he is going to start with zero budgeting. We were starting with a zero

situation. In Germany -- and I was called over there to be the Director of the Manpower Division and the Control Council because of the experience I had had in Italy --

[87]

what they wanted me to do there was exactly what I'd done in Italy except for certain changes. But there I had more trouble because General Lucius Clay was the head of the Military Government. I had more problems there. There again I had recommended a complete liquidation of the Nazi-German labor front. I found it an aberration and an abomination, and I also felt that people who had been leaders of that movement should have been moved out of it entirely, and so on. But I had great difficulty with Clay who at that time felt that this would be a mistake, it would weaken the occupation forces, and it might play into the hands of the Communists; that what we ought to do is keep the structure and modify it rather than liquidating most of it and starting all over. But my views actually finally prevailed and I think that's why we have today in West Germany a free and strong labor movement. I think if it had gone some other

[88]

way we wouldn't. That's a point that scholars one day will want to look at.

FUCHS: One of the other Labor Department people we interviewed offered the opinion that he thought John R. Steelman was too eager to get into the labor disputes. Do you concur in that?

MORSE: Yes. Well, you recall the other day when we met, I said that one of the big problems about Steelman -- whom I liked very much, a very good man -- being in the White House dealing with labor matters, was that he was a conciliator. So he wanted to get into everything. He did get into everything. And he would say to the President, "You know, let's anticipate steel. Let's bring the parties into the White House," and the first thing you know he was in the middle of everything; the President had no buffer. I think it was wrong, a mistake. It created a lot of problems and dissatisfaction in the

[89]

country with the labor movement. I think that's one reason why some of the labor people were unhappy about the President, because: "Look here, Mr. President, I'm here, what are you going to do for me?"

Rather than having to say that to the Secretary of Labor, if you will, or the Director of the Conciliation Service and the Secretary of Labor, who could then say, "Well, I think this," so they could then have an appeal to the President who would have a more objective perspective for settling the matter. So I think there it was a mistake, and of course that whole trend has been reversed; no longer exists.

FUCHS: They had no place else to go once they went to the President unless to God.

MORSE: Yes, let's go there. Why bother with the Secretary of Labor or the Conciliation Service,

[90]

if we have access to the President. Especially since he needs our votes they thought.

FUCHS: Did you have knowledge of what Schwellenbach called his "Secret Six" that he brought in to sort of overview the reorganization of the Labor Department when he took over? John Carson headed the group, I believe.

MORSE: Yes, I know about that.

FUCHS: Were there bad repercussions from that?

MORSE: Well, I tell you, that was an exercise in futility in my opinion. Carson's a good man. All the chaps were. But I don't think that reorganization proposals mean very much unless you've got the political will and stamina to implement it. I think the problem, and there was a problem with the administration of the Labor Department, was not in these reorganizations but in the latter thing. That was due

[91]

to the fact that Lew Schwellenbach was a sick man. He had an Under Secretary at that time, Governor Keen Johnson, who was, again, a very good fellow, but not really interested in the labor business. In the reorganization he had to bring in chaps who could help keep the labor movement together, Phil Hanna, John Gibson. There was myself on the international thing, but that was not, I don't think, part of the Carson report. They were looking at other things. So the report I suppose was all right but the implementation wasn't there. A fellow like Leo Werts, maybe, who looked at this later, and there was another chap before him who was in charge of administration and dealt with the budget and personnel, might give you some views on that. I didn't go into that very much but I don't think it amounted to much either.

FUCHS: When you took over as Under Secretary of Labor I believe there was quite a period there

[92]

when the Assistant Secretary's position was vacant. It eventually was filled by Kaiser, whom you said you wanted to speak further about. There was quite a period in which there was no third Assistant Secretary.

MORSE: What happened was -- I remember it very distinctly -- I discussed with the Secretary of Labor what to do about it. You may recall we had some pretty good chaps on my staff then. There was Millard Cass, Thacher Winslow, and there was Philip Kaiser. There were one or two others. We weren't sure what to do about it. It was a question of recruitment, the right person. Phil Kaiser was a very good man but he was still learning. Thacher Winslow was a very good man.

FUCHS: What was his background?

MORSE: Well, he was a man of good educational

[93]

background. He was a political scientist. He had gone to Harvard. He'd come into the Labor Department from one of the other agencies. I forget which one.

FUCHS: Not from NLRB?

MORSE: No. Millard Cass was in NLRB with me. He'd been my legal assistant when I was General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board. Now, there is a rather interesting story about Phil Kaiser. I think we could say it here on these tapes because he's now become a fellow prominent in his own right. You see when I became Assistant Secretary of Labor for International Affairs, I needed a strong special assistant and I wanted someone who had the confidence of the labor movement and I cast around. I knew a lawyer by the name of Henry Kaiser; Henry is a brother of Phil Kaiser.

[94]

Henry's a lawyer here in Washington -- at that time he was a lawyer in the office of Joe Padway. Joe Padway was then the General Counsel of the AF of L and Bill Green's General Counsel. A fine man; good friend of mine. I liked him; competent. Henry Kaiser was an excellent lawyer; clear, strong man. I made up my mind that I would like to bring him into the Labor Department to be my Special Assistant. So I decided to call Henry Kaiser over. I said, "Henry, how about coming over to be my Special Assistant?"

He said, "Let me think about it."

He came back a couple of days later. He said, "Dave, I've thought about it and there's nothing I'd rather do than work with you and help set up this new operation, but it would mean leaving my profession and means leaving Joe Padway; and it means leaving being a lawyer for the labor movement, and I just don't think I could afford to do that or that I should do

[95]

it. I'm sorry. But I'd like to make a recommendation to you. Somebody I think could do the job better than I."

I said, "Who?"

He said, "My brother, Phil Kaiser."

Well, I'd never heard of Phil. Phil was then doing some kind of job over at the State Department. I said, "Well, I'll think about it."

I looked at a number of people, and on paper Phil Kaiser looked pretty good. I had a very good friend, Herb Marks, who was General Counsel of the Atomic Energy agency and we had gone to Harvard Law School together, and he knew him. He checked him and said, "Dave I think he'd be good at this." We were in a very great need, so I called him in and I interviewed him and was satisfied and I took him on. That was his entrance into this area. That had to be just before I became Under Secretary. Then

[98]

came my move over to be Under Secretary. I hadn't felt then that any of these fellows had quite yet come to grips with what we needed. It wasn't that they couldn't, it wasn't that they wouldn't, it was just that we weren't sure. I talked with Schwellenbach about it and Schwellenbach said, "Look, I don't think we ought to appoint anybody now anyway, Dave." He said, "After all, you've got the bureau going; why not just add that to your duties as Under Secretary of Labor. Then we can make a decision later on as to who it ought to be; you'll have a better perspective.

Well, this thing went on. Phil Kaiser actually acted, for all practical purposes, as the Assistant Secretary of Labor. He assumed the responsibilities. These other chaps began to work with him, and he then became the logical person for the appointment later. I think if I'd moved out of the Department of Labor rather

[97]

than become Under Secretary, it would have been different. I think the appointment would have been made very quickly; but that was really the process.

FUCHS: Were you involved in dealing with strikes throughout that period in any significant way?

MORSE: As Under Secretary? I was involved in two ways. First, in these periodic meetings we had with the Director of the Mediation Service we gave advice, we gave assistance; and also personally as someone the Director of Mediation would consult. But never physically involved because we thought it was not the thing for us to do. We thought it ought to be done by the Mediation Service, but actually what happened was it was being done by John Steelman. So there was that problem again that I talked to you about earlier. It was handled between the Mediation Service and the White

[98]

House with the Labor Department just playing a coordinating role.

FUCHS: Do you view the Labor Department as primarily being the representative of labor, rather than an agency that also represents management?

MORSE: I viewed the Labor Department as having to do a couple of things. First, to be faithful to the implementation of the legislation that it was asked to administer. That legislation had to do with protecting the rights of workers whether it was in the health or safety field or whether it was in the action field where you're dealing with wage rates, or whether it was an inspection, or whether it was dealing with the physically handicapped, and so on. So that by virtue of legislation itself it became protector and advocate, promoter of these rights.

We spent an awful lot of time in our Department working with employer organizations,

[99]

consulting with them and with the Chamber of Commerce. I think it's fair to say, though, that the Labor Department historically has been the agency that the labor movement and working people look to. But I think that it would be a mistake not to reflect and to protect the entire public interest. It's that kind of a thing.

FUCHS: You had a letter from Paul Herzog in '49 -- of course this is during your ILO service -- and he mentioned that the Civil Service Commission was rejecting about half of the full time trial examiners. I wonder if you have any idea why that was? I am connecting this with what you said the other day about veteran's preference and so forth, but maybe there is no connection. I'm not aware of what the rejection process.

MORSE: That's rather interesting. I don't recall

[100]

that letter, of course, that's such a long time ago -- but you know, at about that time, I think there were all these questions being raised about certain people in the Labor Board; not so much about their qualifications as their political orientation and what Paul Herzog wrote there may have been as a result of that. I remember there was this chap, Nat Witt, who had been head of the unit at the NLRB, that was responsible for the examiners. I recall that he had been accused from time to time by outside groups for being much tied in with Lee Pressman and the two of them were very much tied in with the Communist Party. Since trial examiners came under him, and we were getting into the McCarthy era, that may be what was happening. They were not people selected by the General Counsel, so I wouldn't know about that. Actually, there were a number of trial examiners that weren't all that great

[101]

at that time. The NLRB was still in its teething stage. So we may have had a combination of both; but that's my own judgment.

We're now at the point where I was about to become Director General of the ILO.

FUCHS: I want to go into that, of course, but I have some questions that go away back. One, you mentioned your involvement with (1) the Truman Doctrine and (2) the Marshall plan in using your good offices to get labor behind these. How did you go about that?

MORSE: I went about that as far as the Truman Doctrine and Greece was concerned by very intensive and carefully thought out use of this international labor advisory group that I'd set up in the Labor Department to advise me on international labor questions. It was composed of top rank people from the AFL and the CIO. When the question of the Truman

[102]

Doctrine came up, as I said last time, support was required politically for that. The President was anxious that the labor movement support it when he made the announcement. So, I had a number of talks about this with Dean Acheson who was then Under Secretary of State and Dean asked my advice on how this could be done.

"This is going to be your job, Dave."

And I said, "Well, after all, these are all good American citizens."

He said, "Yes, but you know the CIO is still tied in with the EFTU which is Communist oriented and I wonder if there won't be some inhibitions because of that, since the Communists are sure going to attack the Truman Doctrine."

I said, "Well, Dean, I can't believe that the American chaps in the CIO would fall into that kind of a trap even if it meant splitting with the WFTU. I think their allegiance is to our own country, but the problem will be to get

[103]

them to see it -- to see the issues and the need for it; therefore, we need to prepare."

So he briefed me politically and gave me all the intelligence on the situation so I understood it. I then called a meeting of the top people of the advisory committee, not their delegates. Like Bill Green of the AFL-CIO, Phil Murray for the CIO, just the top men. I remember Matty Wohl came with Bill Green and two or three others. Dave Dubinsky came to these meetings. Jim Carey came from the CIO and there were one or two others who were very prominent at that time. Anyway, it was the top of our country's leadership. Fellows who were not talking to each other domestically but they responded to my call, every time I called them. On this issue, I said they had to come because this was urgent. Then at the Labor Department privately, secretly, I briefed them. I said, "Look, I

[104]

don't think it's good enough just for me to brief you. This is a matter of great national and international concern. I've given you the reasons, as I understand them, for what's going to happen, the need for us to fill this political vacuum, the consequences if we don't fill it, the importance that the President attaches to it, his understanding with Winston Churchill on this matter," etc.

"Now, I would like to have what I'm telling you confirmed by Dean Acheson. But I don't want Dean Acheson to come over if there isn't a fair shake that you're going to do this, because bringing Dean Acheson over means we've got to consult the President and I just don't want to do this if you feel right now there's no go."

They said, "No, if the full interests of our country are involved as you indicated, Dave, obviously this is something we'd have to do no

[105]

matter what the consequences to our other allegiances may be. We'd like Dean to come over."

So, I set another meeting and Dean came over secretly through the back door of the Labor Department, and sat down with this committee and myself. We co-chaired the meeting and he then confirmed, but in very eloquent terms, the political implications of the Truman Doctrine.

And I'll never forget Bill Green and Phil Murray and all these people saying, "Okay, let us know when it will be announced and we'll support it." That was a matter of great importance.

FUCHS: Was this prior to the speech that Truman made?

MORSE: Prior to the speech.

FUCHS: Was the ICFTU [International Confederation of Free Trade Unions] organized by that time?

[106]

MORSE: I don't know if they called it the ICFTU, but there was an international federation which was like the ICFTU, but whether it was called ICFTU or the International Federation of Free Workers, I don't remember.

FUCHS: Did they attend?

MORSE: Oh, no we had no one from the outside. We were just American fellows representing the American trade union movement.

FUCHS: WFTU [World Federation of Trade Unions]?

MORSE: WFTU wasn't even consulted. The CIO people had to decide whether to go on the national line or the WFTU line. Of course, they chose the national line. As a matter of fact, that's one of the things I think that contributed eventually to the breakaway of the CIO from the WFTU. Just one; there were others. But that was rather interesting.

[107]

Now, as far as the Marshall plan is concerned, there, you will recall, we had the same problem. I used this committee the same way but there I didn't have to bring in Dean Acheson. We met once over at Dean's office with the leadership. There the President personally asked me if I would take the necessary steps to get Paul Hoffman accepted by the American labor movement. He came out of industry, Studebaker. They knew him, they liked him. So I went about my business taking him to every trade union convention I could all over the country, and it didn't take long before Paul was one of their friends.

Of course, there are some interesting things about the Marshall plan, if you want me to regress just a minute. This is going into another period. It goes into when I was Director-General of the ILO. It just comes to my mind.

[108]

When I became Director-General of the ILO -- and we'll go back to that whenever you like -- I was a young fellow. I didn't know much about international affairs except what I'd learned during the war and what I've told you about already, and what I was studying. But here I was elected. I went over and I got to know, in France, the great leaders of that time. Leon Jouhoux was one. Jouhoux was head of the French trade union movement called the Force Ouvrier CGT.

Then I got to know Paul Ramadier, who had been Prime Minister of France, and at that time I came over was Minister of Finance. I'm now talking about '48-'49. I think it must have been when Vincent Auriol was President.

Now, I was in Geneva and got a call one day from Averell Harriman. I went to Paris to have breakfast with him at his house and he said, "Dave, I don't know what's the matter. I can't seem to get the French to support the

[109]

Marshall plan. They're suspicious of it. I don't seem to have their confidence; it's just bad. I can't seem to get the dialogue going with them and particularly with Paul Ramadier, the Finance Minister, who is so important to us. He's an old Socialist; when he was Prime Minister he was the man that broke with the Communists" -- he drove them out of the Government at that time. Remember up till then they'd had a common front -- "and we're not going to get going unless we have his support."

I said, "Averell, I don't understand it, but I can suggest something. The closest friend of Ramadier is Jouhous, who was head of the CGT, trade unions. He broke with the CGT when the Socialist Party broke with the Communists and he formed a new trade union movement in France called the Force Ouvrier CGT of which he was the leader. He later got the Nobel Peace Prize, by the way, I think in the 1950's. He

[110]

was in detention by the Germans during the Second World War.

I said, "I think we can do something about this, Averell."

I spoke to Leon Jouhous and I explained the whole thing to him.

"Well," he said, "we've got to do something about that. This is bad and the Marshall plan means so much to our country and for its development and for Europe, and for the future. Let's invite Harriman to my little apartment for lunch with Paul Ramadier and you come."

Well, we did that. And old Ramadier, a big man with a beard, Leon Jouhous, a big man with a beard, and Averell Harriman and myself sat down and we had luncheon of choucroute, that's frankfurters and sauerkraut and boiled potatoes. It was good, with some white wine. In the wintertime, it's marvelous. You get that hot sauerkraut and wonderful frankfurters

[111]

and boiled potatoes and a big bottle of beer, or they'd serve chilled white wine. By the time we finished two or three bottles of white wine at lunch, and this wonderful food, everyone was relaxed and we got a commitment from Ramadier that he would, of course, give the Marshall plan full and unreserved support. And that was the turning point in the whole French position towards the Marshall plan. From that point on, Averell was flying high. Doesn't mean that he wouldn't have flown high anyway, but it really facilitated the situation because it gave him the support of the Government and of the free labor movement in France, because the CGT, which

was the Communist group, was opposing him. But if he'd had the opposition of the Socialists, too, he'd been in real trouble. Well, that took care of the matter.

FUCHS: Do you have any remarks about the influence of the Marshall plan upon the international

[112]
labor movement?

MORSE: Oh, yes. I think the Marshall plan I observed very carefully. It's difficult to answer your question because it was a national thing in each of the countries concerned which had an immediate effect on the labor movement. But as far as the labor movement was concerned it gave the labor movement the opportunity that it needed to find its fullest expression of freedom. I think if there had not been that help and that timing, the labor movement could have gotten into the hands of the Communists. Frustrations were real; the Communists at that point were riding high. If there'd been a vacuum I think they would have had great advantage and, therefore, I think the Marshall plan not only saved labor so that it could continue as a free labor movement, but as a result of that saved Europe. I think it was the

[113]
single greatest political event of the postwar period.

FUCHS: I had a note here to ask about John T. Kmetz.

MORSE: Yes, John Kmetz.

FUCHS: I couldn't find anything about him, except he's listed as an Assistant Secretary of Labor.

MORSE: I remember the name. He came from the Mine Worker's Union. I guess he came in while I was Under Secretary. He was a very nice fellow. He was a miner, and there was a transition in a very short time. He didn't stay very long. I don't know what's happened to him. I don't know if he's still living. I do know that he had no experience before in Government affairs. A good man, mineworker, fine fellow. But that's about all I can tell you.

[114]
FUCHS: I believe Philip Hanna wrote that he resigned because of his opposition to the Taft-Hartley law and was going to work against it. Do you think he was well advised in taking that position?

MORSE: Well, first of all, he was well-advised to do it because he couldn't have lived with that legislation. If you don't believe in something you can't stay and work for it, especially when you're at that high level. I think it was the honest thing to do. Phil was a remarkable man. He was a very honest man and a very decent man. As a matter of fact, every time I went up to be appointed Assistant Secretary or Under Secretary and had to get Senate confirmation, I was accused by Taft of being Communist. It was Phil Hanna, who came from Ohio, who made it

very clear to Mr. Taft that not only was I not a communist but in his view a great American and if Taft didn't stop that nonsense and didn't

[115]

stop mouthing things that were being fed to him by disgruntled enemies of mine, Phil Hanna would take them on publicly. It wasn't long after that that Mr. Taft withdrew those statements and I, of course, was always unanimously confirmed. But Phil did the right thing.

FUCHS: What about Secretary Tobin and Under Secretary Gavin? Do you have some reflections upon their administration of the Labor Department?

MORSE: Well, you see Tobin came in right at the point that I left. I knew him. He was a Governor in Massachusetts, Mayor up there in Boston. He came to Geneva quite a lot to see me and he struck me as being a very attractive man, political animal. He brought in Gavin. Gavin was a lawyer, as I recall, but what I was told by my former colleagues there was that he was not anyone that they cottoned to as being a great administrator, but that's just hearsay.

[116]

But Tobin was a political animal who probably helped the President very much in the campaign. He was very useful. From that point of view, a very good selection. The labor movement liked him, but how he administered his affairs -- the best illumination on that would come from Millard Cass, who became Tobin's assistant, and was a very good man. I'd hate to comment on it more because I was out of the Department.

FUCHS: What about the tribulations of Edgar Warren of the Conciliation Service in connection, of course, with the Washington Bookshop? Were you aware of that?

MORSE: Ed Warren of the Conciliation Service. I do remember something about that. Gee, that's a long time ago.

FUCHS: I tried to run him down but couldn't, and I don't know whether or not he's dead.

[117]

MORSE: Probably. I'd have to refresh my recollection. I knew a lot about it at the time but I must say it's gone.

FUCHS: The Office of International Labor Affairs that was created by you in 1946 was later reduced to -- and this is more or less a quote -- "a high level bureau, the International Labor Affairs Bureau." Would you have any remarks about that? Do you think it still has the influence it had?

MORSE: No, it doesn't. I think from the time it was given a reduction in its rank, it went from an Assistant Secretary to a Deputy Assistant Secretary and then to a Deputy Under Secretary. It began to be deputy, deputy, deputy; and that's a dilution, and it lost a great deal of its impact.

I also think that for those bureaus to be effective, you have to have access to policymaking

[118]

and once they began to dilute the level, it diluted the opportunity for direct relationship with the other agencies at the corresponding levels. That was one reason, actually, why Schwollenbach and I agreed that I should hold that portfolio as Under Secretary, because of the personal relations. You see, I had this direct access to Dean Acheson, to the Under Secretary of Commerce, to Forrestal, to Marshall, to all of these people in this area, as well as other areas, and it would have been difficult to make a transition of that. It depends so much on your personal relations. I remember that was a factor: "Maybe we shouldn't interrupt that at this stage?" But when an Assistant Secretary was finally appointed, Phil Kaiser, you had the opportunity of the Assistant Secretary having leverage because he could meet with Assistant Secretaries, but when you move it down to Deputies, that's finished in our bureaucracy, and

[119]

that was one of the problems.

FUCHS: I find a note here that William Batt connected George Elsey, only by name, with the Policy Committee.

MORSE: I remember him, and I remember his being consulted. He was not a member of the group. Bill Batt would have been more a member of the group as it were. As I think back now I guess he was in and out of more meetings.

FUCHS: Mr. Batt's also had the meetings being on a Wednesday night, where Oscar Ewing and several others have said they thought they always met on Monday night. They would go to Oscar's apartment for steaks.

MORSE: Well, we did meet at Oscar's apartment.

FUCHS: It's a small point, but do you remember it being a particular night of the week?

[120]

MORSE: I think it was Monday, yes. I think it was Monday because we all wanted to be fresh after the weekend. We always sat very late and we didn't want to sit late during the middle of the week. We never finished these meetings until 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning. We did meet at Oscar's place, but our regular meeting place, take it from me, was the Carlton. That I remember because, you see, John L. Lewis used to be at the Carlton. He lived there, he ate there -- he didn't live there so much -- but it was so clear in my mind that we were going into the place that John L. Lewis had his luncheons. I remember the waiters coming in and out with those steaks, sure.

FUCHS: Maybe we had ought to get down to the ILO, which was a very large career change for you and the others.

MORSE: Very, and there's a lot to say about that

[121]

that has to do with Harry Truman and the politics of that time, and the U.S. Government's position on various important points. Also the question of whether I'd run for the United States Senate rather than go to Geneva, or whether I'd do other things, all of which came at the same time. Whether I should be his Secretary of Labor instead of going to Geneva. All those things, and my talks with Truman and Clark about those matters. But it's a big subject. I think what we would need is just one more session to cover that, of about an hour and a half.

So, I would stop now, if you agree.

FUCHS: Certainly.

[122]

Third Oral History Interview with David A Morse, Washington, D.C., August 3, 1977. By James R. Fuchs, Harry S. Truman Library.

FUCHS: Mr. Morse, we are now down to 1948 when you left the Department of Labor. I thought you might begin by telling us how you came to be nominated for election as the Director-General of the International Labor Organization -- by whom and so forth, at the conference in San Francisco?

MORSE: Well, what happened, Mr. Fuchs, before the election I think was interesting. It started back in the end of '47. The representatives of industry and labor in the United States contacted me. At that time, the head of the employer delegation of the ILO from the United States was a fellow from San Francisco named J. David Zellerbach. He was Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of Crown, Zellerbach Corporation, and labor was represented

[123]

at that time by a delegate, name of Frank Fenton. He represented William Green, then president of AF of L. These two chaps, speaking on behalf of U.S. industry and labor, were very insistent that I stand for election as Director-General. The term of office of my predecessor, who was an Irishman who had been in the British Civil Service, and after that acted as Director General when John Winant left, was coming to an end. The election was to be in June, 1948. I had reservations about standing for election because there are a number of things that happened at that time. In the first place, I had been asked to come back to practice law in Newark, New Jersey by a great friend of mine, Bernie Shanley. Shanley was later the legal counsel to General Eisenhower when he was President of the United States. We'd been in the Army together. We came from the same part of New Jersey; he wanted me to come

[124]

back home. I actually had agreed with Bernie that I would do that, but I hadn't announced anything. We were waiting for sometime in late '48 for me to make that announcement. At the same time I was asked to be the candidate for the United States Senate in the State of New Jersey. This I was requested to do by the leaders of the trade union movement: Carl Holderman who was then head of the CIO in New Jersey; Al Barkan who was with the textile workers in New Jersey and is now head of COPE, the AFL-CIO's political action group; and a man called Stetton who was then president of the Textile Workers Union and is now one of the officers in

the Amalgamated Clothing Workers -- they have merged his union with that. They all came to see me. They said that they had had a long talk with Frank Hague who was then the political boss in Jersey City and they insisted that someone run for the U.S. Senate in '48 who

[125]

would be clean and honest; otherwise, they were going to split the Democratic Party. Hague said to them, "Fine, if you can find a candidate to fit those terms, I'll agree to go along with it." So they came to see me when I was Under Secretary of Labor and asked me if I would stand.

I said, "I would be glad to consider it."

So all these things happened at the same time and the President, President Truman, spoke to me and said, "I think, Dave, I'd like you to be the candidate for the ILO. It's important. I've had talks with Ernie Bevin, the Foreign Minister of the United Kingdom, and they can get the United Kingdom candidate to stand down in your favor if you'll be prepared to stand. Ernie Bevin would also like you to stand; and we think it's important to our world relations, East-West situation, that you do."

FUCHS: Where did you talk with the President?

[126]

MORSE: In the White House.

FUCHS: You had an appointment for that discussion?

MORSE: I had an appointment for that discussion; it was right there. Then I said, "Well, I'll think about that," and I did and I consulted Dean Acheson.

Dean said, "Well, it's a great thing, but I'd like you to stay in national life. I think you ought not get yourself lost abroad."

I talked with Dean Rusk who was Assistant Secretary of State in charge of International Organizations, and Dean thought I ought to stay home and not become Director-General. One of his reasons was that it would be better for the Director-General not to be an American.

FUCHS: Why was that?

MORSE: Well, he just thought we had a lot of Americans then as heads of international organizations which

[127]

is 100 percent the opposite right now. The Director-General, I think, of FAO was, and so on. He thought maybe it would be too many, and I said, "Well, I think I'd better do what the President wants. The President thinks it ought to be an American; that it ought to be me. I'll abandon the option of running for the U.S. Senate, which was a nomination without contest. I'll withdraw from going into law practice with Shanley and I'll do this."

I talked to my wife and I remember saying, "Well, we won't do it for long. I think we might do it just to satisfy the President and see what it's like. Let's say two years."

Well, we went, got elected -- and that was in San Francisco in June of 1948 -- and I served five terms. I had been there 22 years when I finally resigned to come back in May of 1970.

FUCHS: What is the normal term?

[128]

MORSE: Well, the normal term, when I was elected, was 10 years, interestingly enough. But you couldn't succeed yourself.

FUCHS: Had Mr. Phelan had ten years?

MORSE: No, he was never elected Director-General. He was Acting Director-General. They just kept him as acting through the war years till the time of my election. But a few months before I was elected the Governing Body decided to call him Director-General so he could retire with that title. None of them served that long. I think they made it ten years because the first Director-General, Albert Thomas, served ten years before he died. The staff regulations were for ten years, but they changed the regulations when my ten years were finished because they wanted me to stay for another term and I said, "All right, let's do it on the basis of five year terms, hereafter." Which means you stay for five years,

[129]

then another five depending upon the will of the electorate, and that's the way the changes were made. So, my first term was ten years and I got three more terms of five years but during my last term, as I say, I resigned. So I served 22 years total. Interestingly, all my elections were unanimous except my first one. In the first one it was unanimous except for Poland who voted against me. The Pole came to me privately afterwards, a man named Hoffman; I'll never forget him, a nice old fellow. He said, "I'm sorry but you know how it is. My Government was no way going to support somebody from the United States at this date, but if you'll excuse me, I had to vote that way."

I said, "Of course, that's all right."

Then there was a Communist worker from Mexico whose name was Toledino; otherwise it would have been unanimous. Thereafter as I said, my elections were all unanimous.

[130]

Interestingly enough, the last time I was elected I was not proposed as a candidate of the United States but of Africa, which is just a little interesting sidelight.

So, that's the story and it was difficult because just the night before my election in San Francisco the Secretary of Labor died and the next day I had to stand for election while I was Acting Secretary of Labor. At the same time Mr. Truman and his group were coming to San Francisco

as part of their campaign and they had agreed that they would accept an invitation of Mrs. Morse and myself for a breakfast to meet the members of the Governing Body of this international organization. So we arranged a breakfast at the hotel; I forget the name of the hotel.

MRS. MORSE: St. Francis.

MORSE: St. Francis, it's up on the hill there in

[131]

San Francisco. In any event, we invited all these chaps to come to breakfast and they didn't know it was to meet the President.

FUCHS: It wasn't the Mark Hopkins?

MORSE: Mark Hopkins. They thought these Americans were funny. Here he's just been elected Director-General and the next day he's having us all for breakfast; that's funny. So they all came at 8 o'clock in the morning and my wife and I went up to see the President. While I was going up, Clark Clifford was with me, and Clark said, "You know Dave, you're my candidate for Secretary of Labor."

I said, "No, Clark, we've been all through that, the President and myself, and my election has now taken place and I think this is it." We went upstairs and sat in the President's suite. He received us and he said to my wife, "Mildred, you seem a little nervous."

[132]

She said, "I am nervous, Mr. President. After all we're going to go down to this room with all these people for breakfast; you being the President of the United States, it's a long piece to walk with the President and I just don't know how I'm going to do it."

He said, "Well, I'll tell you, Mildred, I'll give you some advice. My mother always used to say to me, 'Just do the best you can and you'll be all right.'"

That made her feel better and we went down and, of course, those in the breakfast room rose to their feet with great excitement when they saw the President come in. He spoke to the group; it was a wonderful talk.

He said, "You know, it's Sunday," (it was a Sunday). "I don't like to make speeches on Sunday so let's call this a prayer meeting." He made a delightful speech.

[133]

FUCHS: Evidently the other Communist bloc nations voted for you, except Poland. I guess they were all in the ILO then?

MORSE: No. At that time Poland was in, Czechoslovakia was in, and some of the other Eastern European countries; Russia was not.

FUCHS: Russia was not in.

MORSE: No, Russia came in in 1954. But the other Eastern European countries by and large were in. But the Governing Body does the electing and on the Governing Body the Polish member was the representative of all the Communist states. So he spoke on behalf of them. Although when my time came around after '54 and I was reelected, Russia was then a member of the Governing Body and they supported me.

A rather nice thing happened when we returned to Washington. I was then, as I say,

[134]

Acting Secretary of Labor, which I continued to be until I left for Geneva in September to take up my duties, but a nice thing happened when we came back in June from San Francisco. Most of the members of the delegation of the Governing Body came to Washington, especially Leon Jouhoux and all those French personalities -- he was then the head of the French Force Ouvrier -- CGT. All the Ministers and the Secretary of State, Marshall, had talked to the President, and they had agreed that the Secretary should give me a reception at the Blair House in honor of my election and invite all these foreign people who were going home by way of Washington, as well as members of the diplomatic corps in Washington; and they did that. This was a very meaningful gesture which was greatly appreciated by the delegates from all over the world and their governments. Then Mildred and I left for Geneva in late August, 1948 to pick up our

[135]

duties in September there.

FUCHS: The ILO had moved from Montreal, when?

MORSE: Well, John Winant moved the ILO -- he was then Director-General -- just as it appeared war was going to break out after the invasion of Europe by Hitler. He moved the ILO from Geneva to Montreal and it stayed there through the war years and I was the one that brought it back to Geneva after my election, after consultation with our Government.

FUCHS: You never held forth in Montreal then yourself?

MORSE: Well, I did. I went there to Governing Body meetings when I was representing our Government but I never sat there as Director-General. I went there after I was elected but I took up my post in Geneva.

[136]

One thing I think I should add, because it reflects the atmosphere of that period, is that you must remember during all this time the CIO was always trying to get the place as delegate but it didn't have it. It was the AF of L that had the place. But I was really drafted into this candidature by President Truman, by William Green and by the Chamber of Commerce and David Zellerbach. So, with industry, labor and the President, I accepted.

FUCHS: Mrs. Morse recalled, while you were talking just now on the phone, Mr. Morse, that the night before your election, which I believe was a Thursday night, that you had a call from President Truman informing you that the Secretary of Labor had died. Do you recall that?

MORSE: Yes, I did have that call. We were to see each other the next day or two before this breakfast that was part of the campaign and we

[137]

expressed our sorrow about the passing of Schwellenbach, and we agreed at the time that I should stick to my plans.

FUCHS: He did at this time, however, propose the Secretary of Labor position to you.

MORSE: He did. He said to me that, "You know it's going to be a tough one Dave; you are Acting Secretary of Labor and it's for you to decide." He was really decent about what I should do. I said, "Well, Mr. President, it seems to me that having made these commitments to everyone all over the world -- and we had worked out the arrangements with the United Kingdom Government -- having been elected, actually, it would be extremely difficult to go back on it." He said, "Well, I agree."

FUCHS: Did it also occur to you at the time, perhaps, that your tenure as Secretary of Labor might have

[138]

been somewhat shortened by the election in '48?

MORSE: Well, not really, it didn't; it wasn't a big factor with me because, well first of all, the thing that struck me as important was this particular challenge. Because if I had been thinking about myself I would have accepted the nomination to the United States Senate. Because, win, lose, or draw, getting a candidacy like that without opposition by the Democratic party, it meant that, at least, even if you lost you would easily be the leader of your party in the state. I think if I had accepted that, of course, my life would have been an extremely interesting one in my state and maybe nationally. So, that was not really a factor because I had too many other options at that time.

FUCHS: Did you ever regret your decision that evening?

[139]

MORSE: Sometimes I've regretted it and sometimes I've regretted not running for the Senate. But now that I'm sitting here talking in this microphone, upon reflection, I must say I don't think anything could have offered me greater satisfaction than what I had in that particular position. But you know that reminds me of something a little different and that is -- we were talking about Thacher Winslow earlier in one of our sessions, and about Philip Kaiser -- just to complete the record. After I was elected Director-General, and while was still Acting Secretary of Labor, I went over to Geneva and one of the first things I did was to make Thacher Winslow my

representative in the United States, head of the ILO office in Washington. Right after that, Phil Kaiser was appointed Assistant Secretary of Labor.

FUCHS: Do you remember Charles Straub?

[140]

MORSE: Charles Straub was in the Labor Department.

FUCHS: He was Special Assistant to the Secretary.

MORSE: He was there I remember, but nothing in particular.

FUCHS: There was also an executive assistant to Secretary Tobin in 1949, Stanley Wilson?

MORSE: Yes, I remember but nothing stands out about him. The man who stands out in my mind through the whole Labor Department's history of post Second World War is this chap Millard Cass. The fellow that came over to the Labor Department with me from my post as General Counsel of the NLRB. Because when I left he stayed on. He served as the Assistant to every Secretary of Labor after I left and finally finished his career in the U.S. Government at the highest level a civil servant can hold in the Labor Department. That is as Deputy

[141]

Under Secretary of Labor for Administration. He's now practicing law here in Washington. No one has a better insight on the whole postwar history of the ILO than Millard Cass.

FUCHS: I talked to him the other day after you recommended I do so and we weren't able to work out a date now. He's quite busy, but he said he would be interviewed when I got back in town the next time.

When you became Director-General, you've been quoted as saying, "The ILO was the greatest living governmental vehicle for world peace." How did you feel about that after you served your time there?

MORSE: If I said "governmental," I should have said "inter-governmental." That's what I meant. Well, I felt that more when I left than when I came in, and I suppose nothing would underscore that more than the fact that the ILO got the

[142]

Nobel Peace Prize in 1969 and I went to Norway to receive it on behalf of the organization and to give the Nobel Peace Prize lecture. So, it isn't just me talking, it's the Nobel Peace Prize talking.

FUCHS: Around 1949 you proposed that technical assistance be an expanded function of the ILO and I was wondering, with whom did you consult within the United States about this, if you did?

MORSE: Well, that's a very good and interesting question, because up to that point, 1949, the ILO had been an international standards setting organization and advisory body. During the period, I believe, of the Point IV program I'd been consulted by Willard Thorp, who was then I think Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs. He came over to talk to me in Geneva to find out how I would feel about the Point IV program and how it ought to work, get

[143]

my advice. I told him that I thought it was a tremendous thing and as far as I was concerned he could be sure that I was going to remold the entire program of the ILO so it would achieve a tradition of standard setting and operational programs to implement the standards. You know, vocational training, management training, occupational health, say, the training of people and the training of officials and administrators for social security systems; training, training, training in all areas that had to do with the labor and social side. Starting from that point on I began, and the ILO has become and, I think, is among the specialized agencies of the United Nations a leader in that area. Now, I consulted from the start with Willard Thorp, I consulted with the President when I came back and had my usual meetings with him. I consulted with the labor movement in this country, with William Green, and later with

[144]

George Meany. As for industry, I got the full agreement for our country behind that as I did the full agreement of all other countries behind it. They didn't want to sacrifice standards, but they understood standards are no good unless they are implemented and implemented by trained people, and so on.

Now, to get it started was a problem because we needed money and, interestingly enough, the first money for a private project to implement this concept came to me from the ECA [Economic Cooperation Administration]. The office that was set up in Europe for the Marshall plan. They came to me and offered me a million dollars to start a model project for implementing this concept in the field of manpower training -- training people to become instructors in vocational training centers and so on.

FUCHS: Did you work with Harriman and Milton Katz?

[145]

MORSE: Averell was there, Milton Katz was there. We got the million dollars. I had a very difficult time getting agreement in my Governing Body that I should take this million dollars. I remember Leon Jouhoux, particularly, the French worker, who was afraid that if I took that million dollars as a special grant from what was actually the United States, for training, it would place the organization under the control of the United States. He had my assurance that that wouldn't happen, plus the fact that it was our Governing Body that would have to decide the program to implement the use of that money. Later he became one of the supporters of this program. Well, from that point it came in from various sources; our regular budget, bilateral sources; the Swedes gave money, the Germans gave money, other countries gave money, and then we began to get money from the United Nations special fund. Paul Hoffman himself

[146]

later made a lot of money available for these purposes.

FUCHS: Of course, you as an international servant were neutral, I guess you'd say, but did you find pressures brought at various times by some of our nationals?

MORSE: Yes, I was under pressure all the time by the United States. I was under pressure by a lot of people, a lot of countries, that's normal. But there was pressure plenty from my own country, for staffing, for changing of policy, for implementation of policies that would be more congenial to the United States vis-a-vis Eastern Europe, etc. But I just took that as the normal part of my job. I got it from Russians, I got it from everybody. But I sure got it from the United States. But I was able to withstand it; they were always decent about it. As a matter of fact, I had a

[147]

very happy experience with practically all the countries in absorbing this kind of punishment and resisting these pressures. Because if you didn't do that you were finished. Once you compromised with them on this, you really were finished. So you had to take a stand. You had to be understood by them just what it was and why you were doing it. If you were doing it just for political purposes, you were finished, because you not only lost your self-respect but they lost their respect of you. I couldn't let that happen.

FUCHS: Were there ever any charges that you had shown favoritism?

MORSE: No, as I say, I was elected everytime unanimously. I guess that would have been the time when they could have said, "Brother, we've had enough of you."

FUCHS: In the series of lectures you gave at

[148]

Cornell, which was later published as a book* you noted that the OEEC [Organization of European Economic Cooperation] had helped finance immigration to Latin America in 1950. Now were these Marshall funds or was it paid out of counterpart funds, or do you recall?

MORSE: That was U.S. money.

FUCHS: How did you provide technical training in the non-industrialized countries, let's say Africa or Asia or Latin America or the Middle East?

MORSE: There were larger demands than I could fill. But there were demands mainly for the development of skills. They were going into a beginning period of change as a result of independence. Most of this occurred in 1960 on. That was the big wave because most of them became independent about that time, particularly in

*David A. Morse, *Origin and Evolution of the I.L.O. and Its Role in the World Community*, Cornell Univ., Ithaca, New York, 1969.

[149]

Africa. Before that it would be people in normally developing countries in South America, etc. But the big bulge was in the late fifties or the early sixties and was mainly for training -- make a fellow a plumber or a carpenter, or train people so they could train those kinds of people. Training that would be relevant to the implementation of the nation's industrialization plans, whatever they might be. Also skills in management because these developing countries recognized that the genius of this country and of other industrialized countries lay in the development of skills and management and organization, techniques of production. These were the things that we were transferring through experts to developing countries.

FUCHS: When you began to redirect the ILO from setting standards into technical cooperation did you meet resistance?

[150]

MORSE: I met resistance from many people in the labor movement to start with and from employers. Not from the governments. The labor movement was afraid at the start although a little later they became great supporters of it. But you had to be educated to it. They'd been accustomed to the ILO fixing world social policies, world standards, laws, legislation -- laws that could be adopted by different countries on the elimination of diseases and certain other hazards - - in mines for example; or relative health hazards or laws to set up social security systems.

Now the employers generally didn't want to go beyond legislation to start with, because they felt that this might activate the labor movement too much into getting into the picture nationally, because to make technical cooperation work you've got to get workers and employers to cooperate together with governments. They were rather resistant to that. It was really an

[151]

educational job that had to be done on them to get them to recognize the need for change, and this was done. They became great supporters of it. You've got to remember, to do this I had to train my own staff, had to get new programs of my own, had to get a different kind of budget. I set up an international center for labor study so that the world's leading experts could be brought to a central place in Geneva to study the social implications of change in developing countries. I got a big endowment for that from Konrad Adenauer of Germany and from DeGaulle, who was President of France, and from other countries. I used the interest on that endowment fund to set up a permanent institute which is still going very strong and is very important. This is so that the leadership in the world will understand the social implications of change and bring their people to this place for that purpose. This is an educational affair. I did the same thing in training; I set up an international center for advanced training for

[152]

vocational training, for training instructors for skills and also for management training. That's going on now in a very big way in Turin, Italy where people come from developing countries -- foremen, middle management men, trade union leaders, industrial leaders, to take courses everywhere from bookkeeping to mechanical skills, from auditing to how to manage an operation, from accounting to techniques for production. So, these new institutional dimensions were built autonomously into the structure of the ILO as a result of the decision to move into the

field of technical cooperation and help developing countries. Without these dimensions for education, for the training of people who train others, you could never trigger any accomplishments. We wouldn't have been very successful, unless this had been carried out.

FUCHS: This is a slight regression but, as Assistant Secretary of Labor, you acted in the capacity of an adviser to John Winant, I believe. Does

[153]

anything stand out in your memory about that, and also, did Winant have something to do with your nomination?

MORSE: No, that was interesting. John Winant came back after serving as Ambassador to the Court of St. James while I was still Under Secretary of Labor and Acting Secretary of Labor. This was right after the war. Ed Phelan was acting as Director-General. Ed Phelan was this Irish gentleman I talked to you about. Winant was nominated by the President to be the Ambassador -- Representative to the Economic and Social Council of the U.N. Maybe I was Assistant Secretary of Labor then instead of Under Secretary, but know that an interdepartmental group was put together to advise him on social policies and economic policies, and I worked with John Winant to help him complete them. I met with him on a number of occasions. I never thought

[154]

it was very effective because it was difficult to have a dialogue. He was a very inarticulate gentleman, although a very highly motivated one. So most of my work with him was by memorandum.

FUCHS: The AF of L of course, as you indicated, was the representative in the ILO, and the CIO, starting back in the forties, I believe, was fighting to get delegate representation, which they didn't get then. Eventually, there was a renewal of their efforts. Is there anything that stands out about George Meany and his efforts against the CIO and also his efforts regarding the problem of Communists in the ILO?

MORSE: Nothing special. I think the merger naturally came along so that the American labor movement came into the ILO with one voice and that was sometime after I took over.

FUCHS: That was '55, I guess, when they merged.

[155]

MORSE: I think it was something like that; I don't know the exact date. Before that though there were some beginnings of cooperation. I remember Mike Ross was the international representative of the CIO and he worked very closely with the international representative of the AF of L. So that when the AF of L came to the Governing Body or to the Conference, they had his input and there is the point, I believe, that the CIO usually sent some advisers over as part of the labor delegation of the AF of L before the merger. What helped very much in that was this Interdepartmental International Labor Advisory Committee, that I have talked about, that was set up where the AFL and CIO could meet together to discuss problems. Well, Meany's position, as

you know, is always a very fixed one. He was very concerned at the time he came into the ILO's activities as President of the AFL-CIO about the Communist participation

[156]

in work in the ILO.

FUCHS: You think he was overly concerned about the Communist domination?

MORSE: Oh, I think he was very much overly concerned because he had the feeling, I think, that the Secretariat of the ILO was being infiltrated by staff from East European and that they would have too large a voice in the creation of policy by the Director-General. Of course, that just never happened. But he thought it was going to happen; he thought it was happening, and that was one of his preoccupations. I often wondered what his advisers were telling him or dreaming up to tell him. I always respected George and he and I talked about this at great length on many occasions. I think he certainly respected my position as Director-General and respected what I'd said to him, but he always had that overriding concern. He still has to

[157]

this day. But I'm away from it now.

FUCHS: This is a bit beyond the Truman period, but in the late fifties some of the employer representatives became quite concerned about the fact that the Communist nations' employer delegates weren't true representatives.

MORSE: Well, that's right. The employers felt that way, from the United States particularly, and the employers felt that way and the workers felt that way. George Meany, at least, from the United States, felt that way. The fact of the matter is that there are very few trade union or employer organizations in the world that are free of their governments. Whether they're from Eastern Europe, Communist countries, or other countries. You could put in your two hands the true independent trade unions or employer organizations. Nothing in the ILO constitution says that trade unions that work

[158]

through the ILO have to be free and independent of the government. Freedom is an objective but not a condition, and also, if you'll remember, the ILO is not a trade union movement.

FUCHS: As I said, in the fifties -- I believe until around '56-'57 -- the employer delegate was always nominated by the NAM [National Association of Manufacturers] and the Chamber of Commerce. Did something occur at that time or did that just die out?

MORSE: You've really done your homework because what you say is true and [William L.] McGrath was there. He ran a small company out here in Ohio. He was a delegate of the NAM and the Chamber and I think as a result of his efforts the NAM finally withdrew from the ILO and that left the Chamber of Commerce as the representative. McGrath was a rather interesting fellow. He was certainly one of the most isolationist

[159]

men I ever knew. I remember many times when we were in Geneva. He said, "I want to see you, Dave, and to have a talk with you." (We always had quite a dialogue, always very friendly.) He said, "You know, what's happening back in the United States?"

I said, "What's happening?"

He said, "Something terrible is happening in New York. They're flying the U.N. flag with Old Glory."

"Well," I said, "the U.N. has a flag."

He said, "Yes, but they shouldn't put it on the same pole as Old Glory."

I said, "Well, I don't know; I've got enough problems here running the ILO in Geneva without running the flagpole. Take it up with the Mayor or the President."

Then, he would do that kind of thing. He just didn't believe in international cooperation. It didn't make any difference about ILO or anything,

[160]

and I don't know why they ever sent him in to represent the employers unless they wanted to sabotage the organization; I don't think they wanted to do that. But it was difficult to make any sense out of it. He also, I think, was affected by this period of McCarthy. It was in that atmosphere -- a terrible period that we all lived through, where everybody was considered to be a Communist even if you were a Republican but didn't agree with someone from the camp of Joe McCarthy. So, that atmosphere was very special. He, like you say, didn't make a very great contribution to international cooperation. But as soon as NAM left, the Chamber of Commerce picked up the ball and filled the vacuum.

FUCHS: I believe in that same year, 1956, they were saying the Soviets were using, to our disadvantage, the fact that we had failed to support a convention

[161]

on slave labor. Do you recall anything about that?

MORSE: Yes, I do and I never have understood it to this day. The Soviets were saying that we didn't support a convention on slave labor. Was that a question?

FUCHS: Saying, therefore, we were for slavery.

MORSE: Well, that's a rather interesting point because we were accusing the Russians of slave labor. Actually, I sent a commission in to make a study of the forced labor situation in the U.S.S.R. and make a report to my Governing Body. But what I've never understood is that while the ILO has enacted the most important international conventions ever in the field of human

rights, supported at the conference by the United States, the Russians would ratify them, but the U.S. has never yet ratified one. Yet all our rhetoric is in favor of human rights.

[162]

That's still true as of through August, 1977, when we are reporting this. Jimmy Carter is making all these great speeches about human rights. Well, the ILO has the only bundle of human rights laws on the international books. There's the convention against forced labor that you referred to, there was a convention against child labor, there's a convention against discrimination in employment on the grounds of sex, race, color and so on. There's a convention which guarantees the right of equal pay for equal work. There are these conventions. They are human rights conventions so recognized. None of those conventions have ever been ratified by this country. They've all been ratified by the Communist countries, by Western European countries, by practically all the countries of the world, and yet we are the leaders by rhetoric and I think by practice in our own country in the field of human rights. But it makes us so vulnerable to

[163]

attack because we use rhetoric and these people say, "All right, if you've got the rhetoric, why don't you enact these laws, why don't you ratify these conventions. You'd be in a much stronger international position if you did, and if you did you'd also be able to invoke the machinery of the ILO for the investigation of violations of other countries which you can't do now. If you haven't ratified, you can't invoke that machinery and the ILO has the only international machinery for that purpose."

It was very interesting. I've never understood it. I talked with Secretary Dulles about it; I talked with others, and they would say, "Well, we'll get around to this," or "why should we do it; our standards are way above the standards of this legislation."

Then there was the Bricker amendment which didn't permit us to do it and nothing's yet been done. I gather now that the administration is

[164]

beginning to look at the problem. I hope they do because if we want to effectively lead in the field of human rights we'll have to ratify human rights conventions.

FUCHS: I realize that some of the conventions, a great many of them apparently, are not ratified because of our Federal system and we feel some things are reserved for the states. But I couldn't see what the objection was to our ratifying a convention on slave labor?

MORSE: Well, that's it or forced labor. And they say, "Well, because the procedure bypasses the normal processes of the Congress. If it was done just by senatorial endorsement."

Well, that's true of any treaty and if you say, "Well, it's not a Federal matter but a state," okay, then bring in your state labor commissions and get them to move on it. Or don't endorse it at the international conferences,

[165]

which we do.

FUCHS: The reaffiliation of the Russians in 1954, is there anything important about that that comes to mind immediately?

MORSE: Yes, there's one very important thing about that I think ought to be stressed. You see the Russians were out and I had discussions with Mr. Molotov who was then the Foreign Minister. These were all secret discussions. They wanted to come back in. I met with him in Geneva and I explained to them what they had to do if they wanted to come in. To come back into the ILO, a member of the U.N. would automatically become a member of the ILO, if they sent a letter to the Director-General informing the Director-General that they were coming back in and that they would accept the constitutional provisions of the organization, pay their dues, etc. Well, I got a letter from Molotov and he said that

[166]

Russia was now a member of the ILO by virtue of this letter to me and that they accepted the constitutional provisions of the ILO except for the jurisdiction of the international Court of Justice.

Well, I looked at this and I figured that I was the trustee of the constitution. I didn't consult anybody but I wrote Mr. Molotov saying that the ILO could not accept U.S.S.R. membership on the basis of a conditional acceptance of constitutional obligations. I rejected their coming back into the ILO. I was criticized by many people for that action. They thought that I shouldn't have done it without consulting the organization, the Governing Body or the officers. They thought that it was against the principle of universality and I said to them, "Well, I'm the Director-General and I think I have that right. It's clear that you cannot have this kind of acceptance." While we were still arguing

[167]

about it the Russians came back with another letter saying, "We accept the constitution without reservation."

FUCHS: In '48 I have also read that the Russians, although they were not a member, were demanding, in meetings I guess, that labor's representatives be increased from a third to a half. Do you recall that?

MORSE: Yes, they were doing that. They wanted to have the organization come under their complete control, to change it from the kind of organization that it is now, which would have been a very bad thing. It would have been for all practical purposes an intergovernmental organization. We fought that very bitterly and won out. Before that, you know, they tried in the WFTU to abolish the ILO. They suggested the ILO be abolished and labor problems be dealt with by the U.N. We fought that, too, the free

[168]

world did. So the Russians have never worked very comfortably with the ILO and they are still not comfortable with it. They're still always under attack and they have great difficulty squaring

their system with the ILO; but they stay in and keep working. I would hope we would do the same.

FUCHS: In 1951, when you conferred with Trygve Lie of the U.N. about the study of forced labor, what kind of a man did you find Mr. Lie to be?

MORSE: Oh, I liked Lie. He was a very comfortable man. He was a down to earth fellow, social democrat, socialist orientation, trade union orientation, ideologically conservative, interestingly enough, great believer in human rights, very concerned that we build our relations prudently and solidly, anxious that the boat not be rocked internationally in any way. So that when we talked about moving in the

[169]

area of forced labor, he'd say, "You know Dave, I believe in all this but please be careful." But we went ahead with it.

FUCHS: In 1950, consultative status was granted to the International Federation for Free Trade Unions. Just what does that mean?

MORSE: Well, consultative status means that you have an official access to meetings, unless the executive body says you can't come; you have access to the documents of the Governing Body. On special occasions, depending upon the Governing Body, you have a right to speak on a given subject.

FUCHS: Is there anything you recall about your trip to India in 1950 that stands out?

MORSE: Yes, one thing very much. My wife and I were there and Nehru made a great speech on that occasion to the regional conference of the ILO and said what I've heard since then, what I

[170]

heard then for the first time, that it's a terrible mistake for a politician to raise expectations of people beyond the possibility of their realization.

FUCHS: Isador Lubin was representing the United States in 1950 and '51. Did you have any dealings with him?

MORSE: Very good, close dealings. He was a very positive constructive man, committed to international cooperation, very high marks, did his homework, made a great impression. I think he was a fine representative.

FUCHS: He's still living, isn't he?

MORSE: Yes, he's still living up in New York. His present wife used to work at the ILO. She was on my staff.

FUCHS: Is there anything you could say about Leo

[171]

Werts, who was Associate Director of the Office of International Labor Affairs in 1949 and 1950?

MORSE: I can't say too much about Leo. He was a good man and a very hard worker, conscientious. He'd gotten his experience, I think, on the international side through his military government association in Germany. He was not particularly dramatic; I can't add much more to that. He was always reliable.

FUCHS: What about the present situation? As I understand it, Mr. Kissinger has served a two year notice that we will drop out of the ILO.

MORSE: Well, if what I have been informed is true, I think it's a colossal mistake our Government will make if it leaves the ILO. I think the way it's been handled has been bad and I think if our Government leaves it will be of great damage to the international community and to the United Nations

[172]

system. I understand that John Dunlop was the person who had proposed to the Cabinet that this letter be sent, and Kissinger resisted it but finally accepted it. I think if the U.S. leaves we will have abandoned the field in the area of human rights; that is Jimmy Carter's first priority right now, to the Communist world. It would be a very great mistake and we would be delivered a very serious blow by the opposition in the international field. So I'm still hoping.

[174]

INDEX

Acheson, Dean, 126

 and labor's support for Truman Doctrine, 35-37

 and Truman Doctrine, 102-103, 105, 107

Ad-Hoc Committee, chaired by Clark Clifford, 54-56, 59-61, 119-120

Atomic Energy Commission, and labor policy, 74-78

Berger, Sam, 28

Bowers, Claude, 27-28

Bricker Amendment, and ILO, 163

Cabinet meetings, procedures of, 43-45

Campaign of 1948, strategy for, 66

Carey, James, 31

Carlton Hotel, 56, 120

Carson, John, 90-91

Cass, Millard, 24-25, 140-141

Clifford, Clark:

 and Ad-Hoc Committee, 54-56, 59-61, 119-120

 and Morse, David, 131

Conciliation Service, 49-50
Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), and World
Federation of Trade Unions, 106

Davidson, C. Girard, 58

Ewing, Oscar, 52
and Ad-Hoc Committee, 57-58

Fact-finding boards, 82-83
Fenton, Frank, 123
Flynn, Ed, 56
Foreign Service Board, and Labor Department, 29
Forrestal, James, and Israel, recognition of, 70
and labor movement, 40-41
Foster, William (under Secretary of Commerce), 38-39, 51
and Taft-Hartley Act, 68

Gambs, John, 25-26
Germany:
Control Council in, 7
and labor reform in 1945-1946, 86-88
occupation of, 6
Gibson, John, 19
Green, William (AF of L), 18, 31

Hague, Frank, 125
Hannah, Philip, 19, 114-115
Harriman, W. Averell, and Marshall plan, 108-111
Herzog, Paul, 8, 12, 13, 47, 68-69, 99, 100
Hoffman, Paul, 29-30, 107
Horowitz, Dan, 26, 27
Human rights, and U.S. non-ratification of ILO conventions, 162-163

International Federation for Free Trade Unions, and ILO, 169
International Labor Organization (ILO):
and Communist states, 133, 157-162
and human rights convention, 162-164
and David Morse, 120, ff
and Training programs, 141-152
U.S. participation in, 24-25, 33, ff
U.S. plan to withdraw its membership from, 171-172
Israel, U.S. recognition of, 70-73, 79
Italy, and labor reform in 1944-1945, 85-86

Johnson, Keen, 19, 23

Jouhoux, Leon, 108, 109-110, 134

Kaiser, Henry (A F of L attorney), 93, 94-95

Kaiser, Philip, 32, 92, 93-97

Keyserling, Leon, and Ad-Hoc Committee chaired by Clark Clifford, 58, 62, 63, 73-74

Kingsley, Don, 58

Kmetz, John, 113

Labor attaché program, origin of, 26-29, 83-85

Labor commissioners, state, meetings of, 33-34

Labor Department:

and Marshall Plan, 30

organizational changes in, 50, 90-94

as representative of labor movement, 98-99

and "secret Six", 90

Labor-Management conference in 1945, 79-80

Labor management relations, 45-47

Labor movement, and Truman Doctrine, 105

Labor policy of U.S. Government, 59-61

Labor, U.S. international policy on, origins of, 14-17

Lehman, Herbert, 9

Leiserson, William, 77-78

Lewis, John L., and Carlton Hotel, 120

Lie, Trygve, 168-169

Lillienthal, David, 74-78

Lubin, Isador, 16-17, 26-27, 170

McCarthyism, 160

McGrath, William L., 158-160

McSherry, General Frank, 7, 10

Margold, Nathan, 2

Marshall Plan, and labor movement, 29-30, 37-38, 112

Meany, George, and ILO, 154-157

Morse, David:

and Ad-Hoc Committee chaired by Clark Clifford, 54-61

Election as Director-General of ILO, 43, 121-135, 138-139

and Marshall Plan in France, 108-111

and Truman Doctrine, 102-105

Murray, Philip, 31

National Association of Manufacturers, and International Labor
Organization, 158-160

National Labor Relations Board, 3-4, 10-14, 99-101

Nehru, Jawaharlal, and International Labor Organization, 169

Office of International Labor Affairs, fate of, 117-119

Petroleum Labor Policy Board, 2-3
Point-4 Program, and ILO, 142-143

Ramadier, Paul, and Marshall plan, 108-111
Rowe, James, 66
Rusk, Dean, 126

Sauer, Walter, 4
Schwellenbach, Lewis, 18, 20-23, 42, 96, 137
"Secret Six", and Labor Department reorganization, 90-91
Shanley, Bernard, 123-124
Sicily, in World War II, 5
Smith, Oscar, 76
Snyder, John, 62
Soviet Union, and ILO, 164-168
Stanton, Frank, 56
Steelman, John, 45-48, 88-90, 97

Taft-Hartley Act, veto of, 67-70
Thorp, Willard, 142-143
Tobin, Daniel J., 115-116
Tracy, Daniel W., 14-16
Trade Union Advisory Committee on International Affairs, 30-33, 36
Truman Doctrine, and Labor movement, 34-36, 101-104, 107
Truman Harry S.:

- and Israel, recognition of, 72-73
- and labor policy, 80-83
- and Morse, David, 131-132, 137
- and Sabbath observance, 132

Warren, Edgar, 116
Werts, Leo, 7, 171
Winant, John, 135, 153-154
Winslow, Thacher, 32, 92-93, 139
Witt, Nat, 100
Wohl, Matthew, 31
World Federation of Trade Unions, 35

Zellerbach, J. David, 122