

Oral History Interview
with
FREDERICK OSBORN

Promoted Major General (temp.), 1943; Director of Information and Education Division, AUS; resigned from Army 1945; appointed Deputy Representative of U.S. on the U.N. Atomic Energy Commission, 1947-50.

Garrison, New York
July 10, 1974
by Richard D. McKinzie, Harry S. Truman Library

The Harry S. Truman Library
Independence, Missouri
July 1977

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 It may not be published in full except by permission of the Harry S. Truman Library.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
FREDERICK OSBORN

Garrison, New York
July 10, 1974
by Richard D. McKinzie, Harry S. Truman Library

[1]

MCKINZIE: Mr. Osborn, perhaps a good place to start would be to ask how you happened to become involved with the Government. Your background is that of a businessman and an academician?

OSBORN: Well, I had the previous ten years been making studies and taking part in administrative activities in genetics, psychology and sociology with an office in the Museum of Natural History where I had been working. In August of 1940, I was on vacation in Maine and had a call on the telephone from my friend Stuart Rice, whom I had met at meetings of the Sociological Society, and who was

[2]

then one of the assistants in the office of the Director of the Budget. Stuart Rice asked me if I would come to Washington to fill one of the positions under him which had just been allowed by Congress for a dollar-a-year man. I would be engaged in trying to systematize the research between the different departments of the Government for the Bureau of the Budget. I thought that the opportunity to be in Washington at that time when a war seemed very imminent was a wonderful opportunity, and I said at once I would come down, and I was down there, I think, the next day. I got a room at the Hay-Adams, and I didn't know that I was setting myself up in Washington for the next four years.

I went to Stuart Rice's office the next day, and he took me down to the Director of the Budget, Harold Smith, who questioned me about

[3]

my background and what I was doing; then got into a discussion with me of the Selective Service, which I did know something about. Before I left him he asked if he might send my name in to President Roosevelt, as one of a group who were being considered as members of a committee to organize the Selective Service under the act which was about to be passed by Congress. So, of course, I said yes. And the next day

Harold Smith sent for me and he said, "Is your name Fred?"

I said, "Yes."

And he said, "Well, the President said that Fred was to be chairman of this committee and that must be you." So I was chairman of the Committee on Selective Service with Charlie [Charles P.] Taft and Bill [William A.] Draper, who was then in the Army, but later became famous as Commissioner in Germany, and

[4]

[James Phinney, III] Baxter, the president of a big university, and various other people. We worked on the regulations and the setup for Selective Service for some six or seven weeks, and got it all ready in time for the proclamation, which was signed by President Roosevelt here at Hyde Park. While I was with this Selective Service operation, I saw a good deal of the Army, and I saw something of General [George C.] Marshall in a very informal way.

MCKINZIE: In what informal relationship did you see him?

OSBORN: Well, I don't think in the Selective Service that we had any conferences with General Marshall. My recollection is that he and I made a couple of speeches together at meetings which he was to address, and where Selective Service was a

[5]

very interesting thing, and I was asked to come along. My recollection is that we met in that way.

MCKINZIE: I see. Could I ask, did you get a chance to talk to President Roosevelt about your work on the Commission?

OSBORN: No. I don't think I ever did. He never asked to see me, and I don't think I ever did. I had not been close to President Roosevelt in politics; though we were friends. He lived at Hyde Park, twenty-five miles from here, and we were friends. Roosevelt's family had been great friends of my family for several generations.

MCKINZIE: Yes.

OSBORN: But I had not wanted to work with him in politics, and he knew this. So, while we

[6]

remained good friends, he didn't think of me as one of the people that he could call on, you know, ordinarily.

MCKINZIE: Yes. You never did get to that statistical work of coordinating the research?

OSBORN: No. I gave up. I had a desk in the Bureau of the Budget for a month, but I never went there because the Selective Service job was a very continuous one. We were working against a very urgent deadline, and the committee spent all day writing regulations and drawing up orders and things. At 6 o'clock when we disbanded, after a long day, we would turn it all over to the lawyers, who were putting it in legal form for us, and tell them to have it ready for us the next morning at 8 o'clock. So, we were really working around the clock on the thing.

[7]

MCKINZIE: Did you have contact during that time with the people who had special arguments to make?

OSBORN: Yes. I had a great deal to do with the psychiatric regulations and the regulations for the objectors.

MCKINZIE: Conscientious objectors?

OSBORN: Conscientious objectors, that's right. We had a committee of people interested in conscientious objectors headed by Mr. [Clarence Evans] Pickett of the Quakers, quite a famous Quaker, very fine man. We met with them a number

of times, and I think drew up very sound regulations on conscientious objectors as a result, and they stood up very well right up to World War II.

MCKINZIE: On those conscientious objector regulations,

[8]

the only thing that's come up really on that whole issue since then has been objections for reasons of conscience which has nothing to do with religion.

OSBORN: That's right.

MCKINZIE: Did you ever talk about that at the time?

OSBORN: No. That problem didn't arise, because we thought of it only in terms of men who by their past would naturally be conscientious objectors. This was not necessary in that war, because after watching Hitler for a number of years the whole country was almost unanimous in their feeling that we had to stop this, we had to get into the war. So there wasn't the problem which we had in Vietnam, when there was every reason for a young man to say, "Well, why should I go and fight in Vietnam?"

Then the other thing in which we did have a

[9]

very active series of conferences on which I was much interested in was the psychiatric problems. The problem of getting psychiatric people screened properly and what kind of psychiatric trouble would require refusal from the draft. On this I worked a great deal with a man named Harry Stack Sullivan, who was -- I found out afterwards -- a very interesting and eminent psychiatrist; and his work has lived after him. He was quite a character. We had a good psychiatric group.

In all these conferences we also had to work very closely with the representatives of the man who was assigned by the Army to watch Selective Service, who was Major [Lewis B.] Hershey -- later Major General Hershey, head of Selective Service. He and I didn't really see eye to eye on either conscientious objectors or excuses for the psychiatric disability.

[10]

MCKINZIE: He was inclined to have fewer exceptions than you?

OSBORN: Yes. He was inclined to have fewer exceptions and look at it in a rather tougher way. But he was a competent man, and there was one thing about him which I thought was peculiarly appropriate to the job he later had. He felt very strongly that the individual boards -- Selective Service Boards all over the country -- should be given a lot of latitude. That if they made mistakes, it would be a local mistake, and he didn't want them tied up so stiffly with regulations that

if there was any mistake made it would be a mistake in Washington. In this I thought he was very wise, and in the matter of public relationship if nothing else. And we did try and draw the regulations in such a way that they could be interpreted quite broadly by the local boards.

[11]

MCKINZIE: As the chairman of this committee which drafted those regulations, did anyone come to you and suggest that you might be the appropriate person to head the Selective Service?

OSBORN: Oh, yes. One morning I read in the newspaper that I was to be appointed Director of Selective Service. This was one of the rumors this was done in Washington, and it's still done a great deal. Before appointments were made, they would put a rumor out, and then see whether there was a protest or whether the rumor was acclaimed. I didn't wait to see whether it was a protest or acclaimed; I telephoned to the White House, and I told them that I read this rumor and that it was untrue because I was not in a position where I could accept it, I had other work to do. In fact, Mr. [Henry L.] Stimson called me up the same

[12]

day on the same matter, and said he hoped that I would be chairman of the Army Committee on Welfare of Troops and that he hoped I would not take the Selective Service job; but I'd already made up my mind about that. When I talked to the White House I recommended Major Hershey as a man who I thought would do a great job, and they did appoint him.

MCKINZIE: Had you known Secretary Stimson?

OSBORN: Secretary Stimson had been a lawyer in New York. My father was a younger lawyer in New York, and my father was a great admirer of Mr. Stimson's. I had met Mr. Stimson. But I think he felt he knew me well through my father, whom he had a great respect for.

Mr. Stimson had surrounded himself with a very high-grade group of young men. Harvey Bundy had been his secretary when he was

[13]

Secretary of the Army, and when he was Secretary of State. And Harvey Bundy came down to be Mr. Stimson's secretary again. Harvey Bundy by then had two sons, both of whom came down and worked in the Government, and had some relations to Mr. Stimson and they -- McGeorge Bundy and his brother Bill [William] Bundy -- were there. Mr. Stimson had a great admiration for Bob [Robert B.] Patterson, whom he knew as a lawyer and had known in World War I when Bob Patterson had very distinguished service in the Infantry. So Mr. Stimson brought Bob Patterson down to be in charge of supply. This was a wonderful choice, because Bob Patterson was a man with a vivid personality and

a kind of integrity of character which nobody could mistake. Patterson as -- was it called Assistant Secretary of War...

MCKINZIE: Yes.

[14]

OSBORN: ...was not directly under Mr. Stimson but reported to Congress and was in charge of all purchases, and in that capacity Patterson spent more money than any man in the history of the world had ever spent before -- whether measured in goods or in gold or in anything else. He made mistakes. He was constantly being questioned in Congress, where there were many people in the opposition who would have been delighted to attack him for something, but nobody ever questioned his integrity. He was a tremendous choice for that job.

Mr. Stimson brought in Jack [John J.] McCloy who was a New York lawyer that Mr. Stimson had known, and a very able fellow. He brought in Bob [Robert A.] Lovett, who had been in the Air Force in the First World War and was a banker. And Mr. Stimson read

[15]

a memorandum which he wrote for the Secretary of the Army, who was then in charge of the Air Force, as to the reorganization of the Air Force. This was a very able recommendation and Mr. Stimson brought Lovett in. Well, this group of Bundy, Lovett, McCloy, and Patterson was a wonderful group of men. They were men of absolute integrity, no political interests whatever. There were no personal interests, but terribly keen to do a job -- very able fellows. They had a wonderful quality of loyalty to Mr. Stimson and enjoyment of him because he was quite a character as he got older. I knew all of these men. I didn't know them well; I never was one of them. I wasn't in their class really -- for administrative jobs -- but they knew me and had confidence in me; so it was a very natural thing for Mr. Stimson to bring me in on this civilian job. And it was

[16]

from the civilian job where I was working closely with the Army, that I got to know General Marshall, and he me, and he appointed me Chief of the Morale Branch of the Army when the Army man went out.

MCKINZIE: Yes, but when you first took this job with Mr. Stimson the war hadn't even started yet. What kind of a job did you think you were getting into? Was this going to be setting up programs for troops or what?

OSBORN: Well, I thought of it in terms of a job that had been done by the YMCA and the Jewish agencies and all the others who operated with the Army in the First World War. The Red Cross and others whose work I'd known something about because I was in the Red Cross in the First World War in charge of their military work in the advance sectors in France during

[17]

the whole of the war. I had this background, and I suppose the job I was going to do was of that sort. I had watched the First World War, and what happened afterwards. And I was impressed that while there had been a very fine job done in recreational activities for the men (they had been well cared for in the First World War, remarkably so, because there was very little time to prepare for it) they had no educational opportunities. They had no information given them as to what the war was about, or why they were in Europe. I felt very strongly that the biggest thing we could do for troops was really to tell them what's going on, keep them informed, give them a larger view of the world, and not have them come back to the United States and vote us out of the United Nations within a year. So we set up, besides the recreation facilities, a very large informational program with radio stations

[18]

all over the world. Newspapers all over the world published Yank, an Army weekly which sold two and a half million copies a week for a number of years.

We did provide information to troops, which I hope had an effect on their attitude towards the war after the war. So, this is what we were doing to a large extent, but at the beginning, it was looked on purely as a recreational activity.

At the beginning of all that the President sent word to Mr. Stimson that he wanted the committee to make a general recommendation on the welfare and recreation of military and naval personnel. He wanted the joint committee to make such a recommendation and have it to him in a week. He wanted it initialed by Paul McNutt, who was the Secretary of Education and Welfare, and by Mr. [John C.] Knox, Secretary

[19]

of the Navy, and by Mr. Stimson, Secretary of War.

We drew up such a recommendation, and I got it initialed by McNutt, whom I talked to, of course, and I talked to Mr. Stimson and Mr. Knox. General Marshall telephoned me that the President wanted us to present the paper. He wanted General Marshall there, and he wanted me there at half past 11 that morning, and for me to be in General Marshall's office at ten minutes past 11, and he'd drive me to the White House. So I went to General Marshall's office, and General Marshall was on the telephone answering very quietly in monosyllables, and he sort of waved me to a chair, where I was almost behind him. I sat down, and I realized that he was tense. His replies which were very brief seemed to me very tense. I noticed that the back of his neck

[20]

and the side of his face began to get red, and I looked at his hand holding the telephone receiver -- the knuckles were white -- his grip on the receiver was evidently so tight. The conversation lasted quite a long while, and the air was very tense though he didn't raise his voice any and finally put down the receiver. He got up and started out of the room motioning me to follow, and this was very unlike him because he was usually very courteous. But he just motioned me to follow, and went down and got in the car. He didn't pay any attention -- he didn't say anything, sat with his hands clasped rather stiffly. Then said to himself, really not out loud, "If I ever get mad at these fellows, I won't be able to do this job." Then he sat back a little and relaxed, and then in a little while he began talking to me about our visit to the White House. This was my

[21]

first intimate acquaintance with General Marshall, and he showed the same self-control all through the war, and it was terrific because he couldn't abide self-serving people and foolish people, but he had to keep his temper with both.

MCKINZIE: You mentioned that when you got to this meeting which was to take place over dealing with the troop recreation that there was some dispute.

OSBORN: Well, it was very amusing. We got to the White House, and they told us we'd have to wait a little while, and Paul McNutt, the Secretary of Education and Welfare, was there with his assistant Wayne Coy. Well, Wayne Coy was one of the New Dealers that Roosevelt had brought in and put in the different departments to report to him what the department

[22]

heads were doing. I guess this was particularly necessary with Paul McNutt because he wasn't a very bright man. While we were waiting Wayne said to me, "We made some changes in this report, and I will give the President our copy."

Fortunately I knew Wayne and knew about him, and I said, "Wayne, I have the initialed copy in my pocket and that's what we are going to give the President."

He said, "Oh, no, I know the President, and I'm going to give him ours."

Well I said, "Wayne, I know the President too, and he's going to get my report. And I would suggest that you not raise any questions about it because you would be in a very embarrassing position."

General Marshall was watching this, and I suppose this was his first contact with me.

[23]

So we went in. The President sat down, and Paul McNutt sat next to him. The President read this report. When he came to the part about the USO servicing

troops outside the camps, Paul McNutt interrupted and said: "We've changed that recommendation Mr. President; we're going to have my department do it. We have just brought in a very top-notch recreation man." The President looked puzzled, and McNutt said, "I've talked to Raymond Fosdick about this (who ran these things for the Army in the last war) and Raymond thinks that we ought to do it."

I said, "Paul, that's not so, because I lunched with Raymond Fosdick yesterday with you, and Raymond thought that this should be done by a reconstituted USO."

Paul McNutt, who was not a very smart fellow got angry and excited, and began

[24]

making a speech to the President in rather a loud voice as to why he should do it. The President looked very pained and puzzled, and Paul went on in a loud voice. Finally the President grinned -- I saw him grin -- and he leaned over and put his hand on Paul's shoulder. He said, "Paul, when the war is over all these fellows will have to be fired, and if you had to fire them that would break your heart. And I wouldn't have that happen for anything, we'll let the USO do it." I always thought that was a lovely story of the way Mr. Roosevelt operated.

MCKINZIE: Yes. When you took over the Morale Branch under General Marshall they gave you the temporary rank of Brigadier General, and then you were promoted after that.

OSBORN: Yes.

[25]

MCKINZIE: You became, during the war, the Director of Information Education Division of the Army.

OSBORN: I was not as interested in the recreation end as I was in the information-education end and in the reorganization of the Army during the war. My work was put under General [Brehon] Somervell, who had charge of almost everything, so that General Marshall could be free for his work and...

MCKINZIE: Did you find General Somervell cooperative in this matter?

OSBORN: Very indeed. But he thought that I wasn't doing as well in the recreation end as in the other, and he proposed that the Morale Branch be split in two and that the recreation end be called Special Services. He gave us the option of naming the other end, and we

[26]

called it the Information-Education Division. I was happy at this split because I really wanted to concentrate. My staff was much upset because in Washington, I

guess, everywhere in the Government everybody wants the thing they are doing to be bigger and bigger. I was pleased with the arrangement when General Somervell called me in to tell me what he was doing. I said, "That's fine."

After that, General Somervell took a very real interest in our work. He was a very able fellow, Somervell. He was a tough, hard-boiled fellow, but he was able and very fair. His ability showed itself in an interesting way. I had a friend named Colonel Black in Army Intelligence. Colonel Black had set up a psychological unit in Army Intelligence which seemed to me very sensible. He'd even talked to me about it and talked to me about

[27]

the psychologists he'd brought in. One day Black came in and said, "I had a catastrophe with a new G-2 (new head of Army Intelligence named General[Harold Roe] Bull), and he told me that he understood I had set up a psychological unit; he told me to fire them all and close it up. He said, 'I won't have any longhaired fellows around the Department.' And Black said, 'What am I going to do, I've got top-notch psychologists who have just come here and set up this unit? It's terribly necessary and valuable and what can I do?'"

We talked about it a while. I suggested it was much easier to transfer a unit than to set it up or close it, and would he transfer it to me. So, he transferred it to me. We got the transfer done, and I had a research unit, and I reconstituted it with men appropriate to the work I wanted to do. We got a very

[28]

able man named Stauffer from the University of Chicago, a leading sociologist in the country and a great friend of mine. He came on and headed up this research unit.

I told General Marshall that I was setting up a research unit. And he said, "Well, I'll help you in everything else, but I won't help you in that. I've got too much on hand to try and force sociological research on the Army during time of war." But he said, "If you can do it, why, go right ahead." Stauffer was very shrewd, and they did a wonderful job and studied the soldier attitudes.

I was talking about Somervell. Somervell watched what we were doing -- got all our reports and was very much impressed with them. I had intended this work to get us information on the kind of education and information we should be giving troops. Somervell saw it larger than

[29]

that and had it set up in the form where we made a monthly report to the whole Army about the morale of the troops and their attitudes towards a number of things. We were reporting the work of the Research Branch, and it became a very widely accepted and successful operation, and this was due to Somervell's breadth

of view. Somervell had a large civilian experience. He was an able fellow, and this was very well handled on his part.

MCKINZIE: At that time, did you have an arrangement with the University of Maryland where soldiers could have educational...

OSBORN: No.

MCKINZIE: Was that a postwar development?

OSBORN: I guess there was an educational division in the Morale Branch when we changed its name.

[30]

The Army man who was the head of our little educational division was not very well qualified. So I got Frank [Francis Trow] Spaulding, director of the Harvard School of Education, one of the top men in the country, to come down and be a colonel in the Army and our educational director. He set up a correspondence school in the University of Wisconsin at Madison. They did a tremendous job. They were delighted to take on the job because they had so few students during the war, and we had as many as four million men at a time enrolled in correspondence courses in the University of Wisconsin. They sent in examination papers, and they were counted as credits. Many men graduated from high school, and were accepted in college on the correspondence courses that they did in the Army. Later I think this transferred to the University of Maryland where it operates now, of course,

[31]

on a smaller scale.

MCKINZIE: People who have been in the Army recall that once a week or so when they were outside combat situations every man in every operating company was called, and there was a TI&E hour. Someone either at the company or battalion level would come and talk about the baseball scores back home and have a little lesson on this or that topic. Is that an innovation of yours?

OSBORN: This was the so-called orientation hour. The orientation hour was set up by the Army with a rather special regulation, and I think maybe it was set up before I came in. There was supposed to be a discussion group at the company level, at which the officer would discuss world affairs with the men. We prepared a great deal of material which we

[32]

sent out in batches to the Army for this orientation hour. In actual practice it didn't work out very well to have a discussion between an officer and the men, and it was generally changed in the field to be a talk by the officer using material that

we'd sent out. These Army talks were very popular, and we got them out in great number.

The size of this information-education operation is hard for me to believe looking back on it. We ran all the Army newspapers overseas. About three million daily newspapers were going out. We had a hundred and twenty-seven radio stations transmitting news on the hour and recreational and musical programs the rest of the time. They were all stations of limited wave lengths so that the troops within a hundred miles could hear them, but they wouldn't enable distant planes to home in

[33]

on them. We published Yank, which sold two and a half million copies a week. Our news center in New York handled more news than AP and UP combined, and this went into our newspapers and our radio information and so on. We had a motion picture division, and I got Frank Capra to come on from the west coast and head up a motion picture division. He made a wonderful series of films, some of which you must have seen if you were in the Army: "Why We Fight" and "Our Ally England."

MCKINZIE: Do you recall the editorial policy and the content of those films? Those are in a sense ideological questions and problems. Did you delegate the responsibility for that to the people who were heads of those divisions, or did you assume overall responsibility?

OSBORN: I suppose I had the responsibility, but

[34]

I delegated it. In the case of the films, I delegated it all to Frank Capra, who I got to know and have a great confidence in as an American having very fine ideals. On the educational work I certainly delegated everything to Spaulding, who was a very able and very high class man, later he became Commissioner of Education of New York State.

To go back to the original committee, the original Morale Branch had on its staff a younger Army officer named Lyman Munson. He was the son of the general who made the Munson shoe, and his father had been a general in the Morale Branch before him. Lyman Munson was assigned to the Morale Branch. He was a very lively fellow, and his judgment in many ways was very good. He was good at selecting men. He found Paul Horgan to head up the Orientation Branch. Paul Horgan was at that time Master of Cadets at a New Mexico private

[35]

military training school, and he was also a novelist. I don't know how Munson happened to bring him in; but Paul came in, and we made him head of the Orientation Branch. Paul was just a perfect man for the job. He was a man of very fine judgment, a wise man, wrote beautifully, and very widely experienced --

widely traveled -- knew people everywhere. I let Paul pretty much alone. Of course, we had staff meetings all of us, and plenty of intercommunication. I kept pretty close with all the men and with their staffs, but Paul Horgan ran the Orientation Branch and did a wonderful job. You know his writing don't you?

MCKINZIE: Yes. When you mentioned it, yes.

About editorial policy in Yank, and in all the newspapers, how was that handled?

OSBORN: By the heads of the different branches in

[36]

the Division, and frequent staff conferences, and also with advice of the Research Branch who reported on what troops knew and thought about. The Research Branch had an able sociologist on race relations, Donald Young, who greatly influenced our thinking on race and what we put out which might affect troop attitudes. The word Negro or black never appeared in our material, all were soldiers, fellow combatants in the war, and appeared as such in everything put out by the Division.

On the handling of political matters we reported to Mr. Stimson.

MCKINZIE: How did that come about?

OSBORN: Well, Mr. Stimson was very much aware of his responsibilities for public relations. He kept General [Alexander D.] Surles from active duty because he liked General Surles as his

[37]

public relations man. General Surles was in Washington with Mr. Stimson throughout the war, and he was a fine character. Mr. Stimson was concerned about what we were telling troops, and General Marshall told me after a while that I was to report to Mr. Stimson on the content of what we were saying to troops though I was to report to General Somervell on anything else. In this way I was constantly being sent for and going in to see Mr. Stimson as to what we were saying to troops. Mr. Stimson was an old Roman in his behavior, and he wasn't going to allow any politics to be played with information to troops. There wouldn't have been any politics anyway, because I wasn't interested. But he sent for me often on this subject. Then when it came to election time -- Roosevelt's fourth term -- there was a great deal of talk about Roosevelt

[38]

trying to influence troops for their votes. Mr. Stimson took this very seriously, and he appointed one of his men (Robert Cutler) to sit with me on all political information which we sent out to see that it would be absolutely non-partisan and carefully handled. We did this, and there was no criticism of what we sent out.

MCKINZIE: How long in 1945 did you stay in? Did you wait until V-J Day before you decided to leave the services?

OSBORN: I certainly stayed until the end of the war which was November. It seemed to me that it would be best for the service if I could get one of the Army men who was going to stay in the Army, whom I knew, and who knew the work we had been doing and was interested -- get him appointed in my place fairly early,

[39]

so that he would work the job out. I told General Marshall I was going to resign and recommended a successor, and he agreed to a man named General Latham, who I worked a good deal with, and who was the most appropriate man in the Army I thought for the job. I resigned I guess in December, 1945, and Latham came and took my place.

Then I went back to scientific work and business, and I was pretty much out of touch with Washington until November of 1946 when I went to a convocation at Princeton where I was a trustee. We were giving a degree to General Marshall. General Marshall asked me what I was doing. I told him what I was doing, and I got some indication that he was thinking he had a job for me. Sure enough about a week later I got word from him to come down and see him. I guess he was Secretary of State by that time.

[40]

MCKINZIE: Yes.

OSBORN: I went down -- actually I went down and saw Dean Acheson. I may have seen General Marshall, but Dean Acheson was the man I talked to. Of course, I knew Dean because he had been in the Government when I was there -- we had business together. Dean said that they wanted to appoint me Deputy Representative of the United States to the United Nations Commission for the Control of Energy, for peaceful purposes only (I forget the title of the commission), under Warren Austin, who was the United States Ambassador to the United Nations. So, I accepted the job. This job was in New York and not in Washington though I made frequent trips to the State Department, and that's where I got into the Truman administration. Of course, I'd served under Mr. Truman in a sense from the time of Roosevelt's death -- in the Army --

[41]

but I really got back into it in December 1946. I forget whether my appointment from Mr. Truman in this job was 1946 or January 1947. But all these papers have been sent out to the Truman Library.

I had one very active year in New York working with the committee of the United Nations. There were twelve of us -- all the members of the Security Council appointed representatives to the committee. This was a very active year indeed.

MCKINZIE: Did you have enthusiasm for achievement? Did you have the belief that there could be some kind of achievement when Dean Acheson asked you to take that job? This had been preceded by some difficulties over controlling atomic energy. The [Bernard M.] Baruch plan had not won any acceptance in New York.

OSBORN: Not by the Russians nor by anybody else.

[42]

When I went to Washington on that Friday in December, Dean Acheson told me that there was quite a question in the State Department whether the negotiations should continue because they had been turned down so definitely by Russia, and it might be foolish for us to be sort of suppliants in the negotiations.

While I was in Washington I got a telephone call from Robert Oppenheimer, who was on the west coast. He said he wanted to see me. I didn't know him. I knew of his name in the newspaper, and I suggested that I was on my way up here to Garrison. He said, "Well, I'll meet you up there on Saturday." This was Friday afternoon, and he arrived here Saturday morning at 11 o'clock. He said, "I want to see you right away before you get on this job or make any public statement because I want to tell you my view of it. This plan is one

[43]

which I worked a .great deal on." It was called the Acheson-[David E.] Lilienthal plan and then the Baruch plan. But he said, "It was my original proposal, and I thought it was a good one." But he said, "I was wrong. I didn't know enough about Russia. Russia is a closed society, and they are not going to let anybody in. They are never going to allow any inspection which will mean anything, and therefore, this plan could not be put into effect and be safe for the security of the United States because if the Russians accept, it will be on some basis where there is no real inspection." He said, "I'm just sure of this, they are just a closed group, and they are not going to allow anybody to go in their country."

This was very interesting to me with regards to Oppenheimer...

MCKINZIE: Yes.

[44]

OSBORN: ...and as regards to my job.

MCKINZIE: Were you surprised by that when you heard it? Did you have any strong views?

OSBORN: No. I knew very little about the subject except what I read in the papers. It seemed to me natural because I did know a good deal about Russia. I made it a business to know something about Russia. I think I had some of the finest reports on Russia. I've just been through them in my files and sent some copies out to the Truman Library. Some of the finest reports on Russia and on [Joseph] Stalin that I wish the State Department had had and made use of at the time. I had no illusion about the Russians at all, and I was inclined to agree right away that they were not going to accept any plan by which foreigners, Americans or anybody else, would have a free chance to inspect

[45]
their country.

Shortly afterwards, Acheson called a meeting at the State Department to discuss whether we would proceed with negotiations. By that time, I was established in the office in New York, and had conferred with all the other representatives of the twelve countries involved. They all felt that they had not had a chance to work on the plan because Baruch had held the center of the stage and done all the negotiations himself, and they didn't know whether the Russians were receptive of the plan or not. They never had a chance to find out because Baruch had made a rather personal thing of it, and they were anxious for negotiations to continue. When I found this out I had a feeling that we should certainly go along with them and continue negotiations. I went to the conference that Dean Acheson called in the

[46]
State Department at which Senator [Warren R.] Austin was present.

The Army and others spoke very strongly against continuing the negotiations, because they had been turned down on the Baruch plan and the Army thought it was dangerous and unnecessary to go further. Senator Austin was very anxious to continue because he said, "I'm getting on a very warm personal basis with [Andrei A.] Gromyko, and I think that there's a good chance I'll be able to do something with him." This didn't strike a responsive cord with me because I knew enough about the Russians, and I'd already met Gromyko. I never saw Gromyko alone without a Secret Service man on either side of him. You couldn't negotiate with Gromyko, he was only a messenger boy for the Kremlin. But when Acheson asked me whether we should continue I said -- for a very different

[47]
reason from Austin's -- we should continue. We should continue because the other nations, particularly England, Canada, and France don't think they have had a fair chance at this negotiation, and they want to see for themselves whether they can work something out. The committee agreed that they should continue the negotiations for this reason, though they disagreed very strongly with Austin that there was likely to be any breakthrough.

Dean Acheson felt that Austin was entirely wrong about it. He said that if the English, Canadians, and French wanted it to continue, we certainly should, otherwise we'd be in a very impossible position of having refused to negotiate, you see.

MCKINZIE: Right.

[48]

OSBORN: When we set up the work of the Commission, and I got to know the different people on it I was very impressed with General [Andrew] McNaughton, the Canadian representative -- from the point of view of character and personal qualities, very fine man. I proposed that General McNaughton be the leader of the committee and that Canada take the direction. It wasn't a matter of chairmanship; the chairmanship of the committee changed every month, but General McNaughton should be the man who we would look to to decide our direction and how the thing would go. I think everybody was very pleased with this because they had been rather irked at the United States taking the position they did before. Of course, I worked closely with him on it; I never retired.

MCKINZIE: Yes.

OSBORN: General McNaughton really more or less

[49]

ran the show, and he did it very well. One time later on Francois De Rose, the French representative on the Commission, referred to General McNaughton officially as the conscience of the committee -- which was nice. Well, the whole group was a wonderful group of men really. It was a very interesting experience to me, because it just happened that to this particular committee the different nations assigned very high grade men, and there was no political motivation in it, except on the part of Russia and the satellites. They, of course, had no intentions of negotiating. They were operating under rules and daily and monthly instructions laid down in the Kremlin, and there was no negotiation about it.

MCKINZIE: You mentioned that Robert Oppenheimer had been in touch with you almost as soon as you had been approached about taking this

[50]

appointment. Who else briefed you? Who officially briefed you about this, do you recall? Did you see Ambassador Austin in regard to this?

OSBORN: I was briefed by the State Department, by Dean Acheson and others as to the position of the United States. I really got briefings on the negotiations by two very competent young men assigned on Baruch's staff, who stayed on. I moved into a staff that was established and a going concern, and I kept them all

on. It was a very good staff. They gave me the kind of briefing that was very valuable to me, but I got my instructions from the State Department at meetings which I went to.

MCKINZIE: So there was no large change in policy at the time you took over?

[51]

OSBORN: No.

MCKINZIE: It was just a matter of changing some personnel and allowing Canada rather than the United States to become the director of it?

OSBORN: Yes. It is very interesting that we did make various substantial changes in the Baruch plan, and they were made not by the United States they were made in a group of committees. One of my staff suggested that we couldn't get anywhere meeting and debating in Long Island where the United Nations was located because these meetings were public and there was nothing but propaganda from the Russians. So we set up a series of committees -- one for every heading on the atomic energy agenda -- one for control of mines and materials, one on inspection, and one on manufacturing -- control of manufacturing plants and so on. McNaughton of

[52]

Canada was the chairman of the Committee on Mines. You remember the Baruch plan called for international inspection of what was going on. After these committees had been at work for two or three months McNaughton, of all men, reported that his committee didn't think it would be safe to have mines independently owned and operated within the countries of the different nations where they lay and that mines should be taken over by the United Nations Atomic Energy staff. This would be run as a worldwide social venture in which all countries would participate in the sense that they would ask the central United Nations agency to put up their plants -- run them. So we changed the Baruch plan, but it was changed and stiffened very much by the other countries. We never would have been able to do this if the United States had proposed it.

[53]

MCKINZIE: Would the United States have accepted that position?

OSBORN: Oh, the United States liked the position because it was a very much tighter position. Instead of having inspection, it was a much stronger position. The Russians idea of inspection was a very simple one. Russians from the start accepted international inspection, and they publicized this a great deal. There were headlines: "Russia Accepts Inspection." We got to a meeting of minds, but when we got down to international inspection that meant there would be the international unit in Paris. The Russians would inspect their own operations and report on their inspections to the international inspection unit, but nobody would

go into Russia and look. This was what the Russians called open international inspection, but it didn't go down with the rest of the committee, and we never got

[54]

beyond that point.

MCKINZIE: Did you talk about such things as preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons? Was that a subject that ever came up on your agenda?

OSBORN: Well, this you see would have been the complete doing away with nuclear weapons. Under the proposal the United States would destroy all its nuclear weapons and turned over all its know-how to the United Nations. The United Nations would then use that know-how to build nuclear plants wherever countries wanted them. We didn't need to talk about proliferation. We were the only people that had the atomic weapons, and we were turning in all our secrets, and thereafter nobody was to have them except the United Nations.

MCKINZIE: The reason I asked that question was

[55]

that after the fact there were a lot of people who said the Smyth Report contained enough information to enable any nation with technological sophistication to have constructed nuclear weapons. I just wonder if there was any talk of this since complete disarmament wasn't going to occur because of the position of the Soviets -- some way to keep it from spreading...

OSBORN: There was a great deal of talk about how long it would be before Russia had atomic weapons. Somervell said twenty-five years. Others said a few years. Of course, they were well along. This we didn't know during our negotiations. The Russians were almost at the point of exploding an atomic bomb during the negotiations. None of us had any idea of this. We all thought that this was a long way off.

MCKINZIE: In fact, you were still serving in that

[56]

position at the time they did explode their atomic bomb.

OSBORN: Yes.

MCKINZIE: Do you recall any incidents that occurred in that committee at that time?

OSBORN: No. The committee wasn't meeting then. They were no longer negotiating with them.

MCKINZIE: I was going to ask you if you could tell if the cold war and the events of the cold war, the Berlin Airlift, the Soviet bomb, and the fall of China, and all of that was reflected in the way the members of the committee approached their work?

OSBORN: No. Because the committee didn't meet anymore.

MCKINZIE: Is that right?

[57]

OSBORN: Yes. I left the committee in 1951 having gone in in '47. But by 1951, I was Deputy of Atomic Control and Deputy on the Control of Conventional Arms, and neither committee of the U.N. had met for months. I don't think we'd met for a year, and we didn't have any talks because we didn't get together on it, and I didn't go to the United Nations.

MCKINZIE: At what point did the negotiations really break down? Was it something that just fizzled out, or can you think of a particular stalling block?

OSBORN: We drafted a majority committee report to the General Assembly which was to be presented to the General Assembly in Paris at their meeting in the fall of 1947. We had been working on it for a year. The Soviet Union, the Ukraine, and all the other satellites had voted

[58]

against it. It was a report of nine members of the Atomic Energy Commission Committee. This was presented to the General Assembly in Paris, debated and approved by the General Assembly, and then vetoed by Russia in the Security Council. I'm pretty sure that's right because I remember General McNaughton's pleasure and enthusiasm when the General Assembly approved it, but we all knew it was going to be vetoed in the Security Council. We all felt that the negotiations were over. We'd gone at it very patiently and exhaustedly, and there wasn't any use negotiating any further because by that time the committee was very determined that there should be no weakening of their plan. It would be very dangerous to allow loopholes by which Russia could be building atomic weapons when there was a treaty preventing it.

MCKINZIE: Was there ever any serious discussion

[59]

given to any alternative plan? One in which the United States would unilaterally reduce its nuclear stockpile.

OSBORN: If there was, it wasn't in our committee. Nor was I aware of it.

MCKINZIE: Did you have bilateral discussions with the Soviet representatives to this committee -- just you and the Soviet delegate? Did you sit down without the other members of the committee?

OSBORN: I tried to talk to Gromyko a number of times, and he always had Secret Service people with him in the guise of assistants. I don't know if he knew whether they were assistants or Secret Service people, but they were always there, and he never let down on his official demeanor. In 1947 towards the middle of the year, Gromyko was evidently very tired. I thought he was really approaching a nervous

[60]

breakdown. He told us that he had been given leave for two months or so and was going to the Crimea to rest.

I met him in the hall one day -- a few days before he was to leave. He was alone didn't have his Secret Service people. He was walking down the hall, and I stopped and I said, "Mr. Gromyko, you're and undoubtedly you are going to report to your government. We've been having all these public debates which have been largely propaganda, and it is quite possible that your government really hasn't got the same understanding of our position that you have. Even you may not have the full understanding of our position."

"I have great confidence that you are very sincere in your desire to reach an agreement which will prevent the use of these arms.

[61]

I think you believe that I am sincere. I wonder whether you and I couldn't go to lunch together or meet somewhere and talk about the respective positions of our countries, so that you can report back to your government what's really on our minds and not what's been said in these speeches."

Gromyko leaned against the wall of the hall as we were walking in, and he was quiet for quite a long while and looked at me. Then he said, "Mr. Osborn, you may be sincere, but governments are never sincere." He didn't answer my question. He just said, "I have to go along," and left.

Of course he was right, and I knew that. I didn't know it my government, and it wasn't so about my government at the time. There would have been quite a lot of trouble getting the Baruch plan accepted, or getting

[62]

the modified plan accepted, but we would have accepted it. Mr. Stimson and the State Department assured me that they would recommend it strongly. They were pretty sure it would go through Congress.

MCKINZIE: Were you aware of any large opposition within the Armed Forces against it?

OSBORN: No. They were against any weakening of the plan, but they were not against the plan as we developed it and presented it to the General Assembly. Senator Austin was not very well at the time -- he had quite an illness. He still -- at the time of the General Assembly and after a plan was being presented -- thought that it might be modified and that the Russians might come along. This the Army took grave exception to. They were very excited about Senator Austin's statements that we were

[63]

going to make some concessions to the Russians. I was a no concession man too, I still am. The Army was very upset about Austin and took some quite strong measures reporting about him to the administration.

I knew they were doing this. I tried to warn Senator Austin, but he was not well. We got into quite a little difficulty. There is a secret report in my papers that talks about this. We got in difficulty because he was having news conferences at which he was saying that we were going to make certain concessions to the Russians, and we were going to get a treaty. This wasn't really what he thought. I told the reporters after he left that it wasn't what he really thought, and that they must not misquote him. He was upset with me and only later learned that it was the Army that was reporting. He thought I was

[64]

reporting back to him.

MCKINZIE: Oh, I see.

OSBORN: But it was the Army and not me.

MCKINZIE: After the committee report and after the Soviet veto, what kind of attempt to regroup was there? Did you meet about having made the valiant effort?

OSBORN: After that assembly meeting, the State Department decided that there was no use reopening the negotiations. The committees were kept in abeyance -- they didn't hold any meetings. McNaughton went back to Canada, and there were new people appointed. The committees I think remained in existence, but the personnel changed, and the whole effort was dropped for the time.

MCKINZIE: What then were your duties after that?

[65]

OSBORN: None. I was working in New York at the U.S. mission to the U.N., and it was a part-time job. I wasn't paid anything. We had offices with the United

States mission, and I had an office there, but I didn't maintain an office there after the thing died down. I went on to other things. I'd been active in work on population studies, and one of the earliest people in that field.

MCKINZIE: Yes.

OSBORN: John Rockefeller asked me to run the Population Council which he was setting up as a foundation for the study of population problems. He asked me to run it temporarily while they got a qualified man to run it. The temporary nature of it lasted for six years. So I was kept very busy on that and other things. I resigned from the State

[66]

Department in '51, I think.

MCKINZIE: After a period of just no activity.

OSBORN: Yes.

MCKINZIE: Did you have any views yourself at that time about what would be necessary to bring about any kind of effective disarmament? I know we've gone through SALT [Strategic Arms Limitations Talks] since then?

OSBORN: I had very definite views. I never thought that any -- I don't think now that any treaty of disarmament with the Russians would be a safeguard to peace. I figured it would only be dangerous. I'd seen the [Aristide] Briand-[Frank Billings] Kellog treaties which were hailed in the papers [August 27, 1928]. Now we are going to have an era of peace in a world which knew better than to go to war. I

[67]

saw the British-American-Japanese naval treaties in which our neighbors would be on a three-three-two basis. I wrote in my diary at the time: "Now we will go to war on a bigger scale than ever." And the Japanese developed a pocket battleship which was not included in the treaties but which had bigger guns than any of our battleships, and they did go to war. I have a French book here somewhere in my shelf entitled, *Hunt Mille Traite de Paix*, Eight Thousand Peace Treaties. That's my attitude about treaties with the Russians and the Russian Government. I think you can have treaties in an open society, but you can't have treaties with a government which runs a closed society -- doesn't mean anything. It may be that as a means of opening discussion with them and opening up relations with them that there may be some advantages in discussions

[68]

about treaties. It frightens me because the American public would feel, oh, we have a treaty with Russia, we are safe on nuclear weapons. Having a treaty with

Russia just means that we've agreed not to do something, and they've agreed not to tell us what they are doing.

MCKINZIE: You weren't very optimistic at all then at the time?

OSBORN: No. I thought we'd wait out the Russian thing. The reports I'd had on Russia said that we couldn't disarm as long as the Russian Government was the closed kind of government and society that it was and is. Our move was not to disarm, but to stay strong, and do anything we could to open up Russian society. Open it up to information, contracts, and trade. If eventually Russian

[69]

society became a part of the world, this form of government would not continue. It would be overthrown and then we would have a chance to make agreements with them. That is still my position, and I shouldn't be surprised if it was pretty much [Henry] Kissinger's position.

MCKINZIE: When you were drafting the report or at the time that it was being considered by the General Assembly did you have occasion to talk to Dean Acheson at all about these resolutions?

OSBORN: No. The only thing of that sort was that I talked to Dean Acheson about the attitude of our government towards communism. I thought that the Russians were putting it all over us in the way of the effectiveness of our propaganda. I felt that the President or the Secretary of State should make a statement in a speech or

[70]

something like that saying in effect that the United States had no quarrel with communism as a plan of social organization, that in fact we admired the ideals of Socialist communism. They were in accord with our religious background and beliefs, but we have seen no signs as yet that they had a practical method of increasing the well-being of the people. We had a system which had increased the well-being of our people beyond anybody's dreams, and we were not going to change it until socialism could do as much. But we respected the Socialist and Communist ideals and were not opposed to them. In fact, we had many Allies who were largely Socialist -- like Sweden and England who've got a lot of Socialist measures. But we were inevitably and deeply opposed to dictatorships of every kind. Especially dictatorships which kept their people uninformed

[71]

of what was going on, imprisoned dissidents, and used communism as a cloak for that kind of dictatorship. If that's what people called communism we were against it.

Well, Dean said, "This is a very interesting view, and it's one on which the State Department is very much divided as whether the State Department would recommend this statement of the American position on communism. This country was all alerted about [Joseph] McCarthy. He was dominating the Congress for a while. The State Department group discussing this were pretty well divided. A lot of people felt just the way I did about it in the State Department. A lot thought this would be a very dangerous statement to make. The Government would be accused. Mr. Truman would be accused of being pro-Communist which was an accusation that they loved to throw at Democrats anyway, and

[72]

it would be unwise to make such a statement. I think they were probably right. So nothing came of the meeting except that we couldn't afford to make such a statement at that time. That was my view then, and it's still my view. I think it probably would have been unwise for President Truman to make such a statement at that time.

MCKINZIE: It would have been domestically unwise.

OSBORN: Yes.

MCKINZIE: It might have made negotiations a little easier.

OSBORN: It wouldn't have made negotiations easier, but it would have clarified our position with the rest of the world: "Sure we're for revolution against dictatorships, against unfair control of the masses by Capitalist land

[73]

owners. We're for revolution that's what the United States stands for that's what we started for. So we are not against all these fellows who are idealist Communists who want the perfect society. We're all for them. This is great, but we are against dictatorships." It would have given us a clear position. I thought a much stronger position propaganda wise in the world than to be in a position saying: "We're against communism; we're against the equality of men."

MCKINZIE: At this very same time you've already mentioned that you were interested in the problems of a rapidly increasing population. You were, indeed, in the forefront of that movement. That's a little outside the realm of government. Yet, government later, after this period did become very interested in that?

[74]

OSBORN: Yes.

MCKINZIE: I wonder if I could ask you how you came to be interested in that particular problem, and if you ever approached anyone in the U.S. Government

about its awareness of the problem -- or should that have been a governmental problem back in those years?

OSBORN: When I left college I went into business, but I had in the back of my mind a constant interest in what was happening to the human race. This just seemed to me a very interesting subject. I studied geology in Princeton, and had some idea of the time span of the evolution of life, and I just kept wondering what's happening to the human race. When I retired from business and started working in this field, it was for this reason to satisfy this curiosity on my part. Naturally, if you

[75]

want to find out what's happening to the human race, you've got to find out what's happening to human populations -- what kind of people are surviving and what kind of people are not surviving and how many and so on.

After three or four years the little staff I'd gotten together and I wrote a book, Dynamics of Population, which was an attempt to consider what was going on in the world with the changes in the size and scope of populations. It was the first book of that sort, and this gave us a little position as population people.

This was way back in 1937, and there were several other people in the field besides my little group.

Mr. Scripps of the Scripps newspapers had set up a foundation in population. I think it was called the Scripps' Foundation for Population Studies. Two very able men ran it,

[76]

very able sociologists. Also the [Albert G.] Milbank Fund had set up a Division of Population Studies. The Milbank Fund was a health fund, and Sidensticker who ran it had an idea that health and population problems might be related. There was a nucleus of very competent scientists working in this field, and we all worked together. Sidensticker of the Milbank Fund and I thought that the field would never become an accepted field of study unless it was well placed in some university. We got Mr. Milbank to put up money for a Bureau of Population Research. We tried to get it at Harvard, but [James B.] Conant wouldn't take it; afterwards he regretted it. Princeton took it. Mr. Milbank was a Princetonian, and it went more easily. We started it with only about three hundred thousand dollars, but later it had grants of two or three million and continuing

[77]

grants from many people. It was later supported in a very large way by the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller people. They have had several grants of a million dollars or more, and this put population well up in academic standing.

The group set up the Population Association of America as a meeting place for people interested in population, and then they organized the International Union for the Study of Population which was a very active and strong organization. We met all over the world every three years for a number of years. The French in particular had a very strong government demographic institute. We did not have any government institute, though the Bureau of the Census worked closely with our group in bringing the census out in new ways and in different ways.

In about 1951 we got the United Nations to set up a commission on population. When I say

[78]

"we" got it, I mean this whole group of people interested in population and their backers in the foundations. The Secretariat of the United Nations Commission on Population was turned over to Frank Notestein, head of the Bureau of Population Research at Princeton, and my longtime friend. He did a wonderful job of organizing the Secretariat of the Population Commission of the United Nations. He ran it for two or three years, and then went back to Princeton and put a new man in.

The men that I have spoken of working sometimes as a group, sometimes through their universities, and sometimes through the Population Association of America raised a great deal of money for the training of men in scholarships in this specialized field which was either sociology or economics. They raised money for special studies on the

[79]

population changes taking place in the United States. We got these funded in a very large scale. We made the largest sociological study that has ever been made in the United States. It was the first one, and we got two hundred and fifty or three hundred thousand dollars for a study called "The Indianapolis Study," which was a study of the fertility characteristics of the people of Indianapolis, a typical city in the United States.

MCKINZIE: When was that done by the way?

OSBORN: The field work was done in 1939 and completed just before the war. Then everything stopped, but we had all the field work completed. We began publishing it in 1946 after we were able to get our people back and begin to analyze the material. We published it in three volumes of the Milbank Fund which are up there on the

[80]

shelf. Those studies in the population trends in the United States have been continued in a very large way by the University of Michigan and other people, mostly with Ford grants of a million at a whop. They are big studies. They really

were the basis of all of our information on birth control: how much it's used and who was using it, on trends in population growth, on public attitudes towards birth control, abortion, and all which had been the background of much of the legislation and some of the propaganda. When John Rockefeller set up the Population Council as a foundation interested in this subject the field work of the Council was almost entirely overseas. We felt it our job to conduct research, medical research on contraception.

We had a medical division to conduct research on population trends in this country and in

[81]

foreign countries, and to give technical help to countries asking help in establishing birth control programs. We had a medical division, a demographic division, and a technical division giving help.

The first big call came from India in the 1950's India wanted to put in a big population control program. We sent over a very high grade group of three people who worked with the Indian department of public health for months and set up a program. The American help later was taken over by the Ford Foundation who spent a great deal of money there. We did the same thing in a number of other places for other governments. We put the greatest effort in and got the least results from the Indian thing. Yet the Indians tried. It was just sort of hopeless. We still are very discouraged about India whereas in some other

[82]

places there were very great results -- probably going to happen anyway.

MCKINZIE: Did you at the end of the Second World War feel that population expansion had become significant enough that it constituted a problem which governments should deal with directly? Should there have been a bureau for the study of population in the U.S. Government? If so did you ever make overtures to anyone?

OSBORN: None of us foresaw the population explosion in the United States which began in 1945 or a little before. None of us foresaw it. The birth rate had been declining in the United States. It declined very rapidly during the depression, and we didn't foresee at all what was going to happen. We were all wrong in our calculations.

We did see that the population of the

[83]

underdeveloped countries was going to increase very rapidly. We were concerned by something which people aren't concerned about now, but they ought to be interested in. It was that the population of the European peoples was some 30

percent of the total of the world population in 1945. By the year 2000 it was going to be less than half of that proportion, and the underdeveloped countries were going to have the big population of the world. We thought that was a matter which should be understood, and we should be moving our diplomatic one economic efforts with this in mind. We foresaw the population explosion in the underdeveloped countries. We did not foresee it in the United States, but we kept up with it. We explained it. We knew long before the birth control people did when the population explosion was over. Now in the United States

[84]

we are probably having children at the rate of only 80 percent of the number needed for replacement. So the thing is over in the United States. I've always believed that it won't be over in the many underdeveloped countries such as India until we have a series of famines which wipe out millions of people -- the old Malthusian check. After that people would restrict their population. Just as the Irish did after the Irish famine. But the efforts of getting birth control information out to a population like the population of India hasn't been successful to date -- but had some effect. China has apparently been successful in reducing its birth rate, but by extraordinary measures. The population people were not much help until recently. In the last ten years, I think, they have been very helpful -- stimulated research by the government and that sort of thing.

[85]

MCKINZIE: Mr. Osborn, you have had at least three careers: one in business, one in the academic world, and another with Government. Since we've talked mostly about your Government career here, I wonder if -- now that you have had these other things to compare it to -- you have found that experience personally fulfilling in the sense of working with people of that integrity and believing that the work you were doing was socially useful?

OSBORN: Looking back on it, I was conscious of the very high quality of men I was working with in both the Roosevelt administration and the Truman administration -- with their morale, their dedication to the job, and their confidence in each other and in the way the thing was being run. In both administrations there was a wonderful quality to the personnel in the various departments that I dealt with and great

[86]

confidence in the integrity and dedication of the men who were running the Government right up to the top.

This was the case with Roosevelt, and I think equally or even more the case with Mr. Truman. I know that both Dean Acheson and General Marshall spoke to me about what a satisfaction it was to be under a man of such personal modesty and sureness at the same time. He was a wonderful man to work for. He always advised with them as to their point of view. He usually took their advice, but at

times went on his own when he felt it had to be done. They were very happy in working for him. They were the only two who had any direct experience whom I knew because I didn't know Mr. Truman myself.

A few weeks after Mr. Truman had become President a group of us associated with the

[87]

U.S.O. (United Service Organization) met in a conference room in the basement of a Washington hotel. It was a long meeting and ran into the night. About 11 o'clock we heard someone open the door and come in. It was President Truman, followed by the usual group of Secret Service men. He came directly to us, exchanged introductions. He told us that he had been making a speech nearby, had heard what we were doing, and felt he could not go to bed without telling us how much he appreciated our work in such a fine cause. He said this briefly and left. He had had a long day and none of us will ever forget the impression his visit left on us. I had that feeling that this was a fine administration. More so than any company I ever worked in, and more so than in my scientific group. There are charlatans among scientists as there are among other people.

[88]

When we were working up the Selective Service regulations, the labor people proposed that a labor union representative would be a member of every local draft board. The administration sent word to us, and I said we couldn't do this. The President sent back word that I should see Sidney Hillman. I'd never seen Sidney Hillman before, and he was quite a fellow. He had a big office and a lot of people around. He met me and said, "Mr. Osborn we are going to put representatives of the unions on every draft board." He said it was only fair to see that they do the right thing by the working man of the country.

I said, "Mr. Hillman, there are just as many crooks in the labor business (and I saw him begin to get excited) as there are among the lawyers, even among clergymen. If you had a labor man on every draft board, and one

[89]

draft board out of three thousand did something dishonest you would be in for trouble over the whole United States. If a clergyman or a lawyer did it, there are so many of them it would be just a local thing, but if you have a union man you'd be..."

He said, "By god, I think you're right."

His staff rushed into it and said, "But Mr. Hillman, we agreed..."

But Hillman said, "Oh, I don't think it's a good idea." So we didn't have a labor man on every draft board.

MCKINZIE: So you found that it was personally rewarding.

OSBORN: Oh, very. I look back on it now as a very fine experience. One that gives me a great deal of optimism about our country. Because while we may not get another Roosevelt and

[90]

another Truman, there are men like that around, and they will be around.

MCKINZIE: Thank you very much, sir.

[91]

INDEX

Acheson, Dean, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 50, 69, 71, 86

Air Force, 15

Armed forces, welfare and recreation of the, 18, 19, 21-29

Army:

Baruch Plan, and the, 46, 62-64

Committee on Welfare of Soldiers, 12

Information and Education Division of, 17, 19, 25, 26, 28-39

Intelligence (G-2), 26, 27

Moral Branch of the, 16, 34

Welfare and recreation in the, 18, 19, 21-29

Atomic energy, control of, 41-47, 49-53, 57-59, 61-63

Atomic weapons, 54-56

Austin, Warren R., 40, 46, 47, 62, 63, 64

Baruch, Bernard M., 45, 50

Baruch Plan, 41-46, 51, 52, 57, 58, 61-63

Baxter, James P., 4

Briand-Kellog Treaty, 66

Budget, Bureau of the, 2, 6

Bull, Harold R., 27

Bundy, Harvey, 12, 13

Bundy, McGeorge, 13

Bundy, William, 13

Canada, 47, 48, 52, 64

Capra, Frank, 33, 34

Census, Bureau of the, 77

China, 84

Cold War, 56, 69-73

Committee on Selective Service, 3-11
Communism, 69-73
Conant, James B., 76
Conscientious objectors, 7, 8
Council on Population, 80
Coy, Wayne, 21, 22
Cutter, Robert, 38

DeRose, Francios, 49
Disarmament, 66-68
Draper, William A., 3
Dynamics of Population, 75

England, 47, 70

Ford Foundation, 77, 80, 81
Fosdick, Raymond, 23
France, 47

General Assembly, UN, 57, 58, 62, 69
Gromyko, Andrei A., 46, 59-61

Harvard School of Education, 30
Harvard University, 76
Hay-Adams Hotel, Washington, D.C., 2
Hershey, Lewis B., 9, 10, 12
Hillman, Sidney, 88, 89
Horgan, Paul, 34, 35
Hyde Park, New York, 4, 5

India, 81, 84
"The Indianapolis Study," 79
Information and Education Division, U.S. Army, 17, 18, 25, 26, 28-38
International Union for the Study of Population, 77

Japan, 67

Kissinger, Henry, 69
Knox, John C., 18, 19

Lovett, Robert A., 14, 15

McCarthy, Joseph R., 71
McCloy, John J., 14, 15
McNaughton, Andrew, 48, 49, 51, 52, 58, 64
McNutt, Paul V., 18, 19, 21-24

Marshall, George C., 4, 5, 16, 19-22, 25, 28, 37, 39, 40, 86
Milbank, Albert G., 76
Milbank Fund, 76, 79
Morale Branch, U.S. Army, 16, 34
Munson, Lyman, 34, 35
Museum of Natural History, 1

Notestein, Francis, 78

Oppenheimer, J. Robert, 42, 43, 49
Orientation Branch, U.S. Army, 34, 35

Patterson, Robert P., 13, 14, 15
Pickett, Clarence E., 7
Population, study of, 73-84
Population Association of America, 77, 78
Population Council, 65
Population Research, Bureau of, 76-78
Princeton University, 74, 76, 78
Propaganda in the cold war, 69-73
Psychiatric disability, 9
Psychological research, 26-28

Red Cross, 16
Rice, Stuart, 1, 2
Rockefeller, John D., 65, 80
Roosevelt, Franklin D., 3-6, 18, 19, 21-24, 37, 86, 87

Scripps Foundation for Population Studies, 75
Scripps-Howard, 75
Secretariat of the UN Commission on Population, 78
Security Council of the UN, 41, 58
Selective Service, 3-11, 88, 89
Selective Service Boards, 10, 88, 89
Smith, Harold, 2, 3
Smyth Report, 55
Sociological research, 26-28
Somervell, Brehan B., 25, 26, 28, 29, 37, 55
Soviet secret police (KGB), 46, 59, 60
Soviet Union:
Atomic bomb, and the, 55, 56
Baruch Plan, opposed by, 41-46, 49, 53, 61, 63, 64
disarmament negotiations, and, 67, 68
Security Council of the UN, vetoes in, 57, 58
Spaulding, Francis T., 30, 34
Stalin, Joseph, 44

State Department:

atomic arms negotiations, and, 64

briefings, 50

Communism, views on, 71, 72

Stimson, Henry L., 11-15, 18, 19, 36-38, 62

Sullivan, Harry S., 9

Surles, Alexander D., 36, 37

Sweden, 70

Taft, Charles P., 3

Truman, Harry S.:

assessment of, 86, 87

Communism, charged with being soft on, 71, 72

Osborn, Frederick, appoints U.S. Deputy Representative to UN Atomic Energy Commission, 40, 41

United Nations, 51, 54, 65, 77, 78

UN Atomic Energy Commission, 40-53, 56-63, 66-68

United Service Organization (USO), 23, 24, 87

University of Maryland, 29, 30

University of Michigan, 80

University of Wisconsin, 30

Vietnam War, 8

Welfare and recreation, U.S. Army, 18, 19, 21-29

World War I, 16, 17

Yank magazine, 18, 33, 35

YMCA, 16

Young, Donald, 36