

Oral History Interview
with
JUDGE HERBERT N. MALETZ

An attorney-investigator for the Truman Committee, May 1941-November 1942; and a trial attorney in the Antitrust Division, Department of Justice, February 1946, December 1950; detailed to the White House for six months in 1950.

New York, New York

September 11, 1968

by Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library

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[1]

HESS: Judge Maletz, for the record, would you give me a little of your personal background, such as where you were born, where you were educated, what positions you held before your service on the Truman Committee, and a little bit about your background since the Truman Committee.

[2]

MALETZ: Yes, I'll be glad to, Mr. Hess. I was born on October 30, 1913, in Boston, Massachusetts, I was educated in the public schools of Boston. I was graduated from Harvard College in 1935 with a degree of A. B. cum laude, and was graduated from Harvard Law School

in 1939. From 1939, I think it was October 1939 to May 1941, I was employed as a review attorney-investigator by the Truman Committee of the Senate. I might add that at Harvard Law School I was a member of the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau and received full tuition scholarships for my last two years.

HESS: What are a few of the positions that you have held since your service on the Truman Committee?

MALETZ: I left the Truman Committee in November, 1942, to go into the United States Army, and was in the Army from November 1942 until, I

[3]

believe, January 1946. From February 1946 until the latter part of 1950, I think it was December 1950, I was a trial attorney in the Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice. From January 1951, until May of 1953, I was employed by the Office of Price Stabilization (OPS) in Washington, D.C. My initial Position with OPS was assistant chief counsel for about a year, and then I became an associate chief counsel for three or four months, and then served as chief counsel for a year and a half. After that, I was in private practice in Washington, D.C. for a period of about two years from May, 1953 until April of 1955. From April until November 1961, I was chief counsel of the Anti-trust subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives. That subcommittee is commonly referred to as the Celler Subcommittee. It handles not only anti-trust matters but is in effect the investigating

[4]

subcommittee for the House Judiciary Committee I left that position as chief counsel of the Celler Subcommittee in November 1961 to become a Commissioner of the United States Court of Claims in Washington, D.C., in which capacity I served until November 1967, a period of six years, at which time I was appointed by the President to be a judge of the United States Customs Court in New York City. I think that, in capsule form, represents my lifetime up to now.

HESS: Yes, that brings us up to date. Judge, why did you join the Truman Committee?

MALETZ: Looking back, I think I joined the Truman Committee because the job I had as review attorney for the Marketing Laws Survey was a most unsatisfactory one. It presented no challenge, and to my way of thinking it had very little future. I had heard from a friend

[5]

of mine that a new committee called the Truman Committee was being organized, and I thought that securing a position with the Committee might represent a helpful change from the duties I had as a review attorney with the Marketing Laws Survey.

HESS: What positions did you hold during your service on the Truman Committee?

MALETZ: Would you like to know how I happened to secure employment with the Truman Committee? I think it would be rather interesting. What happened was that I was informed that a gentleman by the name of Charles Patrick Clark, the associate chief counsel of the Truman

Committee, was responsible for employing staff members for the committee. I called Mr. Clark and he asked me to come over for an interview. I was interviewed by Mr. Clark extensively. I had never met him before. And he then asked

[6]

me whether the Dean of the Harvard Law School would recommend me. I said I thought he would. He also asked me to submit recommendations from several of my professors at the law school, which I did. Mr. Clark then called me and asked me to come back for a re-interview with him, together with an interview by Hugh Fulton, who was the chief counsel of the committee. I was interviewed at some length by Mr. Fulton and was employed by the committee.

HESS: Who seemed to be in charge of hiring the staff members for the committee?

MALETZ: Well, Mr. Clark did the initial interviewing, but the final decision in my judgement was made by Mr. Fulton in consultation with Senator Truman.

HESS: Fine. What positions did you hold?

MALETZ: I was an attorney-investigator I think

[7]

that was the title of my position. I remember quite well that I was initially employed at the grade of P-1, which was my grade at the Marketing Laws Survey. P-1 was then \$2000 a year, and about six months later I was promoted to P-2, which was about \$2600 a year and about a year later, just before I went in the army, I was upgraded to P-3 which is \$3200 a year,

HESS: Before the committee was established, Mr. Truman took a trip around the country to see some of the various military and defense installations. Do you recall hearing him speak of that trip?

MALETZ: No, I do not. I knew very little about the Truman Committee prior to my employment with it, but after having been employed by the committee I participated quite actively in various phases of its activities.

[8]

HESS: Before the committee was established, Mr. Truman took a trip around the country to see some of the various military and defense installations. Do you recall hearing him speak of that trip?

MALETZ: No. I do not. I knew very little about the Truman Committee prior to my employment with it, but after having been employed by the committee I participated quite actively in various phases of its activities.

HESS: Do you recall hearing Mr. Truman state in a capsule version what he thought the purpose and objectives of the committee should be?

MALETZ: My recollection is somewhat hazy, but I think the leitmotiv of Mr. Truman was that the committee would not be a committee to investigate the military strategy of the conduct of the war by the President and the military

[9]

commanders in the field.

HESS: Speaking of the committee in this nature, in his Memoirs, Vol. I, page 189, Mr. Truman states:

Senators Brewster and Vandenberg tried at times to make another Committee on the Conduct of the War out of our committee by attempting to bring the Congress into the control of the operations of the military establishment, but we never permitted that to happen.

Do you recall anything about that situation?

MALETZ: No, I did not participate in any discussions between Senator Truman on the one hand and Senators Brewster and Vandenberg on the other. As I indicated a few moments ago, Senator Truman made it abundantly clear that the committee would not investigate military strategy. He wanted to avoid having the committee become a committee on the conduct of the war per se.

HESS: As they had had during the Civil War.

[10]

MALETZ: He mentioned that he was very familiar with the operation of the committee that was set up by Congress during the Civil War, which investigated and criticized in many respects the military strategy then being followed. And he emphasized time and again that his committee would not duplicate that kind of experience.

HESS: Perhaps at this point we can discuss a few of the people who were chosen to be members of the committee. Could you give me a little of their background, why they were chosen for the committee, perhaps what some of their duties were, how effective they were in carrying out their individual duties, and things of that nature, and I have a list that is not complete. We can run down the names that I have, they are in alphabetical order, and then we can add on a few of the others that I have missed.

[11]

The first name on my list is William M. Boyle, Jr.

MALETZ: Yes. William M. Boyle Jr. came from Kansas City. He was a close friend of Senator Truman and my understanding is that the Senator asked Mr. Fulton to have Mr. Boyle placed on the staff. Mr. Boyle worked with me specifically on the investigation of the defense housing program. And when Harry Vaughan who was Senator Truman's secretary, entered into military service, as a lieutenant colonel in the beginning of 1942, Mr. Boyle left the committee staff to succeed Mr. Vaughan as secretary to Senator Truman.

HESS: How effective was Mr. Boyle as an investigator?

MALETZ: Why, I would say that Mr. Boyle did a conscientious job. He was quite interested in the work that he was doing. I don't believe that he

[12]

had had a great deal of background in investigative work of this nature. He learned very quickly and I thought was quite effective.

HESS: One general question on the staff; in hiring the staff members, did they not try to get men who had expertise in certain fields?

MALETZ: Well, when I came to work for the committee, in May of 1941, there were a number of staff employees who had been appointed some months before -- all of whom had considerable investigating experience. They were, as I recall, in addition to Mr. Fulton and Mr. Clark, Matthew Connelly, the chief investigator who had spent a number of years in investigative work; Harold Robinson, who had had extensive investigating experience with the FBI; and a Henry Styx, who is now deceased, who had done a considerable amount of prior investigating work in the aluminum area. I think that comprised the staff as of May 1941.

[13]

HESS: Do you think they tried to hire people with competence?

MALETZ: I think so, yes. I know that in my own case, Mr. Clark and Mr. Fulton were interested primarily in my law school record, and they relied almost in toto on the recommendations received from my law school professors and the then Dean of the Harvard Law School. I was told by Mr. Clark and Mr. Fulton that that was the sole reason for my employment.

HESS: You mentioned that you and Mr. Boyle worked on a housing investigation.

MALETZ: Defense Housing Program, yes.

HESS: What do you recall about that investigation? What were the procedures in going about such an investigation?

MALETZ: Well, the procedures were initially to

[14]

become fully familiar with the program itself, the legal aspects of the program, and the manner of its operation. And then we conducted a great number of interviews with people at various levels, and we heard a number of criticisms which were checked out. We also made file searches and we then prepared, Mr. Boyle and I, a rather extensive report on the program itself together with various recommendations for improvement. One of the recommendations that we made, and I think that was contained in the committee report, was to do away with the cost plus fixed

fee type of contract in the construction of defense housing projects. Mr. Boyle and I discussed that with Mr. Fulton, Mr. Clark, and Senator Truman. Senator Truman then appeared before a subcommittee then headed by Senator [Allen Joseph] Ellender, recommending an amendment to the defense housing act which would prohibit cost plus fixed fee contracting

[15]

except when absolutely necessary upon certification, I think, by the President or his delegate: And that amendment, by the way, was adopted.

HESS: The next man on our list was Fred A. Canfil.

MALETZ: I met Mr. Canfil, I think, just one or two times. I was never entirely clear as to what his duties were. I got the impression that he was kind of a roving investigator for Senator Truman, and I think that he reported privately to Mr. Truman on the results of his various camp installations. Mr. Canfil came from Missouri and had a ferocious dedication to Senator Truman, and I think that he reported privately to Mr. Truman on the results of his various inspections of camps throughout the country.

HESS: And not to Hugh Fulton and Charles Patrick Clark?

[16]

MALETZ: I don't believe so.

HESS: The next man is Charles Patrick Clark. Just what was his background?

MALETZ: I got to know Mr. Clark very well, indeed. Mr. Clark, you know, died last November. He was born in New York, went to public schools in New York, and graduated from Georgetown Law School, around 1936 or 1937. He was employed for a number of years by the General Accounting Office and then became associate chief counsel for the committee. Primarily, he handled administrative problems; he also participated in a supervisory capacity in some of the investigations. I know that the investigations that I conducted were performed under his general supervision.

HESS: What type of assistance did he give you at this time?

[17]

MALETZ: Well, it's hard to recollect, but I know that I consulted with him almost continually. He had a great deal of experience in conducting investigations as well as a basic sense of fairness, and he gave me general guidance in my investigative work. I can't recall more specifically his actual participation or precisely the kind of guidance he gave me. I did report to Mr. Clark and to Mr. Fulton.

HESS: There is some question among historians as to why Charles Patrick Clark was not employed in the White House during the Truman Administration. Have you heard any reason why he might not have made the transition?

MALETZ: Well, I've heard various rumors, but I simply don't know.

MALETZ: Yes. Matthew J. Connely was the Chief investigator. I think I indicated that I received general guidance from Mr. Clark. Mr.

[18]

Connely and I were located in the same office, and I consulted with him on an hour to hour basis. He gave me very specific guidance and was unusually helpful. In addition, Mr. Connely was responsible for the conduct of various investigations.

HESS: Was it one of his duties as chief investigator to give guidance to the other investigators?

MALETZ: Yes, he was the chief investigator, and he did provide specific guidance to the attorneys and investigators on the staff. He worked with Mr. Boyle, by the way, on an investigation that was unusually effective, and in my opinion, he made an important contribution to the success of the Truman Committee itself.

HESS: What was the technique that you referred to?

MALETZ: The technique was an ability to get to the core of a particular problem, to ascertain the areas

[19]

that needed investigation, to probe and to get to the core of the problem and not indulge in peripheral matters that weren't particularly important.

HESS: A question along that same line, what does it take to be a good investigator? What makes a good investigator?

MALETZ: I think myself that a good investigator is one who first has a terrible amount of energy, who is indefatigable, who has a great deal of basic common sense, who is able to distinguish between the relevant and the irrelevant, who is able to obtain information as unobtrusively as possible, and who is above all else completely objective in his approach.

HESS: The next man on our list is a gentleman we have mentioned, and that is Mr. Hugh Fulton.

MALETZ: Mr. Fulton was a very amazing gentleman. He had been, I think, executive assistant to

[20]

the United States Attorney in New York, a Mr. [John Thomas] Cahill, and I understood that he had been recommended to Senator Truman by the then Attorney General Jackson. Mr. Fulton was responsible in the last analysis for all the reports issued by the Truman Committee. He made the basic recommendations to Senator Truman as to what areas would be investigated. He conducted the hearings as committee counsel. And he assisted Senator Truman in the drafting of

the latter's speeches. I think that Mr. Fulton was one of the hardest-working, most energetic people I have ever met, and also one of the ablest.

HESS: One question on that. What is your opinion regarding the help that Hugh Fulton gave to the committee towards the success of the committee?

MALETZ: I think that Hugh Fulton was as much

[21]

responsible for the success of the Truman Committee as any one individual. Senator Truman relied on him very, very heavily. I think I had indicated that Mr. Fulton in large measure made the basic recommendation to Senator Truman as to what areas of investigations the committee would conduct. In addition, he not only reviewed every proposed report, he himself was responsible for the drafting of many, many reports. He did a lot of speechwriting, and he had overall supervision of the entire staff.

HESS: At the time that Mr. Truman moved into the White House, there was some speculation that Hugh Fulton would accept a position in the Truman administration. Do you know why he did not?

MALETZ: Only what Hugh Fulton himself told me. I recall this instance rather vividly. In November 1948 just prior to the presidential

[22]

election I was on a plane going to New York from Washington, when I happened to run into Hugh Fulton. We chatted for about two hours. In the course of the conversation, I indicated that I knew how close Hugh had been to Senator Truman during all the years of the Truman Committee, and I had a natural curiosity as to why he was not at the White House. And Mr. Fulton said, in effect, "I'm not at the White House, because Mr. Truman never asked me to work there, It's as simple as that."

HESS: The next man on our list -- we can hurry through some of the people who held some of the minor positions. Rudolph Halley.

MALETZ: Rudy Halley was with the committee only three or four months during the period I was there. I think he was employed in or about January or February 1942. He served initially as executive assistant to Mr. Fulton. Mr.

[23]

Fulton told me that he had known Mr. Halley when he and Mr. Halley had worked together on the Howard Hopson case and several other matters. Mr. Halley during the period that I was there, worked almost exclusively on the investigation of the rubber program.

HESS: Walter Hehmeyer.

MALETZ: Walter Hehmeyer was on the staff when I got there, and he served as liaison officer with the press; he drafted press releases and worked with Mr. Fulton in drafting speeches for Senator Truman.

HESS: Did he handle most of the press relations himself?

MALETZ: I would say that he did, although Mr. Fulton and Mr. Clark also conducted liaison with the press.

HESS: Robert L. Irvin.

[24]

MALETZ: Bob Irvin came with the staff after I was employed, and I don't recall at the moment what his assignments were.

HESS: Donald Lathrom.

MALETZ: Donald Lathrom also was employed on the staff. I don't recall whether or not he was employed before I was, or later, but in any event, he worked almost exclusively on the investigation of the aircraft program.

HESS: Frank E. Lowe.

MALETZ: I don't recall that I ever met General Lowe. He was the liaison officer with the Army, with the War Department it was then called. With the Navy -- while I investigated the tank lighter program -- my contacts were with Frank Nash, who later became assistant secretary of defense in charge of international affairs and has since deceased, Mr. Nash was chief

[25]

of the special matters section in the Bureau of Ships and acted as liaison between that Bureau and the committee.

HESS: What do you recall about the investigation of the tank lighters? Just how did that get underway?

MALETZ: I recall that fairly well. The committee had an executive session initially, at which time a Mr. Andrew Higgins of New Orleans testified and criticized a design selected by the Bureau of Ships for a tank lighter. He was very critical. We also had received some information indicating that the Marine Corps felt that the Bureau of Ships design of the tank lighter was most unsatisfactory and that the Higgins design for such a lighter was far preferable. After the executive hearings were held Mr. Fulton asked me to conduct an investigation of the entire tank lighter program. I first made a file search at the Navy department, Mr. Nash made all the

[26]

files available. Following that I interviewed a number of Marine Corps officers, including General Holland M. Smith, then went to Camp Edwards where I rode in a Bureau of Ships

lighter and participated in simulated operations, and then made file searches at the Charlestown, Massachusetts Navy Yard, and various other places. This investigation, took about four months. I then drafted a report, which Hugh Fulton went over, and this became the report of the committee. And that report, as I understand, was kept under lock and key for a number of years thereafter.

HESS: What was your finding as to the comparison of the Bureau of Ships tank lighter and the Higgins tank lighter?

MALETZ: I haven't seen that report for some twenty-six years, but as I recall, the committee was most critical of the selection by the Bureau

[27]

of Ships of its own design for a tank lighter and concluded that the Higgins design was far superior. The sequel was this: General Holland Smith had been very critical of the Bureau design. He said the Higgins lighter was superior in every respect, and I think all the prospective users felt pretty much the same way. Subsequently, the Navy reversed its decision after the committee report was sent to it for comment, and placed major reliance on the Higgins lighter. The Higgins lighter was the one that was actually used in the Tarawa operation which was commanded, as you recall, by the same General Smith. Now, unfortunately, the Higgins lighters were unable to clear the reefs at Tarawa about a hundred yards from the shoreline though I'm convinced that the Bureau of Ships lighter would not have done any better or indeed as good a job. But it's rather ironic, I think, that General Smith,

[28]

who had recommended vigorously the procurement of the Higgins lighter, found that it was unable in the Tarawa engagement to clear the off-shore reefs.

HESS: Was the Navy's insistence upon using its own design and its own equipment sort of a commonplace occurrence?

MALETZ: I simply don't know. I know what the facts were in this particular case and I recall that the committee was most vigorous in its criticism of the Bureau of Ships' decision, to select the Bureau of Ships lighter over the Higgins lighter.

HESS: The next man is Franklin N. Parks.

MALETZ: I knew him, and still know him quite well. He was a very industrious, a hardworking, intelligent gentleman. He is now assistant general counsel of the Atomic Energy Commission.

[29]

He had various assignments, the nature of which I don't recall.

HESS: Harold G. Robinson,

MALETZ: Harold G. Robinson had a background with the FBI, and did work on the investigation of camp construction programs.

HESS: In your opinion, did his previous service with the FBI help him in his investigations?

MALETZ: I would say very definitely. He was a very effective investigator; he worked very quickly, and he was very productive.

HESS: Haven Sawyer.

MALETZ: Haven Sawyer was on the staff, as I understood, on the recommendation of Senator Brewster. I don't recall just what he did. He was a very delightful gentleman, but I don't recall that he had many investigative tasks to perform.

[30]

HESS: Wilbur D. Sparks.

MALETZ: Well, Wilbur D. Sparks, again, was employed as I recall, after I was. He was an energetic and enthusiastic young man. He performed very effective work for the committee and eventually became chief investigator for the committee.

HESS: And a young lady, Marion G. Toomey.

MALETZ: Well, she was not an investigator. She was secretary to Hugh Fulton when I was there.

HESS: The information that I have was that she became an investigator on May 12 of 1941 and served until October 8, 1944.

MALETZ: Well, my recollection differs somewhat. During the period I was there until November 1942, Marion Toomey was Secretary to Hugh Fulton. She might later have become an

[31]

investigator. I simply don't know. She was a lawyer, by the way.

HESS: Who else served on the staff that we haven't included on the list?

MALETZ: Thomas F. Flynn, who is presently the chief of the concessionaire branch or division of the National Park Service in Washington, D.C.

Also there was an Agnes Wolf, a lady who came with the staff in the latter part of 1942. She worked with Mr. Halley in investigating the rubber program. I think that about sums it up.

HESS: How did Mr. Truman handle his relations with the committee staff?

MALETZ: Our relationship, at least my own relationship, was not with Senator Truman directly. My relationship was with Mr. Clark and Mr. Fulton,

[32]

though I did have some contact with Senator Truman,

HESS: Were the various staff members assigned specific areas of research and investigation?

MALETZ: Yes, I think I have indicated that I was assigned the jobs of investigating the defense housing program, and the tank lighter program. Also, I was assigned to investigate the activities of a man by the name of Clifford McAvoy who had been mayor of Newark. However, midway during the investigation I left the committee to go into the Army. I also was assigned the job of investigating the activities of the former mayor of Boston, Mayor [James Michael] Curley.

HESS: What do you recall about that problem?

MALETZ: I recall that I conducted file searches at the War Production Board and that the

[33]

liaison man at the Board was the deputy director, Mr. William L. Batt, who was most cooperative with the committee, and made available all the files that he had. I think the first annual report of the Truman Committee had one section dealing with the activities of dollar-a-year men. And Mr. Truman was most critical, I recall, of Philip D. Reed, who was chairman of the board, if I remember correctly, of the General Electric Corporation. He was on loan to the War Production Board on a dollar-a-year basis as a division head.

HESS: What do you recall of the difficulties between the committee and the Office of Production Management, the office that was set up before the War Production Board came into being?

MALETZ: Well, the first annual report issued by the Truman Committee was quite critical of the Office of Production Management, I have always

[34]

believed that the President established the War Production Board as a direct response to the Committee's first annual report.

HESS: That was in January of 1942.

MALETZ: I heard Senator Truman summarize the report to the Senate.

HESS: How were the various assignments made? Just who made the assignments?

MALETZ: The assignments were basically made by Mr. Fulton and by Mr. Clark. The tank lighter program was assigned to me directly by Mr. Fulton. Mr. Clark assigned me the task of conducting an inquiry into the dollar-a-year man program. Mr. Fulton assigned me the task of

investigating the activities of Clifford McAvoy. Oh. Mr. Fulton also asked me to investigate the activities of a gentleman who had been mayor of Houston. I think his name was

[35]

[Oscar Fitzallen] Holcombe. And I spent about two months in Houston looking into his activities in connection with the defense procurement program.

HESS: Do you recall anything offhand of interest about that investigation, anything that you may have come up with?

MALETZ: I don't recall whether a report was issued or not.

HESS: What about your investigation in Boston of Mayor Curley?

MALETZ: When I left the committee, the investigation was still underway. The investigation was continued after I left the committee, by Mr. Robinson, I believe. But in any event, Mayor Curley was indicted and convicted. I think the same was true of Mr. McAvoy.

[36]

HESS: I understand that the committee staff held a portion of its meetings in the doghouse of Mr. Truman's office. Did you attend any of those meetings?

MALETZ: No, I did not. I did participate in the drafting of several speeches, where I worked in the doghouse, but I did not participate in any meetings there.

HESS: Did the staff hold regular meetings?

MALETZ: Not when I was there. My contact, as I have indicated, was with Mr. Clark and Mr. Fulton. If they wanted to see me they just called up, but I don't recall regular meetings. I might add, though, that there was a great deal of rapport among the members of the staff. But I don't recall staff meetings as such.

HESS: What was the nature of the relationship between Donald M. Nelson, the chairman of the

[37]

War Production Board and the committee? Was he helpful in forwarding the work of the committee?

MALETZ: I think that question would be most appropriately addressed to a higher echelon. I had no relationship with Mr. Nelson. My relationship at the War Production Board was with Mr. [William L.] Batt, and Mr. [Edwin A.] Locke, who was the Board's liaison officer with the committee. If we needed any information we would call Mr. Locke who would make it available. He was very helpful.

HESS: On the question of Edwin A. Locke, I'd like to read a quote and get your opinion of it. In Donald Riddle's book, *The Truman Committee: A Study in Congressional Responsibility*, there is the following quote:

Nelson's liaison officer, Edwin A. Locke, Jr., kept the Committee continuously informed of events in WPB.

[38]

Does that pretty well cover it?

MALETZ: I would say that summarizes it very well.

HESS: What was the relationship between Senator Truman and the other senators on the committee? I have listed a few of the people who served during the time that you were on the committee and the senators who were there when Mr. Truman was on the committee. The names are listed in the order of their appointment to office.

MALETZ: May I interject. I never participated in any discussions between Senator Truman and the other senators on the committee. I do know that in the period I was there every committee report that was issued was a unanimous report, so I assumed -- this is solely an assumption on my part -- that the relationship between Senator Truman and the other senators were most harmonious.

HESS: The fact that all the reports were unanimous

[39]

is of interest to historians. Do you know of any -- of the times that this came down to the deadline had they had to convince some of the senators to go along to preserve their record of unanimity? Do you recall?

MALETZ: I recall only that the reports I drafted -- which were, as I said, were gone over by Mr. Clark and by Mr. Fulton for editing and revision -- were all later issued by the committee as such without any change whatsoever.

HESS: Shall we just skip over the names of the senators?

MALETZ: Yes.

HESS: Do you recall anything in particular about the relations between the committee and General Brehon B. Somervell?

MALETA: No, I do not. I think I heard Mr. Fulton speak of General Somervell on several occasions.

HESS: What was the nature of his comments, do you recall?

MALETZ: I think that Mr. Fulton indicated that General Somervell did not cooperate to any great extent with the committee. That was the sum and substance of it.

HESS: Did the committee have problems with military secrecy in its investigations?

MALETZ: I'm glad you mentioned that question because I examined all the files of the Navy Department pertinent to the tank lighter program, and many of the files and documents that I saw were highly classified, yet no effort was made to hold back any file on the basis of military secrecy.

HESS: Did you have the same cooperation with the

[41]

Department of the Army, or did you have occasion to request that cooperation?

MALETZ: I did not investigate any programs under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Army, so I was personally not familiar with the committee's experience with the Army.

HESS: But the Navy was most cooperative?

MALETZ: Completely.

HESS: Do you recall anything about the committee's coming across evidence of the research in atomic energy?

MALETZ: No, that was after I left in November of 1942.

HESS: Were the relations between the Truman Committee and the press very good?

MALETZ: I would say the relations were excellent.

[42]

HESS: Can you give me an example? And another question, how helpful was this to the committee to have good relations with the press?

MALETZ: Well, I think that the press reported on the committees activities at some length and I think in part because of this press coverage the committees existence became well and favorably known, and resulted, I think, in increased committee effectiveness.

HESS: Were there any problems of information being leaked to the press, information that the committee did not want to be released, do you recall?

MALETZ: I recall one situation where I made a file search at the Charlestown, Massachusetts Navy Yard and came across a verbatim transcript of a conversation between two Naval officers, I think they were captains in the Navy. They

[43]

talked, in most disparaging terms, about the Bureau tank lighter, and about certain tests that were conducted at the Norfolk Navy Yard. About two weeks later I saw that verbatim transcript reproduced in toto in Drew Pearson's column. Now how it ever got there I to this day do not know. Also, my investigation of Mr. Holcombe down in Houston, Texas, became the subject of very extensive press coverage, and where the information came from, I again don't know. I myself had no contact with the press.

HESS: Did that press coverage hamper your investigation?

MALETZ: I would have preferred that the investigations had continued in complete secrecy until they were completed and the committee decided to take some action in terms of hearings or otherwise.

[44]

HESS: Now we've mentioned the investigation regarding the tank lighters. Two other cases that were very well known were the Canol Project, and the Curtiss-Wright airplane engines. What do you recall about that?

MALETZ: I didn't participate in either one, and I have no recollection of either investigation at the moment.

HESS: What other major cases come to mind when you look back on those days, other than what we have covered? Have we covered most of them?

MALETZ: Well, no. In addition to my investigative responsibilities, all the mail from so-called "crackpots" was sent to me for acknowledgement.

HESS: Public opinion mail?

MALETZ: We got mail from people who appeared to be crackpots. In addition there was routed

[45]

to me mail from people who were just commenting about the work of the committee. Also routed to me was mail from people who said they had information about the defense program and whatnot that might be helpful to the committee. I got a series of letters from an individual who claimed that he was a foreman of a major steel plant, and that various tests of steel bars for the shipbuilding program were being faked. I would just courteously acknowledge each of his letters in Senator Truman's name. I must have received about a half a dozen letters from this particular individual, and paid no attention whatsoever to the contents. His letters were kind of scribbled on a scratch pad. Rudy Halley came with the committee, and at a later dates began investigating the steel program. He took this fellow's letters and went major consequences in terms of an investigation which demonstrated that the steel company had in fact faked tests, as the man had alleged.

[46]

HESS: Was that man a supervisor at the plant?

MALETZ: He was. I just indicate this to point out my own dereliction in the matter. I should have gone out to Pittsburgh to interview him myself.

HESS: Do you recall any other instances when letters from interested citizens helped the committee?

MALETZ: Yes. The McAvoy case in Newark stemmed from a letter we received from a carpenter on a project. On this particular situation the letter was routed to me and I spoke to Mr. Clark and Mr. Fulton about it and they said, "You better get up to Newark and interview the guy," which I did. And this led to the subsequent indictment and conviction of Mr. McAvoy. It started from a simple letter by an interested citizen, namely a carpenter in this instance.

[47]

HESS: Do you think of any other examples along this line?

MALETZ: Not at the moment.

HESS: This was fairly commonplace, for the committee to receive letters of this sort?

MALETZ: Well, you see, the more press coverage the committee got, the more mail. This had a direct impact on the amount of mail we received in terms of complaints all over the country. I believe that a number of investigations were initiated as a direct result of citizen mail.

HESS: Have we mentioned most of the cases that you worked on?

MALETZ: I believe so.

HESS: How was it determined which cases would require a formal hearing?

[48]

MALETZ: Mr. Fulton and Senator Truman made that determination.

HESS: Did you attend any of the hearings?

MALETZ: I audited a few hearings just as a matter of interest, but I attended just a handful of hearings.

HESS: Did you attend any of the hearings that were held in the field, so to speak, and not in Washington?

MALETZ: No.

HESS: What in your opinion was the most significant accomplishment of the Truman Committee?

MALETZ: That's a very difficult question. I think the most significant accomplishment was that its existence played an important constructive role in the activities of the agencies. I think the agencies took the

[49]

position after the committee became well known that they should operate at the maximum degree of efficiency, otherwise, they might be investigated by the committee. In other words, I think its mere existence, the fact that it was so well known, acted as a check and balance as against the actions of the various executive agencies.

HESS: How instrumental, in your opinion, was Mr. Truman's handling of the committee to his receiving the vice-presidential nomination in 1944?

MALETZ: I can't answer, because I was in the Army at the time and had little contact with the committee itself. I am persuaded in my own mind that he was nominated as vice-president in 1944 primarily because of his role as chairman of the committee. In other words, I think that this committee was the instrument

[50]

which catapulted Senator Truman into national prominence. So I think there was a direct causal relationship.

HESS: As you have indicated you were in the Army in 1944, but do you recall anything about the events of the campaign?

MALETZ: No, I was in Fort Benning at the time and I was awfully busy as a soldier. I was astounded to hear over the radio that Senator Truman had been nominated Vice-President. I hadn't been reading very much about him, and it seemed to me that the nomination came like a bolt out of the blue.

HESS: You were surprised at the...

MALETZ: I was astounded.

HESS: What were your thoughts on April 12, 1945, when you learned of the death of President Roosevelt?

[51]

MALETZ: I was at Camp Shelby when I heard of the death of President Roosevelt. I was so staggered, that I didn't even think at the time of Senator Truman becoming the President. I wondered shortly thereafter whether his background was such as would make him an effective President. His role had been primarily in the legislative area.

May I interject with a little anecdote which might be interesting?

HESS: As they say, that is the life's blood of oral history, so please do.

MALETZ: Shortly after Mr. Truman became President, about six months after he became President, I was in Washington, DC. I was a so-called T-5, which is about a half step below full corporal. I was in Washington, and I called Matt Connelly to say hello. He was at the White House, and he said, "Why don't you come on over and see the Boss?"

[52]

I said, "I'd love to." I went over to the White House and Matt ushered me in to see the President. I had never been in the White House before, and I was awed going into the Oval Office, a very impressive place.

The President got up and he said, "Well, it's good to see you. Sit down and tell me what's been happening to you."

I spent about twenty minutes chatting and then said, "Mr. President, I'm taking too much of your time,"

He said, "Sit down and relax and let's continue our discussion,"

We continued our discussion for another twenty minutes I would say. We talked about old times. We also chatted about the duties of the Presidency, and Mr. Truman said "This is a real tough job. You have to read half the night and every day the decisions you have to make are simply incredible." I don't think

[53]

he used the word incredible, but he said that they were as tough as all get-out.

Well, again, I said, "Mr. President, I know how busy you are and I'm taking too much of your time."

He said, "Don't rush."

And then about five minutes later after I had been there for some fifty minutes, Matt came in and said, "Mr. President, there are a number of people who are waiting to see you. And you're running awfully late in your appointments."

So I got up and said goodbye to the President and he said, "I'm sure glad to see you," and he walked me to the door. I walked out and people in the anteroom who were waiting for the President must have thought some dignitary was with him and to and behold they saw a T-5 coming out -- I was in uniform. The Chief of Staff of the Army

[54]

was there, the Under Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, I think two Senators; Senator Brewster and some other senator, and several 3-star generals, I walked out and I must say I kind of walked on air.

HESS: Were you ever detailed to the White House during the Truman administration?

MALETZ: Yes, I worked from 1946, as I've indicated, to December 1950 with the Anti-trust Division of the Department of Justice and I was detailed to the White House in mid-1950 and worked there for a period of about six months. The detail was made at the request of Mr. Connelly, who was then President Truman's Appointments Secretary.

HESS: Prior to your being detailed to the White House, had you ever met a Mr. Max Lowenthal?

MALETZ: I had not.

[55]

HESS: What projects did you work on at the White House?

MALETZ: Well, we worked on several projects. Even though some eighteen years have elapsed I do not feel free even now to discuss the nature of those projects.

HESS: One question on that. During the period of time that you worked on that project did you receive any assistance from the members of the White House staff?

MALETZ: Yes, I worked with Mr. Connelly -- primarily with Mr. Connelly.

HESS: Do you have any other things to add on the Truman Committee? Any other thoughts come to mind looking back on those days?

MALETZ: Well, looking back on those days, I was amazed at how Mr. Truman grew over the

[56]

years in stature, I think he developed a tremendous amount of self confidence, particularly after the 1948 election. One little twist on this; Mr. Truman would get a draft of a speech to read when he was a Senator, and I think he had trouble with his eyesight. As a result he stumbled over words. And when he went to the White House I think he had the same difficulty. Then a member of the staff -- I don't know whether it was Mr. Connelly, or Charlie Murphy, or who -- got the bright idea of having the President's speeches typed on a special typewriter with letters two or three inches high and only four or five lines on a page. It seems to me that helped considerably in Mr. Truman's ability to read a speech quite well indeed. Something as trifling as that seemed to improve his prowess as a speaker, the fact that the words were typed so much larger.

[57]

HESS: Judge, one last question: How do you think Mr. Truman will be regarded by historians one or two hundred years from now?

MALETZ: I think Mr. Truman will be regarded as one of our great Presidents, one who was able to make tough decisions, and to stick to these decisions notwithstanding that they were not popular at the time. I'm thinking particularly of his veto of legislation that was adopted by both houses -- the McCarran-Walter bill. Also, I think in some respects Mr. Truman was ahead of his time in terms of civil rights, and in terms of universal medical insurance. I think, in a nutshell Mr. Truman will be regarded as a President who had real courage, and who had the ability to make decisions that were necessary, notwithstanding the fact that popular opinion wasn't always with him.

[58]

HESS: There are those that say that many of Mr. Truman's pronouncements on civil rights as you mentioned, were taken from the standpoint of political expediency; what would you say about that?

MALETZ: I would disagree with that, because Mr. Truman did say to me on several occasions, when he was a Senator and later when he became President, that "the best politics is good government."

Hess: Do you have anything else that you would like to add about Mr. Truman, the Truman Committee, the Truman administration?

MALETZ: Only one little thought. In recent years until the demise of Mr. Clark, the staff had an annual reunion in Washington, D.C. I would hope that sometime in the future some member of the staff would be energetic enough to reinstitute this annual event.

[59]

HESS: Thank you very much for your time.

MALETZ: Its been a pleasure.

[60]

INDEX

Antitrust Subcommittee of Judiciary Committee (Celler Subcommittee), 3-4

Batt, William L., 33, 37

Boyle, William M., Jr., 11-12, 13-15

Canfil, Fred A., 15

Clark, Charles Patrick, 5, 6, 16-17, 46, 58

Connelly, Matthew J., 12, 17-19, 52, 54, 55

Contracts, cost-plus-fixed-fee, 14

Curley, Mayor James Michael, 32, 35

Defense Housing Program, investigation of, 13-15

Ellender, Senator Allen Joseph, 14

Flynn, Thomas F., 31

Fulton, Hugh, 6, 19-22, 46

Halley, Rudolph, 22-23, 45

Harvard Law School, 2, 13

Hehmeyer, Walter, 23

Higgins, Andrew, 25

Higgins tanklighter, 25-28

Holcombe, Oscar Fitzallen, 34-35, 43

Irvin, Robert L., 23, 24

Lathrom, Donald, 24

Locke, Edwin A., 37-38

Lowe, Frank E., 24

McAvoy, Clifford, investigation of, 32, 34, 35, 46

Maletz, Herbert N.:

 career summary, 2-4

 President's office, first visit with President Truman in, 51-54

 White House, detailed to, 54

Marketing Laws Survey, 4, 5, 7

Nash, Frank, 24-25

Nelson, Donald M., 36-37

Office of Price Stabilization (OPS), 3

Office of Production Management, 33-34

Parks, Franklin N., 28-29

Pearson, Drew, 43

Reed, Philip D., 33

Robinson, Harold G., 12, 29

Sawyer, Haven, 29

Smith, General Holland M., 26, 27

Somervell, Brehon B., 39-40

Sparks, Wilbur D., 30

Special Senate Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program. *See* Truman Committee.

Styx, Henry, 12

Tanklighters, investigation of, 24-28, 40, 43

Toomey, Marion G., 30-31

Truman Committee:

- assignment of projects, 34

- Maletz, Herbert N., employment of, 2, 5, 7, 13

- military secrecy, 40, 41

- press, relations with, 41-43

- public opinion mail, 44-47

- scope of, 8-10

- significance of, 48-50

- staff meetings, 36

- steel program, investigation of, 45, 46

Truman, Harry S.;

- civil rights, position on, 57, 58

- estimate of, 55-58

- Maletz, Herbert N., first visit with, in President's office, 51-54

- President's duties, comments on, 52

- vice-presidential nomination (1944), 49-50

Vaughan, Harry, 11

War Production Board, 34

Wolf, Agnes, 31