

Oral History Interview
with
HARRY N. ROSENFELD

Principal attorney and assistant to Federal Security Administrator, 1942-48; Member, United States Delegation to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (Geneva, Switzerland), 1948; Commissioner United States Displaced Persons Commission, 1948-52; and Executive Director, President's Commission on Immigration and Naturalization, 1952-53.

Washington, D.C.
July 23, 1980

by James R. Fuchs, Harry S. Truman Library

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FUCHS: Mr. Rosenfield, I thought we might start by you just giving a little of your background; when and where you were born, some of your education, and how you came finally to be in the Government service.

ROSENFELD: I was born in the City of New York in 1911, August 17. My parents were immigrants. Both of them came from Russia or Poland. I had a brother, who has since passed away, and I still have a sister. I went to the College of the City of New York; was graduated with a B.A. from there. Then went to Columbia Law School, developed a LL.B. there; then subsequently won a JSD, a doctorate of law of the science of jurisprudence, at NYU.

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Let's see. The kinds of things I did in New York, workwise?

FUCHS: Any background as to how you came to the Government and your work there, is what we're primarily interested in.

ROSENFELD: My first significant job was assistant to Fiorello LaGuardia, before he became Mayor. Before he became Mayor and after he lost his seat in the Congress, he was impartial arbitrator for the cloth sponging industry. That's the industry which pre-shrinks cloth, so that when you go out into the rain it won't shrink on you. LaGuardia had an office on middle Broadway, and he was then contemplating running for Mayor. And for awhile I was his sole and only research team, and at that time I was at Columbia Law School. I think I was second year Columbia Law School, and I was working my way through school partially through a job as librarian at The City College of New York, and I had the key to the library. So, when I'd get through with my work I'd appear down at his office and held give me

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projects to do, and I'd work on them at night after everybody was gone, 2, 3, 4 o'clock in the morning. Then I would turn up at his office the first thing in the morning, and have his young ladies type this stuff.

I'll come back in a minute because there's an incident there that's colored my whole life that I think I ought to tell you. After that I was special counsel to the U.S. Munitions

Committee in 1934. I'd come down to Washington to work on the Nye bill. We had such faith in our capacity to prevent war by ending munitions industry, and that's what I was working on. Regretfully it didn't come to pass.

Later in that same year I was legal assistant to the New York City Charter Revision Commission. From there I went to become secretary to a member of the Board of Education of New York City, a position I held for about eight years. The members of the Board of Education were nonpaid people. The member that I was secretary to was one of the most wonderful human beings I have ever known, a Dr.

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Alberto C. Bonaschi. These people were not then, as I believe they are now, paid officials. They did this out of the goodness of their hearts. So for practical purposes, he made me a deputy commissioner of education of the City of New York and it was wonderful experience.

Then, owing to some illness in my family, I decided to come to Washington. Frankly, because the Army turned me down--this was in 1942 I wanted to get into war, and they turned me down because I had a bum left arm from childhood polio. So I figured I wanted to come down to Washington to do what I could in the way effort and because of the family illness I felt it necessary to change the climate. I became the principal attorney to the then Federal Security Administrator; that's the predecessor of the Secretary of HEW.

FUCHS: How did that come about?

ROSENFELD: I talked with a dear friend of my father-in-law, Arthur S. Meyer, who talked with Lillian Poses, FSA Regional Attorney. I also talked with

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a former teacher at Columbia, Walter Gelhorn, who had been a regional attorney for the Federal Security Agency, and they know my legal work. They were liars and said I was a good lawyer. So that was the way it opened up. I came down to visit Jack B. Tate, the general counsel, and Jack Tate employed me.

Before leaving New York, I went to see LaGuardia to say good-bye to him and he was furious with me, "You can't leave me."

I said, "Well, here are the circumstances."

He said, "I was just about to appoint you Assistant Director of the Bureau of the Budget and the director is going to retire in a year and you would have been director of the Bureau of the Budget."

I said, "Well, Major,"--those of us who knew him from the old days knew he liked to be called Major because he was a major in the Air Force during the war--I said, "Major, I'm sorry." And for awhile he was really miffed at me, but as you will see later, he forgave me for it.

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So I became principal attorney and I worked for the then Federal Security Administrator, Paul V. McNutt.

FUCHS: This was 1940 what?

ROSENFELD: 1942. In 1942 I came down as principal attorney. I think it was 1944 or early 1945 that I became assistant to the Federal Security Administrator.

FUCHS: McNutt was already FSA administrator, though, when you came in?

ROSENFELD: Yes, he was. As principal attorney I was in the division headed by Arthur Delafield Smith, an excellent lawyer. A magnificent, imaginative, creative lawyer. And we were all under Jack Tate, who was really one of the ablest general counsels and nicest persons I have ever known. He later became associate dean of Yale Law School.

When I was in the General Counsel's office I was assigned to the division that dealt with the then Social Security Board composed of three members of the Board) and the U.S. Office of

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Education. The commissioner at that time was John Studebaker of Iowa. From there, I think they kicked me upstairs--must have wanted to get rid of me--to assistant to the administrator; and there were two of us who were assistants. Mary Switzer, a magnificent, wonderful woman, after whom one of the HEW buildings is named--Mary E. Switzer (she was really a remarkable person)--and I, were the two. She was directly responsible for the health aspect and I was responsible for virtually all of the rest. Which meant education, welfare, and Social Security.

FUCHS: When was the Office of Education reorganized? Was that a little later? Under Ewing, I guess.

ROSENFELD: That's right. Well, I was at the Federal Security Agency from 1942 to 1948. In 1948 while I was still in the Federal Security Agency the President nominated me to be a member of the U.S. delegation to the U.N. Economic and Social Council for its meeting in Geneva, Switzerland in 1948; and that was a fascinating experience, especially crossing swords with the Russians.

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FUCHS: This was prior to the Displaced Persons appointment?

ROSENFELD: This was prior. As a matter of fact, he appointed me to the Commission while I was in Geneva and I had to excuse myself from that duty and come back. I was a member of the Commission from 1948 until 1952. When that was over and I thought I was going to get at least an hour's rest, I was called back from vacation and made executive director of the President's Commission on Immigration and Naturalization, which was a short time thing, from I think around August of 1952 to I think the end of January of 1953. Bear in mind that a new President came in after that.

So, that's the story of my Government work experience. Thereafter I went into private practice and I've been in private practice ever since. I have been since about the middle of 1953, the general counsel of the National Safety Council; and in the last eight or ten years, in addition, I've been copyright counsel to the National Education Associa-

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tion, and for some years also the Washington counsel to the American Chiropractic Association, which brings me back into the health field, which I enjoyed so much.

That's the story. In addition I have along the way been able to do some writing. I'm the co-author of an eight or nine-volume book with Charles Gordon on immigration law and procedure. I have written a book on liability for school accidents, which the New York Times gave one of its awards for the 60 best books of the year. I've been a contributor to some other books, and then I've written somewhere's in the vicinity of 700 or 800 articles in professional, general, safety, and other areas, including an article for the New York Times Sunday magazine called "People Without Land, Land Without People," which I wrote while I was on the Displaced Persons Commission, covering the whole area of migrations around the world.

Well, I've talked more than I should.

FUCHS: No, that's what we want; we're not here to listen to me.

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ROSENFELD: You must never ask a lawyer to talk.

FUCHS: When did you have time for fun?

ROSENFELD: Well, I had a wonderful family. My wife, Leonora Cohen Rosenfield, was a professor at the University of Maryland. I had a lovely daughter Marianne. I must confess that during the period I was in the Displaced Persons Commission they saw very little of me, but they were very gracious about it and very supportive, so it's just been wonderful.

FUCHS: Well, to go back a bit, while you were with LaGuardia, do you recall any other incidents that might be of interest? You know a lot of these anecdotes are good sidelights and footnotes to history.

ROSENFELD: Yes. Yes, there was one incident that occurred with LaGuardia that's really shaped the rest of my life. He was an extraordinary man, gifted, choleric, but one of the kindest people I've ever worked for. I have two incidents which will be amusing to you, both of them while I was

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working for him as a legal aide.

I had been writing speeches for him for months. One day he called me in and said, "Harry, I want you to write a speech for me. I've got to make a speech tomorrow noon at the Welsh Society of the United States"--I'm not sure that was its title, but it was the Welsh ethnic group.

I said, "What do you want to say?"

He said, "How the hell do I know. That's your job."

So, I went up to the Main Library and I was delighted to find out what an exciting people the Welsh of America were. They were just fascinating people. As was our custom there, I wrote a speech for him. And he had then these 6 x 9 cards with the large type, and I had it typed for him and I brought it in. I apparently got him at a bad time, because he looked at the cards and started shrieking at me like a banshee. He threw the cards down on the floor and jumped on them as if there were an animal there. Now this was in 1933, and I still have a visual picture of his heel mark on the cards.

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You can imagine what an impression it left on me, and on the cards. And he shrieked at me, "Get the hell out of here; who ever asked you to write a speech, and the nerve of you typing it before you showed it to me." And he shrieked, "You're fired. Get your salary, I don't ever want to see you again, get out of here," shrieking at me.

It was the first and only time I've ever been fired. My office was directly below his in City Hall. If he stamped on the floor my lights would have gone out; it was in the basement. I was just absolutely crushed. I was still a law school kid. I started to pull my stuff together, my files and personal things, and memos I wanted to have as keepsakes. The executive secretary of the Mayor, Stanley--I can't for the moment think of his last name--Stanley came downstairs and took me by the arm and said, "The Major wants to see you."

And I said, "Tell him to go to hell, he just fired me."

He said, "Oh, come on, you're the only one in this building that hasn't been fired yet. We don't

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want to discriminate against you." Well, he edged me up the flight of steps and was smart enough to open the door of the Mayor's office, push me in, and stay out.

And there I was, a truculent kid, and the Mayor looked over his glasses at me, that famous look of his over his heavy-rimmed glasses, and he said, "What's the matter, running out on me when I need you?" I figured well, this was some kind of apology. He said, "Come on over here. What does this mean?" I looked at the typed card and there was his heel mark on it. I described what it meant and he said, "Okay," and still no apology. So he said, "Doing anything for lunch?"

And I said, "No, sir, I was going to leave since you fired me."

He said, "Why don't you come up and have lunch with me up there?" He meant at the luncheon he was to address.

And that was the only apology that I ever got from him. And, of course, I was not fired.

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FUCHS: He must have been a case.

ROSENFELD: Oh, he was marvelous. Well, he married my wife and me.

FUCHS: Is that right?

ROSENFELD: As Mayor of the city he was chief magistrate, so he married us. About three months after that--he married us after I had been at the Board of Education, and after I got out of law school. I didn't get out of law school until 1934, and another incident happened before. By then I was over at the Board of Education. I was his hatchet guy. I had to send people to jail for swiping city property and that kind of stuff. One day I was on Government business at the airport, not yet called LaGuardia Airport, and I hear from the other end, "Harry-y-y." Well, there was only one voice in the world like that which I knew, and that was LaGuardia's. And I looked and there he came running at me, those little feet of his pumping, and his whole City Hall entourage coming behind. I said to myself, "Oh, Harry, I

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don't know what you've done, but you're in real trouble." So I started running to him, and of course everybody in the world was looking at this silly scene, or at least so I felt. As I approached him he motioned to me with his finger as if he wanted to whisper to me, and then he said, "Did it take?" referring to the marriage he had just conducted some time ago.

And there's one other story. The most significant thing that LaGuardia ever did for me was in the field of ethics. It occurred during the first part of my association with, him, when I would come down to his office to have the staff in the office type my work on his assignments. It was a small office, and his back was to the window which faced on Broadway. There was one other desk, right near the door, and that was for me. One day when I was in there, in comes the most handsome man I have ever seen, without any implications of impropriety in beauty. This was just a genuine Michelangelo figure. It was a young Italian man who had just come back from his first year at Rome Medical School;

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LaGuardia, as a Congressman, had helped get the kid into medical school.

Now bear in mind this was in the early thirties when Catholics and Jews and Italians and all these other "strange" people weren't able to get into medical schools.

Well, this kid had come back and here he was coming to express his gratitude to his God, and you could see his eyes shining--and he had practiced his speech I'm sure all the way across on the boat. He delivered to LaGuardia for Mrs. LaGuardia, a gift of a very beautiful scarf. I'm sure the kid went without anything to eat for a month to buy it for her. And he made this grandiloquent speech about his gratitude to his savior and so forth and so on. Well, it was obvious I wasn't going to get any work done so I turned around and listened to all this. And LaGuardia was sitting there with that characteristic gesture of his, chewing on his eye-glass frame and looking as if he was going to bite the boy--but not a word out of him until the kid

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was through and then LaGuardia said, "Son, can't take it. Give it to your mother."

Well, the kid just literally burst into tears, "Well, why not?"

"Son, I have a rule. I never take a gift from anyone in connection with anything I've done in the course of official duty, and I did that while I was a Congressman."

The kid pleaded and begged, to no avail, and he went out sobbing. When he went out, there were just two of us in the room. LaGuardia turned his swivel chair to look out the window. Then dumb Harry opened up his big mouth, and said, "Major, that was the cruelest, the most unnecessary, the most unreasonable thing I have ever seen happen.

That kid wasn't trying to bribe you and you know it. He was an Italian boy and you know the ethos of the people, they have to show their appreciation. He was trying to tell you in the only way he knew how, how grateful he was." Even as I tell this story my eyes kind of tear up a little bit. And after I'd got through with my

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long speech of maybe forty seconds, LaGuardia slowly turned around with his glasses on, so that I wouldn't see that he had tears in his eyes, and said, "Harry, not much of a rule is it if you can't apply it in the tough cases?" And then he turned around to the window and I sat there, and after awhile I said, also with tears in my eyes, "Major, thank you, you've taught me something."

FUCHS: Very true. Very good.

ROSENFELD: Well, later on when I was Assistant to the Federal Security Administrator and LaGuardia had become the head of UNRRA--well, I should interrupt myself by saying that his rule was one that I followed all my life. I never accepted a gift while I was in official duty, either in New York or in Washington. I had a rule that my secretaries couldn't even accept a box of candy. It was rough on them. It was really rough, but that was my rule and to anyone I hired, I said, "Now look, I'm a nut; here's one of the things," and I would tell this story. And it was difficult, since everybody else accepted gifts.

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Well, there are two interesting stories in relation to this. Am I boring you with these?

FUCHS: Oh, no sir, they're very good. It's a far cry from some of the things we hear about lately.

ROSENFELD: When I was Assistant to the Federal Security Administrator, I once got a buzz on our squawk box from Paul McNutt, and he said, "Harry, will you come in?" And I came in and he said, "Harry, we're having trouble with Mr. Comer;" I don't know his first name. He was the owner of one of the biggest textile mills in America, in the South. He said--at this point I don't remember what the problem was--"Nobody seems to be able to get things squared up between us and them. You don't know a damn thing about this, but you're a lawyer; make believe you've got a brief and see what you can do."

I said, "I'll try, what's it about?" And he told me and I talked to the other people that had tried and found out what the difficulties were. Well, as luck would have it, it worked out right.

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Comer and I just worked out right and it got squared away. Comer was delighted and McNutt was delighted, and about ten days later I got a package from, I think it was Alabama--and this was during the war, the war was still on--or maybe right after the war--I opened it; it was the most beautiful bolt of shirt cloth I had ever seen. That thing must have been worth 25 bucks a yard. With it came a little note, "Thanks for your kindness." A very gracious note.

I sent back a note to Mr. Comer telling him this story about LaGuardia and saying, "Under the circumstances, forgive me if I can't accept the gift, but in view of the relationship to LaGuardia, I'm taking the liberty of sending this cloth to LaGuardia in the hope that UNRRA can arrange that it will help clothe somebody."

Well, two things happened. In a few days I got an agitated call from McNutt on the squawk box, "Harry, come in; what the hell have you done?"

So I walked in and I knew what had happened. I walked in; I said, "Paul, I'm the only guy on your staff you can fire without any recriminations."

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"Oh," he said, "cut it out; I don't want to fire you, but Comer is furious after you got him all calmed down. He's furious, alleges that you think that he was trying to bribe you with something." So I told him the whole story. He calmed down and was contemplative for a moment and said, "Harry, why the hell didn't you tell me?"

I said, "Well, I don't go around patting myself on the back."

He said, "But goddamn it, I took the cloth."

And then one other story in that same vein that's very significant in our family. When I was at the DP Commission, the pressures on the commissioners were enormous; everybody tried to get more admissions into the U.S. for their ethnic or religious group. Perfectly proper, nothing wrong; perfectly proper, for them, but not for us. We had to treat everybody alike. There was one person--I won't name names, for obvious reasons--who had tried to get special consideration for his group and I had said "no." He was in the food business in California and

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he sent me a magnificent crate of oranges or--I don't know what it was. So the same form letter went out, except this time the oranges went to the Children's Hospital. That didn't work. Well, a week or so after that, I get home, late at night, and poor little Marianne was waked up so that she could see her father. She must have been seven, and she said, "Daddy, Daddy, Daddy, look what I got!"

I said, "What have you got?"

And she had a little Mickey Mouse watch. I said, where did you get it, honey?" And she showed me the card; it was this fellow who had sent it to her, that sent the fruit. So I said, "Honey dear, you can't accept it."

"Why not, Daddy?"

And then I said to her, told her pretty much the story, kind of rough on a seven year old child, and said, "I never allow gifts."

"But Daddy, I haven't got such a watch; will you buy one for me?"

"Marianne, dear, just so that you will never forget the story, I won't even buy you that kind of a watch."

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"Daddy," you know, and that was the end of it.

Well, I completely forgot the story until a few years ago, maybe six, seven years ago. Our daughter is a lawyer, married. Marianne is a magnificent lawyer in Chicago where her husband, David J. Smigelskis, is an associate professor of philosophy at the University of Chicago. She graduated from Yale Law School and had been admitted to the Bar of New York. When she moved to Chicago she asked for reciprocity admission. And as part of that process she had to go downstate to Springfield to be interviewed by the character committee, which is a standard gambit. When she got there were three very serious looking gentlemen. One of them, said to her, "Mrs. Smigelskis, what assurance do we have that you will behave like a person of integrity?"

And as she tells the story, she said, "Well, I was brought up that way."

They said, "Well, what do you mean?"

She told the story about the Mickey Mouse watch. These three gentlemen looked at each other and said,

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"Mrs. Smigelskis, we don't have any concerns about you."

When Marianne told Leonora and me that story on the phone that evening, I said "Well, Marianne, maybe the time has come for me to buy you one of those watches."

She said, " Oh, no, you don't!"

So, you see, LaGuardia had an enormous impact on me. In addition there was his intensity of interest in the public welfare. He was always interested in the public welfare. He was always interested in the little guy, and anyone that worked for him who wasn't interested in the little guy was out of luck.

FUCHS: Did you have any other occasions to see Mayor LaGuardia?

ROSENFELD: I believe not. After I came to Washington, it was either on the telephone or by mail. Oh, I should say, when I sent that letter to Mr. Comer, I sent a copy of it to LaGuardia with a note, "Dear Major, I thought you'd be interested in it." And I think one of the proudest things I ever had was a

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letter back from him on UNRRA stationery in his own handwriting, "Dear Harry, I never had any doubts about you." That was a very lovely thing for him to have said.

FUCHS: Moving up to the Federal Security experience, what were your impressions of McNutt? Does anything stand out in your memory?

ROSENFELD: First I should say that most of my experience was with the Assistant Federal Security Administrator, Watson B. Miller, because you may remember that at that time, Paul McNutt was the head of two agencies, the Federal Security Agency and the War Manpower Administration. McNutt spent most of his energies and time on the War Manpower program, and on the whole, my activity was virtually completely with the Federal Security Agency. Watson B. Miller, who had been for years the lobbyist for the American Legion, and was a superb lobbyist, acted largely on the Federal Security Agency side. I was with McNutt, of course, in all staff meetings. The principal activity that I had with him was on special assignments like the

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one I have told you about concerning Comer--when there was something special he thought I could handle. However, most of my experience was with Watson Miller and with Jack Ewing.

FUCHS: Now Miller succeeded McNutt?

ROSENFELD: Miller succeeded McNutt.

FUCHS: He was appointed as FSA Administrator.

ROSENFELD: He was appointed--and then after him Jack Ewing.

FUCHS: In '48. Well now, what are your views of Watson Miller as administrator?

ROSENFELD: He was an excellent person dealing with people, and he was exceedingly gracious with the staff in a rambunctious agency. It had been pulled together by the ears and it

had a lot of agencies that really resented being with each other, and resented having anyone over them. Watson, following McNutt, had a useful influence in soothing the

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savage beast, so to speak, and making them work together. It was not an easy job, and he was not an easy-going person in the sense that people could run over him. But he had an easy approach.

One or two stories about Watson that will give you some background. I was assigned the duty of taking care, as his assistant, as I indicated, of Social Security, welfare, education--it was not only the Office of Education, but a series of distinct educational institutions like Howard University, the American Printing House for the Blind, and Gallaudet College and so forth. It was a fascinating job, one of the most interesting jobs I ever held.

One day in a staff meeting--and I just give you a picture of Watson Miller the man--one day at a staff meeting, Watson had a note and said, "I just got a note from someone that's complaining about he's not getting enough Social Security." And he turned to me and said, "Harry, here are the facts, what is the answer?"

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I said to him, "Watson, if you'll give me a minute I'll just go to my desk and pull out the manual and give it to you in a second."

He said, "What do you mean? You're supposed to know this; you're supposed to be the Social Security man on this. What do you have to look at a book for?"

I said--and this was in the staff meeting; when I say "staff" this meant the Commissioner of Education, the Social Security Board, the Surgeon General, the Public Health Service, the head of Food and Drug, and so forth--I said, "Watson, if you want me to memorize things that I can easily find out in a book behind my desk, I'm not your guy. I thought I had a different function for you."

Well, he grumped a little bit and let it go by. And after the meeting I went out, got the book, showed it to him, and that was it.

The next morning--as I recall they were Monday mornings--the next meeting he started something as follows: "Ladies and Gentlemen, I have an apology to make. I've been thinking about what

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happened in the colloquy between Harry and me at last week's meeting, and Harry was absolutely right, and I was absolutely wrong, and before all of those before whom I chided him, I want to apologize and say that." Well, that took a big man. That took a big man!

Now, another incident. I was the youngest person on his staff. And one day he said to me, "Harry, I want to teach you something about lobbying."

"Oh," I said, "great!"

So, the rest of that day (I don't think I've ever been so tired in my life, whether I climbed mountains or canoed or anything) he really wore me out, and he was much older than I and he was as fresh as a daisy. We went up to the House office buildings, and went through every one of all those floors, both buildings. And this is what he would do, and I tagging along with him not saying a word. He's walk into a Congressman's office and say to the receptionist, "Mary, howls the child; have you gotten all the medicines you need? Great! And how about

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Joe's uncle; did he get that job out in Kansas City? Fine, if there's any problem let me know."

"Do you want to see the boss?"

"Oh, hell no, I didn't come to see him, I just wanted to find out."

He walked through that entire building, and with one exception didn't see a single Congressman. The only Congressman he saw was one who came running down the hall after him and said, "Watson, you were in the office, why didn't you come in to see me?"

He said, "I didn't want to see you. I wanted to see the girls."

I've never forgotten that. That guy could get anything he wanted out of any of those offices, and if the boss didn't see him when he wanted to see him the boss would have a strike on his hands.

Now that was Watson Miller.

FUCHS: Very interesting.

ROSENFELD: Now, that's why he was such a successful lobbyist.

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FUCHS: Must have had a good memory.

ROSENFELD: Oh, he knew every one of these names and people by heart, just absolutely by heart.

FUCHS: Well now, what were the circumstances of his succession by Oscar Ewing as you remember it?

ROSENFELD: Oscar Ewing had been the deputy chief of the National Democratic Committee and I think Truman wanted him in his Cabinet. It was going to be a tough campaign and he wanted him in his Cabinet. So he moved Watson over to Commissioner of Immigration where he did a good job, and appointed Jack Ewing--that's, as I recall it, what the circumstances were. Does that conform to what you understand?

FUCHS: Well, generally, yes. I knew, of course, Ewing had done yeoman service for the Democratic Party and . . .

ROSENFELD: I think he had been a deputy or assistant chairman of the National Democratic Committee.

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FUCHS: Why do you think FSA did not achieve Cabinet status during Truman's administration? The principal reasons? I think it was going to be called Health, Education and Security or something like that.

ROSENFELD: Well, as a matter of fact, one of the last things I did when I was there, before the President appointed me to the Commission, was to help draft what became the ultimate HEW bill.

Well, I'm not sure I know. I think the answer was that it was a maturing process; people had to get used to the agency; it was an odd duck, a strange animal. It didn't have any fundamental simplicity, such as Defense--you knew exactly what that was. It was such a varied agency that I think Congress and the people had to get used to it, and I guess it was a political judgment that the time came for it.

I should say there were some interesting experiences. I think it must have been in the Watson Miller days, although I'm not sure, that I did what

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is probably, from the point of view of long range importance to the American people, the most significant contribution I ever made in the public interest. I think it was in the Watson Miller days but I'm not sure. Although I wasn't acting as a lawyer then, I was on the top-side staff; I was a lawyer after all. With the Solicitor of the Department of Agriculture I helped draft the School Lunch Act. That isn't generally known--in my own

personal scale of values I think that's the most important thing I ever did. The curious thing about it is that our daughter, Marianne, who is now the head of the food law section of the Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago, has as one of her main jobs the legal aspects of the school lunch program.

FUCHS: Can you expound a little bit on the significance of it?

ROSENFELD: I think the school lunch program originated with the idea of a way of getting rid of surplus food, in a useful and meaningful way. I think it has since become one of the most significant factors

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in the American public health program, although it isn't generally regarded as a public health program; but it assures millions and millions and millions of children of decent, nutritious and balanced food. Many of them come from families which cannot afford that kind of thing, and in many cases this is the only balanced meal some of these children have. So, although it came about from an economic point of view, it has become in my judgment, one of the most significant governmental health programs in America and I feel kind of happy about having a minor portion in its genesis.

FUCHS: Was there one individual who conceived this, as you recall?

ROSENFELD: Not that I'm aware of. Well, I'm sure there must be. I wasn't aware of it. I'm just trying to think of the Solicitor. I think his name was Shields. The Secretary of Agriculture called the Federal Security Administrator and said, "Look, you've got a problem here at schools, let's get together." I was assigned to work with Shields

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and the two of us worked it out. I must say in all candor, he did the principal work, but whatever little I had has always left me with a sense of gratefulness for having had a part of it.

FUCHS: Ewing was appointed in August 1947, so you were under him for about a year.

ROSENFELD: About a year.

FUCHS: What are your views of him?

ROSENFELD: Well, before I leave that, there's another incident in the McNutt days--I think it was the McNutt days--that was significant. That was the time when the Administration was trying to think of national health insurance. Sounds interesting now. That was back in the mid-forties. There had been a Wagner-Murray-Dingle health insurance bill--Senator Wagner, Senator Murray, and Congressman Dingle (the father of the present Dingle). That wasn't given much hope, and the Federal Security Agency was

asked to draft the second one. McNutt assigned me to chair a task force that would draft this.

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Now, this was a little awkward because Mary Switzer knew infinitely more than I about this subject. But I think what he wanted was that someone be in the position who didn't have any recognized previous positions. And we had on the task force, of course, Mary Switzer, who was of extraordinary value; the General Counsel, who at that time I think was Alan Willcox, an extremely able man; and then Surgeon General Tom Parran; the various members of the Social Security Board, and agency operation, and people like Wilbur Cohen, who later became Secretary of HEW and Dr. Iz Falk, who was one of the most distinguished people in this field; George Parrott from the Public Health Service; Martha Elliot from the Children's Bureau, and so forth, and each with their own staffs.

Well, this was an impossible task, because whatever the Social Security Board was for the Public Health Service was against. And for a couple of meetings--as I recall we had two or three meetings a week, maybe two meetings a week--I saw we were going nowhere. Oh, we'd come to some relatively

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minor agreements, but going nowhere. So I went to see McNutt, and I said--I think it was McNutt at that time--and said, "Paul, I'm having trouble." And I told him why.

He said, "Well, what do you want me to do?"

FUCHS: Now what year would this have been, because I believe Martha Elliot succeeded Catherine Lenroot. That would have been I believe a little later. Was she head of the Children's Bureau at that time?

ROSENFELD: She may have come as an assistant.

FUCHS: I see.

ROSENFELD: I don't think Catherine ever came to them; Martha came to them. She may have been an assistant.

FUCHS: This would have been at an earlier period.

ROSENFELD: And he said, "Well, what do you want me to do? We've got to get this thing through."

I said, "I want you to authorize me to say at the next meeting, that if they don't come to a conclusion, an agreement, a consensus on a given subject,

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we'll pass it and I will write that portion of the bill.

He said, "Go ahead." He said, "Whom are you going to use?"

I said, "I'll use Alan Willcox to write it for me.

FUCHS: Now, who was he?

ROSENFELD: He was the General Counsel.

McNutt said, "Go, good. Good idea, go ahead." And that's exactly what happened at the next meeting. There was still the same fussing with each other, all very ladylike and gentlemanly, but very serious. And I said, "Ladies and gentlemen, in the light of what's been going on for the last few minutes, I've been to see the Administrator, and the Administrator has authorized me to say to you that if you folks don't come to a consensus on this within a reasonable time, which I define by the next meeting, we'll pass it and I will write it." I had to "write it" only once; from then on there was always consensus.

Well, I think we are starting to talk about

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Mr. Ewing. I'm sorry I interrupted.

FUCHS: That's perfectly all right; I'm glad you did. I was wondering if maybe you could contrast Watson Miller and what you knew of Oscar Ewing and . . .

ROSENFELD: Well, I worked very closely with Ewing, just as I worked closely with Watson Miller. They were completely different personalities. Watson was an outgoing, people-oriented person. Jack Ewing was the epitome of the successful lawyer. That doesn't mean he wasn't friendly; he was friendly, he liked people. But it was a wholly different approach. He was more reserved; he was more didactic but it was fun to work with him. As a lawyer I had no problem working with him, but I don't think I developed as close a personal relationship with him, although we were on very good personal terms. I remember my first meeting with him; I went in to see him when he was meeting all the new people, and I said, "Mr. Ewing, I'm the only man or woman on your staff that you can fire without any recriminations, so if you want my resignation, it's here."

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He said, "Well, what brought that one?"

I said, "Really, I think that a new man is entitled to his own people."

I said, "Well, do you want to leave?"

I said, "No, I love it."

He said, "Well, stay and stop making speeches." Now, several interesting incidents. As I indicated in preparation for this I've been doing some probing of my memory; and of course, it's hard to remember precisely what happened "250" years ago, but I hope this is accurate and I think it is.

There were two or three incidents there that were very interesting. Perhaps one of the last that I was involved in with him, and is perhaps the most interesting--I left the Federal Security Agency in August or September of 1948, when I assumed my Presidential appointment. Remember, I mentioned I had been overseas on appointment by the President to a delegation of the Economic and Social Council of the U.N.; and Jack Ewing was the one that recommended me for that, for which I was deeply grateful because it brought a wholly new

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phase of experience to me.

You will recall that the State of Israel came into being in 1948 and obviously there had been a great many discussions in the Cabinet with Mr. Truman, and the President had a very fond feeling for Ewing because he knew the New York situation where so many Jews reside. And I have a sneaking suspicion that the 1948 election might have had something to do with that.

Well, before this took place, Jack Ewing called me in his office one day and said, "Harry, I want you to do a very confidential mission for us. I want you to feel out the top Jewish leaders as to what they feel ought to be done about Israel," not giving me authority to talk with them about what was in the works. As a matter of fact, I wasn't sure it was in the works myself, but I divined that was it. In connection with that, but without tying it at all to the White House, I had pretty serious discussions with two of the major Jewish leaders, Rabbi Stephen Wise of the American Jewish

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Congress, and Judge Joseph Proskauer of the American Jewish Committee. And I was able to find out their general view which obviously was in the direction of recognition of Israel.

FUCHS: How close was this to May of 1948 when they were recognized?

ROSENFELD: I would say early 1948.

FFUCHS: In the spring of 1948?

ROSENFELD: Well, even in the late winter of 1947-1948. My recollection is it may have been February, or something like that. That was one rather interesting experience under Ewing.

FUCHS: Had Ewing mentioned that he had done a special study for the President on the validity of the Jewish claim to Palestine?

ROSENFELD: No.

FUCHS: never talked about that?

ROSENFELD: No. He must have had his old law office

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do it. I guess this is a McNutt story, just coming back to it. McNutt and John Studebaker were not on the best of terms, and, as a matter of fact, one day McNutt said to me, "Why don't you fire the bastard?"

And I said, "Paul, he may be a bastard, but he's your bastard; you can't do that. He's doing a good job; you and he may not get along well, but that's my job, I'm supposed to take care of him."

He said, "Okay, keep him out of my hair."

Of course, I had to be very close with John Studebaker and I enjoyed working with him; didn't always agree with him, he didn't always agree with me, but we had a mutually helpful relationship.

was one thing John did that I've always thought of with the greatest admiration. That was a time when top people like Studebaker, Presidential appointees, had a salary of \$10,000. Sounds incredible in the current picture, but that's what it was. I know later, when I got on the Presidential commission staff and I got the salary of a White House aide,

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I kidded my wife one day, and said, "Well now, we've never wanted a yacht, but if we want to, we can buy one now;" I got \$15,000, or something like that. But one day Studebaker came to me and said, "I've got a problem. I earn \$10,000, my deputy commissioner earns 9, my assistant commissioner earns 8, and heads of my division earn 6.5. How can I get any people to work for me? I've got to get them out of the educational community, and if I want to get a college president or a provost or a principal of a school, I can't offer him \$6,500; they won't come."

I said, "Well, what do you want John? We can't change that."

He said, "I want to offer them the same that I'm getting."

I said, "You want three levels down at \$10,000?"

He said, "Yes."

I said, "Wow." I said, "Have you got a justification?" He gave me a justification.

So I went to see McNutt and he said, "He's as crazy as ever, but it's a bright idea. Okay, I'm

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for it; see what you can do."

So the next thing I did was I called in the Director of Personnel of the Federal Security Agency, and said, "Look, I want you to get this through the Civil Service Commission."

He said, "I can't do it."

I said, "What do you mean you can't do it?"

"It's against my principles as a personnel manager."

I said, "Look, man, the Administrator has ordered this to be done."

He said, "I can't do it. I won't make the appointment."

I said, "Okay, fine, I'll make the appointment with the Civil Service Commission myself."

He said, "You want to go over my head?"

I said, "Well, I asked you to do it. Do you want to do it?"

"No."

I said, "Well, then I'm going to the Civil Service," and in his presence I called the chairman of the Civil Service Commission, told him what

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I wanted to do and I wanted to come over and see him. And I didn't bring this guy, and I didn't bring Studebaker, because Studebaker wasn't liked in many quarters. I went over as the lawyer to argue the case before the entire Commission. The Commission staff felt

the way the Federal Security Agency personnel officer felt; this is impossible. The Commission approved it, which I thought took great wisdom on their part. And I thought Studebaker had perspicacity. It was a very wise move. Now, I don't know if he got good people; I don't remember the result of that. But it was a wise move and I thought you'd be interested in it.

FUCHS: It's interesting, too, that when Studebaker resigned he said it was because he couldn't afford to be Commissioner of Education anymore, but I do believe there were other circumstances there. Are you aware of that?

ROSENFELD: No. Well, I know when I came back from, I think from one of my business trips, I came into a beastly fight; and I was called right into the

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top staff, and they were fighting with John Studebaker about something--I can't remember what it was now--and I had to get that squared away again. They wanted to fire him again; I think John Studebaker had made some statements contrary to what the Administration position was.

FUCHS: He did differ with Ewing, and Ewing said he got in his hair after awhile. One of the principal things was a fight about consolidation of the library; the Office of Education library had been in the Interior Building and he wanted to leave it there, and he had an obsession, Ewing said, about the matter.

ROSENFELD: Well, John knew what he wanted, even if you didn't agree with it; and my job with John was to try to talk sense to him. And I had no trouble with John. My real trouble was keeping John and the Administrator out of each other's hair, which I generally succeeded in doing. And I think what happened is I left to take this Presidential thing and then this thing broke.

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FUCHS: Now there were some charges when McGrath was appointed, that they were glad because Studebaker had sort of aborted the true mission of the Office of Education.

ROSENFELD: McGrath was a very good man.

FUCHS: Now he didn't make these charges did he?

ROSENFELD: No, no. McGrath was a good man. No, I wasn't part of that except to cool it down for awhile, and then I left.

FUCHS: You don't have any observations about Studebaker's direction of the mission of the Office of Education? In what ways he might have sort of gone outside what they thought was his true charge?

ROSENFELD: Oh, I haven't thought about that for a long time, but let me just think aloud. Studebaker had a very strong sense of public participation in the school system, of the public as a whole, and of the function of the schools in doing things other than the ABC'S. He came from, I think, Iowa,

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when he caught Mrs. Roosevelt's attention with a rather interesting, as I recall it, adult education program. He was trying to break the bounds of the ordinary classroom concept of teaching, but at the same time, had come out of the school system so that he was part of the fundamental thinking. I think Studebaker's principal accomplishment for the Office of Education is that he took a moribund agency, that nobody gave one hoot in hell about, and put it on the map. You mayn't have agreed with what he said; you may have hated his guts, but you knew damn well that you had to deal with him, and I think for that he must be given a great deal of credit. It was a hell of a lot of headaches for me, but I think in the long run what he did was extremely important for raising the level of the visibility of importance of the Office of Education.

FUCHS: You participated in the reorganization?

ROSENFELD: No.

FUCHS: You didn't, of the office?

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ROSENFELD: No.

FUCHS: What about your views of the transfer of some agencies? Did you feel there were any agencies in FSA that would have been better placed someplace else? Where did you think the Children's Bureau belonged?

ROSENFELD: I think the Children's Bureau belonged there rather than in the Labor Department, because it was a combination health and welfare agency, and research agency, and I think by being part of the general health-oriented agency its heads, like Lenroot and Martha Elliott, were able to have an important impact on the directions of the Public Health Service. The Public Health Service, then and still, is oriented largely toward the individual practicing doctor. When you have the research arms of the institutes of health, that's a different picture. The incestuous relationship between the Public Health Service and these and the AMA and so forth, needed the leavening of the public vision that was in the Children's Bureau; and

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Martha in particular, as a physician, was able to do what Catherine wasn't able to do. They couldn't slough her off; she was a member of the team. And the result was, I think,

that the Children's Bureau performed a service quite above what the chart shows in the relationships there. Furthermore, when it came to aid to dependent children in the Social Security program, the wisdoms of the Children's Bureau, I think, were very useful. I had a great respect for Lenroot and her successors. I think they were eminently wonderful public figures. And this is without political implications. I think they belonged there in FSA.

Responsive to your original question, if you're willing to conceive of a person's department, dealing with people in their fundamental relationships, that is, the family, their health, their education, I think the ideals a good idea and I frankly regret the break off of the U.S. Office of Education and so forth into the Department of Education. I haven't given it much thought but it breaks that family oriented syndrome, which I think the HEW and the

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Federal Security Agency was uniquely competent to perform. Now it was a hell of an operation to administer, and it took a powerful person, and, looking backwards, there weren't always powerful people involved over the years. They were good people, but it had to take a person who was strong in order to be able to hold it from splitting off in a centrifugal effect, as it spun around.

I can't think of anything that I would have removed from it. I think I would have added to the Office of Education some of the things that the U.S. Department of Education has since pulled into its orbit.

FUCHS: For instance.

ROSENFELD: Well, I think the education-oriented programs of the various other departments are not really departmental programs; they are really educational programs. Now, I understand the fear about some of them such as the ones that fear the educators running them down, and I have that same

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fear; but I think Mr. Carter has been wise in not choosing an educator to head the Department of Education. In other words, I agree that war's too important to leave to generals and I think education is too important to leave to educators, as witness the fact that education is run by laymen; trustees running colleges, lay boards of education running elementary and secondary systems. And I think that's wise.

FUCHS: What's the name of the lady?

ROSENFELD: Hostettler.

FUCHS: From California.

ROSENFELD: That's right, I don't know anything about her abilities. I assume she's an able woman, and I'm not passing judgment on her, but the fact that they didn't choose an educator I think is wise.

FUCHS: Very good. Dr. Parran was still there when you were?

ROSENFELD: Yes.

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FUCHS: And then he was succeeded by Sheeley? Was it Sheeley?

ROSENFELD: I can't remember.

FUCHS: Under Ewing were you cognizant of any of the circumstances surrounding this?

ROSENFELD: There was no good feeling between them; but remember that was Mary Switzer's principal assignment, the health field, so I didn't get involved in it.

FUCHS: You did know that Ewing and Dr. Parran didn't . . .

ROSENFELD: Oh, I knew they had no use for each other. I think Tom Parran felt that he was being politically oriented, and there was some truth to that. Frankly I don't see anything wrong with it. I don't see any reason why the politically elected people shouldn't determine policy; that's what you elect people for. As a matter of fact, I wrote an article just before I was leaving FSA called "Experts Are Never Right." It didn't get published until I

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was with the DP Commission. It was an article which took four professions, medicine, law, education, and architecture, and showed that in the relationship of each of them to the public, the organized profession was always wrong. Always wrong.

An interesting thing that took place, after I left the Department, Jack Ewing called me one day and said, "Harry, you got me in trouble."

I said, "What's that?"

He said, "I made a speech and I took something out of your article in which you said that organized medicine opposed the tuberculosis program, and the AMA jumped me on it. Have you got proof of what I said?"

I said, "I sure do." And I looked in my notes and it was in the history published by the National Tuberculosis Association. And I gave it to him and he said, "Thanks, I'm going

to get back at them." But I think what's involved is all professions, my own not less than others, have a tendency to think that the sun rises and falls over them though we're in business only to serve the public; and the medical

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profession has a sort of oracular mysticism about it, which makes it difficult for a mere layman to tackle it. But things like National Health Insurance, HMOs, the PSROS, and all of those things are developments which organized medicine has opposed violently for years, and which the public wants. And I think the public is right, so that in that fight between Tom Parran and Ewing they were both right. Both were decent, honorable people and Tom Parran was a magnificent Surgeon General, but it was a characteristic, "Look, what the hell do you know about medicine? We'll take care of that." And that just wasn't right. That was some of the argument between Studebaker and McNutt, "You don't know a damn thing about education, that's my job."

FUCHS: Of course, Ewing, I guess, was a strong, forceful person who wouldn't tolerate what to him might have even seemed like insubordination.

ROSENFELD: That's right. Jack had a very strong arm, and he used it when he felt it was necessary.

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FUCHS: What do you recall of the fight over Federal aid to education? Wasn't that in that period?

ROSENFELD: Not very much at that time. It was a bubbling issue but it hadn't yet really come out very heavily. Of course, as always, one of the major issues was not only Federal control of education but the whole issue of public against private education, or public and private education. But as I recall it, the issue had not become a major one, at least not in my connection with it.

FUCHS: Do you have any more observations about Oscar Ewing or any anecdotes that might be of interest?

ROSENFELD: I don't think so at the moment.

FUCHS: I did want to ask you about J. Donald Kingsley. Did you have relations with him?

ROSENFELD: Yes I did, a very pleasant and very agreeable one. Do you know where Don is now, by the way?

FUCHS: I believe he's dead.

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ROSENFELD: Did he die? That's what I was afraid of.

FUCHS: In fact I think he died some years ago.

ROSENFELD: That was my vague recollection. Is John Thurston still alive?

FUCHS: I believe he's in Florida; I'm not sure.

ROSENFELD: Well, Don Kingsley was an important influence in the Agency. He had a broad vision. He was not tied to any one of the constituent agency vested interests. He had a great loyalty to Ewing and Truman, but I don't think that was the principal thing that was directing him. I think he had in mind a vision of an interplay among these different constituent interests. I think he thought it would come quicker than it did come, if it has ever come; but I think he was working at that and he was working at it in a combination of a gentle and tough minded way. He didn't show his toughness unless it was necessary. He had a gentle touch, a sort of easy-going way which was useful. And my relationships with him were very, very agreeable. As a

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matter of fact, it was he who had originally suggested to Jack Ewing that I be chosen to go over to Geneva for that conference. Now he must have known something about what was going to happen with me and the DP Commission, or otherwise he wouldn't have sent me over there; because one of the main issues there was refugees. Some of the people that the Russians claimed were theirs and the Poles claimed should have been repatriated, we didn't want to give them back. You know that kind of thing in the DP camps. Don was aware of the political ramifications, but minded the store; and I think he did a good job.

FUCHS: Do you know any of his background, how he happened to come to FSA?

ROSENFELD: No, I do not.

FUCHS: What led to his appointment to the IRO, the International Refugees Organization?

ROSENFELD: I don't know the answer to that either.

FUCHS: Do you have any remarks about John Thurston?

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ROSENFELD: None substantial, no.

FUCHS: Is there anything in connection with the ECOSOC meeting at Geneva that stands out in your memory?

ROSENFELD: Well, I wasn't there too long; I was there for maybe a month and a half before I was called back to assume the commissionership of the Displaced Persons Commission. It was a fascinating experience. Without naming names, I learned to distrust some of our Allies. I could never rely on what they said they would do, particularly one of them. I'm ashamed to say that when the Russians made a commitment, which they rarely did, they kept it implicitly, which wasn't true of at least one of our Allies. The principal fight there was whether the IRC camps should continue to house people which the Russians said were theirs. We said, "These people were refugees and if they went back they would be harmed." The Russians were very effective arguers for their position. They had an extremely able representative by the name of Aroutinian; a very able, very affable guy, but tough as nails, and he

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and I were always at each other.

One interesting thing is that some of our European allies said, "Don't you Americans ever cease working?" We would have delegation meetings first thing in the morning and in the evening, a debriefing. They had a sort of easier lifestyle than we did.

I'm just trying to think of the head of the delegation who was an Assistant Secretary of State. I think he was a professor from Amherst. I can't think of his name, but he was a very able guy, and involved in one experience I had there [Willard Thorpe]. He was the head of the delegation, and we got a notice from Washington that such and such was to be our position on something, I forget what it was. And I went to him and said, "This doesn't make sense, I'm not going to do it. You better have someone else do it, because I can't in conscience say this is in our best interest and I won't be able to do as good a job in arguing it."

He looked at it, and said, "You're right; do what we've been doing until now," which would have

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been the reverse.

I said, "Well, you can't do that."

He said, "Well, as Assistant Secretary of State, I think maybe I can do what other heads of delegations can't do," and we did it.

Well, that taught me something about State Department operation which I later used. The professionals in the international community get along among themselves because they

believe in the idea that don't put a person into a corner that he can't get out of, because otherwise he's going to come out of it as a fighting rat; give him a way out. Now, I think that's an important lesson to learn; you can carry your position, but give them a way out.

FUCHS: It's rather interesting that you say the Russians, at least in connection with ECOSOC, kept their agreements.

ROSENFELD: They kept their agreements.

FUCHS: Of course, Mr. Truman said they made so many and never kept any.

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ROSENFELD: These were minor things, you know. At a given meeting they would say something and I would say, "Now, is that agreed?"

And they'd say, "Yes," and they always kept their agreements.

FUCHS: And some of the Allies were a little less faithful.

ROSENFELD: Yes. Particularly the French.

FUCHS: When you were working with the Nye Committee, that was 1934?

ROSENFELD: 1934, yes.

FUCHS: Were you there after 1934 when Truman came in?

ROSENFELD: No, I wasn't there when Truman came into it.

FUCHS: What was your first connection with President Truman? Had you met him prior to your appointment to the Displaced Persons Commission?

ROSENFELD: I don't believe so. My first dealings

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with him through somebody else were with the Israel situation and Mr. Ewing.

FUCHS: Now what did you report to Ewing, to get a little more depth, about the feelings of the Jewish community in regard to Israel?

ROSENFELD: Well, they were very strongly for American recognition of Israel. They wanted an official Israeli state which was officially recognized by the United States Government. They wanted protection, not military protection, but diplomatic protection-against people who would tear them apart. That was not surprising.

FUCHS: There have been charges, of course, that there were rather unfair tactics, in relation to the U.N., at this time. Do you know anything of that?

ROSENFELD: No.

FUCHS: Loy Henderson said the State Department was not on either side, but they had the best interest of the United States at heart and they felt that

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recognition was not in the best interest of the United States. How did you feel about that? Did you think that he was anti-Semitic? He was anti-Zionist, surely.

ROSENFELD: I don't know Loy Henderson personally. I have no reason to think that he was anti-Semitic in the sense of wanting to hurt Jews. I think he was anti-Zionist. But I think what you're dealing with is typical pro-Arab orientation of the State Department. On the one side, you've got a scraggly piece of land, with a couple of people; and against that, all those major Arab countries that were very significant in the American public policy. And I think that it was a standard position for a long time in the State Department. I was and am a great admirer of Mr. Roosevelt, but at a time when Roosevelt had it within his power to save millions of Jews that were going to be killed by Hitler--and were killed by Hitler--all he did was call a conference, the Evian Conference. Now, if he had been more vigorous, and if the State Department had made recommendations

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to him much more significantly, that never would have happened. If the United States had taken a lead in actually admitting people who were going to be slaughtered, the nations at the Evian Conference would have done their part. I don't know whether they would have taken the millions that were killed, but they would have taken certainly hundreds upon hundreds of thousands.

FUCHS: When was that, about 1942?

ROSENFELD: I think it was 1942 or 1943. Roosevelt wasn't anti-Semitic. Roosevelt I don't even think was anti-Zionist, but he was being guided by the State Department; "Look, don't let's get in trouble with that group." That was a wholly different reaction from Truman's. Truman saw people in trouble and did something about it, while others were holding meetings.

FUCHS: Why didn't we admit more?

ROSENFELD: We had a bitter anti-alien mood in general at that time. That was the time when the labor move-

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ment was anti-immigration. We didn't want to get involved, and that was one of the problems. "Don't let's get involved," so call a meeting. And the meeting didn't result in anything except meeting.

FUCHS: Roosevelt came out and said we'll make no major change without consulting the Arab nations, and Truman adopted that principle, but then I think he did make some.

ROSENFELD: Sure. You know it's one thing to say one thing and do another. Well, Truman was in a spot. After all he came on the job in a very unusual way and so he had to show that there was a continuity, but he was a wholly different person. I had enormous regard for FDR, don't misunderstand, but that was not one of his better moments. He could have saved literally millions of people had he shown the guts that Truman later showed.

FUCHS: I don't know enough of the history of that, but it seems like Eleanor would have come in there someplace.

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ROSENFELD: Yes, I think she might have been, but she apparently wasn't strong enough on it. I really don't know. I wasn't part of the Evian background; I don't know. But I do know, I've always felt that he missed an opportunity to show genuine leadership. And I think Truman did show leadership in behalf of Christians and Jews who couldn't go elsewhere, by opening up the Displaced Persons Act, which brought 420,000 people, Jews and non-Jews, into the United States. I think he had a wholly different view, the kind of a difference between the patrician attitude towards "them foreigners" and a more down-to-earth attitude of people-to-people.

As a matter of fact, on that score, let me tell you a story. I think that I mentioned that I'd written this article in the New York Times on "People Without Land, Land Without People," and I was a smart aleck; I thought I knew something about it. I think that was written and published in early 1952. I thought I knew something about it; I was kind of cocky about it. As time went on, when I was in the DP Commission, I'd be in a situation of coming

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to see Truman reasonably often, and reporting to him, particularly while the legislative fight was going on--and I was largely assigned the legislative fight, within the Commission's primary assignments. One day I reported to him some information that was given to me that a vast landholder in Brazil was willing to give lands to hundreds of thousands of refugees. He would build the cities, he would build the roads, to create cities of ten thousand people. I said I wasn't going to support this but I would report it to

the President for whatever he thought, I did report it to the President, and this was right after I had written this article. And the most amazing thing happened. The President said, "Come on over here," and he took me to the back of the Oval Office where there was that huge globe that Ike had given and then lectured me for the next half hour on population movement all over the world. And he would flip that globe and say, "Now, look here," and then he would tell me the story about that.

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Remember, I had researched this. I had written--but I learned more in that half hour than I had known in all that time I researched, and he couldn't have known that I was going to talk about this, because I didn't tell anyone at the White House I was going to talk about it. Even if he had the time to bone up, he couldn't have boned up. There was an example of real learning on the part of that man Truman.

There's another story about learning on Truman's part. I have been trying to fix the story and I'm not sure that I can fix it completely.

The story I had in mind, Mr. Fuchs, is on a book. I may have this wrong, but my recollection is that Senator Kilgore, with whom we were very close in the DP program, and who was a very intimate friend of Mr. Truman's, had shown me a book with a title something like "What If." It was a book that he was reading on what history would have been if something else had happened, For instance, what if the Moors had conquered Granada instead of the Spanish, and so forth. I went to the Library

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of Congress and was able to take the book out because of privileges that I had there, and my recollection is that it deals with this book but I'm not sure because most of the books in the Library of Congress don't have a card in them to see who the prior users were. But for some reason or other this must have been a special book. When I borrowed the book--Kilgore hadn't borrowed it out of the Library of Congress--but when I borrowed that book the Library assistant who gave it to me said, "Hummmph, two people have had this book out before you, Senator Truman and President Truman." Now that's an example of the kind of a guy he was, and as you know he was an omnivorous reader and one of the interesting things in that regard, not only in his reading, but in his memory, which was prodigious, was a story that happened once when I got a telephone call from--I can't remember whether it was Dave Lloyd or Charlie Murphy--someone; "The boss is giving us hell."

I said, "What about?"

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He said, "He says there's an error in the biography that's being written about him." I can't remember whether it was the Dictionary of American Biography or the Dictionary of

National Biography that has the standard practice of writing these long biographies of Presidents. They had prepared a long one on him and submitted it to him for checking; the staff, of course, staffed it out in all the various departments of Government. Then they gave it to the President to read. He picked out errors--I don't know what else--but one of the things he picked out that he said was in error was some aspect of the DP program. The staff sent it back to the State Department and the Department of Justice, and the CIA and all the other people that were involved, and then they gave it back to the President and said, "They all say it's correct."

He said, "You call Harry on the phone and have him look at it," That's why they were calling me, and they said, "Of course, the boss is wrong, but he's asked us to have you look at it." They sent it up to me. By golly, he was right, and everybody

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else was wrong. It was a characteristic pattern of his; he had not only an amazing intellectual curiosity, but an astonishing memory which would sometimes frighten the hell out of you.

FUCHS: I wanted to touch a bit on your work as the Displaced Persons Commission commissioner. How did your appointment come about as commissioner?

ROSENFELD: To the best of my knowledge, it was decided--how I don't know but, presumably at the White House--that because of the anticipation of the need of assistance from the religious groups in providing sponsorship and jobs and adjustment assistance, that they would have a Protestant, a Catholic and a Jew. And I was apparently chosen as the Jewish member of the Commission.

FUCHS: I think there had been some precedent for this arrangement.

ROSENFELD: Yes. In a similar situation.

FUCHS: Were there other candidates?

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ROSENFELD: I have no idea. It was a complete surprise to me when I was asked whether I would accept it. If you promise not to tell a soul, I hadn't even read the Displaced Persons Act at that time.

FUCHS: You didn't know who recommended you?

ROSENFELD: I suspect that I was recommended by Jack Ewing and Arthur Altmeyer. Arthur Altmeyer was then the Social Security Commissioner, and we worked very closely over the years. I was able to hoodwink him into thinking that I might be good; but I think it was the two of them that proposed me.

FUCHS: What were your impressions of Arthur Altmeyer as Administrator?

ROSENFELD: An astonishing human being. He combined administrative capacity with genuine vision and genuine perspicacity. He was, I think, largely responsible, although not solely, for the conception and the effectiveness of organization of the Social Security program. He was a modest sort of guy. He wasn't a blowhard, didn't talk often; but when

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he did it was worth listening to. I was very much impressed with him. I was one of those who thought he was just great, and one of the real adornments of the Federal Security Agency.

FUCHS: What about the two other appointees, the Protestant and the Catholic?

ROSENFELD: Well, the first Protestant member of the Commission was Ugo Carusi, who had been the Commissioner of Immigration and an assistant to the Attorney General; and he was also the Republican member of the Commission. He was an able, dedicated, extremely knowledgeable, politically sophisticated man, and I think that the United States owes him a great debt of gratitude for helping to organize this program. In the assignment of duties among the three commissioners, Ugo handled administrative and executive functions and largely the overseas operations. Ed O'Connor, the second member of the Commission, was responsible largely for relationships with outside private and public organizations. And my responsibility largely was legislation, adjudication, and development of

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the regulations. Ed O'Connor was the Catholic member of the Board; he had come from the Catholic organization that dealt with this. He was extremely knowledgeable. He was known by and known to, and knew personally most of the people whose cooperation with the Commission was of the utmost importance in the effectiveness of the program. And he did a good job in getting that organized. After a while there was some differences of opinion involving Carusi and the Commission and the White House chose a successor to him by the name of John Gibson. John had been an Assistant Secretary of Labor; he had been a labor leader. He was not particularly knowledgeable about immigration, but then, as a matter of fact, neither was I when I came on. He was a fast learner; he was helpful with the Commission in helping bridge the gap about the differences of opinion, and in political activity at the Hill. So among the four people that there were on the Commission I think that, myself excepted, the other three were good.

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FUCHS: Well, do you think that Gibson was the more effective person?

ROSENFELD: Frankly, no. No, I think Carusi was more effective in organizing the operation to begin with than anyone else would have been and I think it was all to the good that the President appointed him.

FUCHS: Your initial appointments, I believe, were interim appointments and continued for quite a while--what was the little story behind that?

ROSENFELD: Well, Senator McCarran was not very happy with the program and was not very happy with the Commission because of its support of the program. So, he thought he would--I'm psychologizing; he never told this to me--punish the Commission by punishing its commissioners by failing to have them confirmed, and if they weren't confirmed by the end of the year then they were out. Well, what happened is that none of us really cared. We were trying to do our job, not that we would not have wanted to be confirmed, obviously, but we

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weren't going to give up our souls, so to speak, for confirmation. And then the word got around that Congress and the American people would probably have to deal with new commissioners because of the failure of the Senate to confirm; there was such a storm of protest from the very powerful and politically sensitive groups that we had been working with, that Mr. McCarran decided that he had better have us confirmed.

Now, it's odd, because when I was at the Federal Security Agency I used to help write some of Senator McCarran's speeches. McCarran and I had no personal difficulties until the DP program. As a matter of fact, there developed a personal difficulty. When the legislative picture got taut, Senator McCarran took a trip throughout our European stations, and I was sure he was going to come back with all sorts of stories detrimental to the program.

So, I went overseas, and with a big black book in my hand, sat down and talked to everybody he had talked with, since our staff reported to us whom

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he had talked with that they knew. And I was very earnest with them. I said, "Senator McCarran saw you on such and such a date; what did he ask you and what did you say to him," and I made notes in front of them, so there was no attempt to deceive anybody. As a matter of fact, I went to see the Pope. And I went to see the Pope in a private interview, but my staff persuaded me not to take the black book in with me. But when I got out I made notes.

FUCHS: Oh, you broached the subject?

ROSENFELD: Oh, yes, indeed. Yes, indeed, I did. I would rather not describe what that conversation was, because of the nature of the individual, but yes, indeed, I did discuss it.

Two interesting things happened as a result of that. First, when Mr. McCarran came back he made a speech on the floor of the Senate attacking the Commission and saying so and so had said so and so and so and so. My colleagues wouldn't

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have anything to do with that; they were scared to death of McCarran, and they were right to be scared of him, because he was chairman of the Judiciary Committee and a very powerful and a vindictive man. But I issued a press release saying that Mr. McCarran was wrong on this, calling him a liar in effect. McCarran became absolutely livid with rage at me, but never again made another statement about his trip overseas, because he knew I had the facts.

A second thing that happened from that visit during my incumbency in the Displaced Persons Commission: I saw Pope Pius XII two times in private audiences, and I think in that one in which he and I discussed Mr. McCarran, I had the very awkward duty of conveying to Mr. Truman a message from Pope Pius which I have never revealed to anybody else. It wasn't catastrophic, but it was interesting. Every time I came back from overseas I'd report in to the President--first report to my Commission and then report to the President--and when I walked in I said, "Mr. President, I'm in an

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awkward situation as a Jew; I'm a courier of a message from a Catholic to a Baptist." And he just howled with laughter. And I thought the message was rather innocuous but he was especially pleased with it. There must have been something that he knew that I didn't know, or that he read into it that I didn't read into it, but he was especially grateful for my having conveyed it. So, I conducted a diplomatic mission in that sense.

FUCHS: You can put it on the tape and then we'll close it.

ROSENFELD: No, I won't say what went on. Another aspect of McCarran was that the McCarran-Walter Act was passed while the Commission was in business. I thought this was a dreadful immigration law, and, although we had worked very closely with Walter, I bitterly resisted this Act. I went in to see the President--my Commission disagreed with me--but I went in to see the President personally to urge him to veto the McCarran-Walter bill. The

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Secretary of State urged him to sign it, the Attorney General urged him to sign it; only dumb Harry--Harry Rosenfield, that is, not Harry Truman--was the one that urged him to

veto it, and when I proposed it he said, "I'm with you, I'm going to veto it. Even for the President of the United States, it took guts to stand up against McCarran and Walter.

There's another cute story about McCarran. My wife, Leonora Cohen Rosenfield, is a very distinguished scholar and during this time she had a study at the Library of Congress. She was writing several of her books. The next study, lo and behold, was occupied by Sister Patricia

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McCarran. Here Harry Rosenfield and Senator McCarran were trading blows bitterly, and Leonora Rosenfield and Patricia McCarran were very close friends. And they each, of course, were aware of the other relationship among the men. There's one cute story there. When McCarran was very sick Sister Patricia told Leonora that either Truman or someone on behalf of Truman called to find out how he was, called him at the hospital, and then Sister Patricia said, "You know, they're only interested to see if he is going to croak."

FUCHS: Who were the principal architects of the Displaced Persons Act?

ROSENFELD: Oh, I must confess to you I was not. I came on the scene as a Johnny-come-lately. There was a Committee on Displaced Persons, run by a Dr. Bernard, that I think was the focal point of most of the action in the original passing. I was involved in all of the amendments but I take it you're talking about the original act.

FUCHS: Yes. Was this a quasi-governmental committee?

ROSENFELD: No, this was a private group composed of the religious and immigration-oriented groups. And they did a good lobbying job and a good sales job. The Act was bad in some very important respects. It was discriminatory against Catholics, and against Jews, but it at least started the ball rolling, and then we were later able to get it amended.

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FUCHS: As you know, President Truman signed the bill, although he said he certainly didn't think it was a good one.

ROSENFELD: Well, I think it was wise of him to sign it because it got it off the ground, and at least was able to prove to people that it was feasible. And decent, fine, people came in.

You know, I've just thought about a story that is a human interest story that happened to me years after my association with the Commission. I don't remember who it was, but one of the members of the Commission thought: wouldn't it be nice if every refugee coming off a boat got a little welcome note from the United States Government. IRO

brought them over in American ships; they were met at the boats by their sponsors who were largely the religious--where was the United States Government? So, somebody drafted a little bit of a card saying "Welcome to the United States." And it had the signatures of the three members of the Commission on it. Well, it was, I suppose a gimmick, but a lot of people

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thought well of it. Many years afterwards, I was at a faculty party that my wife was involved in at the University of Maryland, where she was a professor of French, and I was introduced to a man in his thirties or forties, and he said to me, "What did you say your name was?"

I said, "Harry Rosenfield."

He said, "Would you stand right here, please; don't move."

That was an odd thing, but I did as I was asked. He soon came over with a lovely lady, of about the same age, and she took out of her purse what turned out to be one of those "welcome" cards. And she said, "Is that your signature?"

I said, "Yes."

She said, "All these years I've been carrying it around to say thank you, and now I have the chance."

FUCHS: Isn't that wonderful?

ROSENFELD: It shows that people really were grateful

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for the opportunity, and here she was a member of the faculty of the University of Maryland. I don't remember; I'm sure I learned then what her husband was doing, but my reaction was that he was something in the professional engineering field. It's just an interesting story.

FUCHS: Did you have reservations about the other appointees to any degree when you were appointed to the Commission, or did you have prior knowledge of them?

ROSENFELD: I hadn't known any of them personally previous to that. I had no reservations at all about any of them. And to the best of my knowledge we worked well as a team, although O'Connor and I had some differences of opinion with Carusi which ultimately resulted in the President replacing him, and substituting Mr. Gibson for him. But Carusi and I remained very good friends since. We're in touch with each other, not as often as I'd like, but oh, a couple of times a year.

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FUCHS: There is some note in the record, of course, of the differences of opinion, and it said the vote was usually two to one, and I just wondered, did this revolve largely around administrative procedure?

ROSENFELD: Completely about administrative procedure.

FUCHS: I should ask you and not provide the answer.

ROSENFELD: O'Connor and I felt, as a general proposition, that Mr. Squadrilli, and Mr. Kaplan, who were the top people chosen by Carusi to run the European operation, were not following Commission policy directives as well as they had an obligation to do. They were both able people, they were both dedicated people; but it was the Commission that had the legal authority and obligation and we both felt that they were sometimes going off on their own. Mr. Carusi, who appointed both of them, disagreed. The voluntary agencies that we were dealing with, the religious and other groups, on the whole, I think, agreed with Carusi, and disagreed with

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O'Connor and myself; but apparently the White House agreed with us and not with Carusi.

I don't want to give you any impression that Carusi was fired; that wasn't so, but in the shuffle that's what happened. was no question of impropriety, there was no question of scandal of any kind whatsoever; just purely a difference of basic philosophies as to how the program ought to operate. And the result of that is that Mr. Squadrilli left and Mr. Kaplan left, and were replaced by I think Robert Corkery, who was equally a competent and able and efficient person. But it was a question of policy rather than anything else.

FUCHS: Yes, I think Carusi, at least in his letter of resignation, said that he felt there was a difference of opinion, and maybe the work of the Commission was suffering and it would be better if he would tender his resignation.

ROSENFELD: Carusi was an absolute gentleman at all times. There never was a harsh word, never a nasty word, just disagreement of opinion.

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Now, I might add that on other occasions the vote was two to one against me. For example, I wrote an extremely thoroughly researched memorandum on the admissibility of the Waffen SS; and I came to the conclusion, on the basis of highly secret information--so secret that I can't even see my memorandum now, because it's so highly classified--that they shouldn't be admitted. Well, after about 18 months of hassling back and forth in

the Commission, Mr. Carusi and Mr. O'Connor voted against me, and some of those people were admitted. I think they had the obligation to act in accordance with their consciences, and their knowledge of the situation. I just disagreed with them, then, and I disagree with them now.

FUCHS: In certain groups, the people were there involuntarily or due to innocent apprehensions, but other groups, such as Waffen SS you felt they . . .

ROSENFELD: They were in it because they wanted to be.

FUCHS: And the program was what they wanted.

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ROSENFELD: That's right.

Now, that isn't to say that there mayn't have been some poor Joes that were dragged into it, but the record that I had from the ultra secret files of the Army showed an unbelievably improper behavior on the part of that group as a whole. My reaction was, with so many people wanting to come in, and a limited number allowable, let's take the ones that we have no black marks against. I was voted down.

FUCHS: What was the Baltic group?

ROSENFELD: The Balts were--as a matter of fact, a good many of the Waffen SS were Baltics.

FUCHS: I see. They were what they called the "inimical list?"

ROSENFELD: Well, that was the list that was maintained by the immigration service of security and related people. The Waffen SS were never on that; that was mostly the Communists. The Waffen SS were Fascists rather than Communists.

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FUCHS: How was the final report written? Did you have exceptions to that?

ROSENFELD: No, I didn't. As a matter of fact, I was largely responsible for it, maybe that's why. What we did was hire an archivist, a very able man, who collected material for us and drafted portions of it.

FUCHS: This was what you called the "chief historian?"

ROSENFELD: Yes. He was able, intelligent, gifted.

FUCHS: What was his name?

ROSENFELD: My recollection is that it was Stuart Portner. I thought I might have a copy of that report here, but I'm embarrassed to say I don't. I think it was Stuart Portner. Oh, here it is. Yes, Stuart Portner. It appears on page 360 of the report.

Well, Stuart collected an enormous amount of material which was of important historic value, including the history of IRO and things of that kind, which I thought were not especially relevant to our report, at least in that context; so

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frankly I wrote a good deal of it. Of course, the Commission had to approve everything and my recollection is that each of the commissioners made appropriate and desired changes and that's the way the report came out. We owed a great deal to Stuart Portner, and we also owed a great deal to general counsel James McTigue, for his part in helping to get that together; as well as to the director of research, Anita Kury. They all participated, but the collection of the original material was by Portner.

FUCHS: I see, and who did the draft of it?

ROSENFELD: I think I finally put it in final. I tore it apart and put it together again.

FUCHS: How would you qualify the success of the program?

ROSENFELD: Well, of course, it depends upon what your objectives were. If the objectives are a part of the American foreign policy to bring relief to tortured people who were refugees as a result of a war in which we were participants, and bring

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decent, good people into the country, I think the program was a success. We brought a little over 400,000 people in. Overwhelmingly these people have turned out to be ultimately good citizens, good residents, participating in the American scene. If I were to be smart alecky in the current picture, I would say they were good taxpayers as well. I think they've contributed. I think their children have contributed. I think their children's children and their children's grandchildren will contribute in the same way that the rest of us do. The only people who were here to begin with were the red men and maybe they came across the Alaskan bridge from Asia. So all of us, in one form or another, came from elsewhere, a great many of us, if not most of us, from Europe and Africa. I think they were in the tradition of the rest of the hardworking, decent, fine people, who took their part in American life. I think we gained by it as a nation.

FUCHS: Well, now, wasn't the number specified? In

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other words, quantity-wise you couldn't have brought in a lot more than that, could you?

ROSENFELD: No. No, the original act said 200,000. The amended act said 400,000 plus, and we were limited.

FUCHS: Now, this was above any quotas that we normally have?

ROSENFELD: That's correct. The quota was no longer relevant except for historical purposes. As a matter of fact, there's an interesting story in that; it shows people can be strange. The very last night of the program I was in Munich, which was the largest of our camps. Of course, I knew that's where the main trouble would be, so that there should be someone around who would make final decisions where there were some problems. And here we had thousands upon thousands of people milling around wanting to get the last visas; and it was tense and difficult, and at 12 o'clock it was to be all over. Somewhere around 9:30 or 10 o'clock—

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it was a huge camp, it used to be I think the Nazi Air Force camp--as things were heating up, and I was in some building at one end and I got a telephone call from someone, "Hey, smart aleck, come here, I've got trouble. You're a boss man; come and settle it."

I said, "What's the trouble?"

He said, "Come here."

There were these people under terrible tension, and remember this was the Christmas week; this was at the end of December, so everybody was being denied their Christmas holidays, New Year's holidays and all that kind of thing. Well, I jumped into a car and drove over, and there I saw a standoff between one of our top staff people and a very beautiful, tall, Amazon-like woman, who had a little bit of a frightened child near her. I said, "What's the trouble?"

He said, "This woman is of Ukrainian birth, we're charging her to the Polish quota," because we didn't then have a Ukrainian quota. "She insists on being charged to the Ukrainian quota, and what

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am I going to do?"

So I said, "Ma'am, I think I know what your problem is. You are a strongly devoted Ukrainian nationalist. That's great; as far as we're concerned we don't have any problem with that. We don't have any Ukrainian quota in our law. Now this is just sheer American governmental nonsense, we have to charge you either to the Polish or to the Russian quota, depending upon which part of the Ukraine you were born in. Nobody's

going to know about it. It's hidden in the deep dark recesses of the Government and nobody's going to know about it."

She says, "Well, I will know about it." She said, "The Poles killed my husband; can I face my little son and have him charged to a Polish quota?"

I said, "Look ma'am, we've only got two hours left, and there are thousands of other people here; if you don't want it, nobody's going to force you. Someone else will take the visa. All I beg of you is think of your son's future, and then you make the decision where he can best grow up to do what you want him to do." I said, "I will give instructions

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to hold two visas until one minute to 12; if you want them, they're yours, because you were in line. If you don't want them they will go to somebody else.

She said, "I'm a Ukrainian."

I said, "Ma'am, that's your decision. One minute to 12," or two minutes to 12 whatever it was. I never found out what happened and I've tortured myself ever since.

FUCHS: Isn't that too bad?

ROSENFELD: Now, there's human reaction. Another human reaction. Of course, this program was filled with this kind of torture things.

FUCHS: You didn't get their names; too bad we couldn't find out if they've got descendants here.

ROSENFELD: No, I felt like so much of a fool not to, but we were so busy, I had to go chasing back; I forget what it was.

FUCHS: She was standing on principle, but I hope she got wise.

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ROSENFELD: My guess is she didn't. My guess is she remained there.

Two other stories. We used to meet some of our boats. We had so many of them that we couldn't meet them all, but every once in awhile when we wanted to feel it was all worthwhile, we'd go to a boat and see these people coming off, or if we were in Europe, see them being loaded on the boat. Two incidents. One of them, there was, oh I don't know, a 20-25 year old man, just as happy as he could be, prancing around, waiting to get off the boat; we were on the boat. He had nothing in the way of baggage of any kind. Everybody had some scruffy baggage; all he had was a life-size Teddy bear. I said to

him, "I beg your pardon, it's none of my business, but why are you carrying that Teddy bear?"

And from the happiest, outgoing guy, he suddenly became a serious almost glum person, and said, "Mister, it's the only family I've got left."

FUCHS: Isn't that something?

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ROSENFELD: Another story. We met the first boat that came into Boston. It really wasn't the place to come in; we brought it in because of John McCormack, who was supportive, so we brought a boat in there, scheduled properly with people going to the Northeast, but it meant extra work in getting reception people up there and so forth. It was worth doing, saved the refugees and their spouses a lot of travel from New York. While this was going on--of course we had our badges so we could get on and off the boat--one of our people came and said, "Harry, we're in real trouble. The newspaper people say that an IRO man struck a Rabbi, and they're going to write a story on it. Can you do something about it?"

I said, "Well, did he strike him?"

He said, "I don't know."

I said, "Take me where it is."

I went to the press and there they were all ready to go with a real good story. I said, "Look, ladies and gentlemen, I've never asked a newspaperman to kill a story, and I'm not going to start now."

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All I want you to do is give me a half an hour, and you can tag along with me. I just want to find out the facts." I had a whole ragtag bunch of people that went in after me. I said, "Who told you that this person was struck?" They said, "Some young woman of 17 or 18." I said, "Do you know where she is?" "Oh yes, let's go."

There we went into the cabins and I talked with her. Dumb Harry forgot to take the badge off. I said to her, "Look ma'am, would you mind telling us the story?"

She said, "I'm not going to talk."

And I could see her looking at the badge, scared to death of a Government person. I said to myself, "Stupid Harry, what an investigator you are." To her I said, "Look ma'am, you're in the United States, nobody can force you to talk; you are free. You're going to

have freedom. If you don't want to talk I can't make you talk. I'd appreciate it if you'd let us know, because it'd save some

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problems, but you're free."

And this little bit of a woman, tiny bit of a woman, put me in my place, as I've never been put in my place before or since. She said, "I know, but it takes time to learn to be free."

Magnificent, just magnificent!

FUCHS: She didn't reveal it.

ROSENFELD: No, she didn't reveal it. The end of the story; I found first he wasn't a Rabbi, second of all he wasn't struck; thirdly, if I'd been there, I think I'd have struck him. That was the end of the story. Obviously, there was no story and the press wrote none.

FUCHS: There was some movement to have an executive director appointed for the Commission. I imagine you are aware of that.

ROSENFELD: Well, we had an executive director.

FUCHS: Now this was early when there was controversy and I don't know whether he didn't have--perhaps it was

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one with more authority, or to delegate more authority to an executive director.

ROSENFELD: The Commission started its duties in August. I was the last one to start because I was overseas. Carusi started serving August 13, 1948. O'Connor started serving--in other words they were sworn in August 13, 1948. I wasn't sworn in until August 27, 1948. Arthur J. Hazes, who came to us from the State Department, was sworn in August 27, 1948, the same day I was sworn in.

FUCHS: He was executive director?

ROSENFELD: As executive director, the same day I was sworn in.

FUCHS: Did he have much authority?

ROSENFELD: He didn't deal with, largely, the program aspect, but he dealt with the business and executive and administrative aspects; personnel, salaries, questions of boats and things of that kind; and he did a good job.

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FUCHS: The amended Displaced Persons Act was created how, largely? Who wrote the provisions; did they pay much attention to the Commission?

ROSENFELD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, we carried the ball completely. We rewrote it; we were the ones that rewrote it. I must say we never would have gotten it through but for the help of Manny Celler, as chairman of the Judiciary Committee, and Francis Walter, whom we called "Tad" Walter, as chairman of the Immigration Subcommittee. Both of them were magnificently helpful. We had some trouble--as you know from what I've said--with Senator McCarran, but we had the support of a great many of the other members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and the one who marshaled that was Harley Kilgore, Senator Kilgore from West Virginia.

FUCHS: Did you have any relationship with David Niles?

ROSENFELD: Yes, I knew David very well and we would discuss problems at the White House. He was naturally involved in this. I didn't report to

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David so much as I would discuss it with him; but most of my discussions on substantive things were with Charlie Murphy, or with--was John Steelman there at the time? I think John Steelman.

FUCHS: Steelman was in the White House, but I don't know if he was in on this.

ROSENFELD: I would report frequently to John, too. But it was largely Charlie Murphy and Dave Lloyd.

FUCHS: Did you have any contact with Max Lowenthal?

ROSENFELD: No.

FUCHS: You were appointed to the Third National Conference of the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO, is that correct?

ROSENFELD: No, ECOSOC, Economic and Social Council.

FUCHS: Your biography, Current Biography, must have been in error.

ROSENFELD: Oh, yes. I was appointed to the UNESCO Conference, but I never attended.

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FUCHS: That was in 1952. I just wondered if you had any recollections.

ROSENFELD: No, I never attended.

FUCHS: You were supposed to have been the chairman of a section meeting at Hunter College in New York City.

ROSENFELD: Oh, yes. That was not the UNESCO itself as I recall. I think . . .

FUCHS: U.S. National Commission.

ROSENFELD: Yes, the National Commission, yes. Yes, I was involved in that.

FUCHS: Any memories of that would be of interest?

ROSENFELD: Oh, dear, I had forgotten that completely. No, I must confess I have none whatsoever. I do remember when I was at FSA being part of a meeting at Hood College, which was the beginning of the fight for UNESCO. In other words, I sort of helped officiate at the birth of one of the organizing

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groups, but I can't recall this one particularly.

FUCHS: How did your appointment to the Immigration Commission come about?

ROSENFELD: I think that was largely due to the intercession of Senator Lehman and his administrative assistant Julius Edelstein. I think he is now the dean of graduate studies of the City College of New York. I had worked very closely with the Senator and with Julius Edelstein in what was perhaps a very interesting development. Julius set up a system of keeping the friendly Senators involved, by having briefing sessions in which I briefed the LAs, the Legislative Assistants, and the Administrative Assistants of the Senators. When I say I, I mean the Commission, although I was the key with Julius Edelstein; that is the key contact. And this was extremely helpful. We would give them material which they could use on the floor or we would help write speeches; obviously it was done all the time.

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FUCHS: And this was as executive director of the Commission?

ROSENFELD: No. No, this was talking of the DPC. And it was by virtue of this experience which apparently was unique; it's been written up in some of the books on Government administration, how bills are passed and so forth. As a matter of fact, one book on that was written by Bailey, who was I think . . .

FUCHS: Thomas Bailey?

ROSENFELD: . . . of Syracuse, dean of the school of public administration. [Bailey, Stephen K. and Howard D. Samuel, Congress at Work, Henry Holt and Company: New York, 1952.] But I think it was because of that, that we'd gotten to know each other, that Julius and the Senator urged my appointment in that position.

FUCHS: And you were appointed as executive director?

ROSENFELD: That's correct.

FUCHS: Do you have any recollections of that would be of particular interest, and also of contacts you had?

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ROSENFELD: Yes, I do.

The members of the Commission were a very unusual and very able group of people. The chairman was Philip Perlman, the former solicitor general; the vice chairman was Earl Farrison, a former Commissioner of Immigration, and I think dean of the law school of the University of Pennsylvania at that time. The other members included Tom Finucane, who was, I think, at that time chairman of the Board of Immigration Appeals; "Butch" Fisher, who had been the counsel to the State Department; Reverend Thadeus Gullickson, who was the president of one of the largest Lutheran seminaries in the country; Monsignor John O'Grady of the Catholic Welfare Conference; and Clarence Pickett of the American Friends. They were a very, very well-chosen group. I had nothing to do with choosing them. And they decided to have a series of hearings around the country. They felt that immigration testimony had heretofore been handled largely by the vested interest groups and they wanted to go out to the people and hear what they had to say.

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We had some seven or eight or nine hearings around the country, compiled a hearing volume of about 2,000 pages, and on the basis of that prepared the report Whom We Shall Welcome, which proposed an amendment to the revision of the law which ultimately became the law about ten years later. The Commission had a very short period to act. The report had to be filed January 1st of '53. The President established the Commission in early September, so, you see, we didn't have much time.

We had these hearings, and we were doing staff research as well. The hearings were amazingly informative. We had all sorts of points of view. All points of view. Some bitterly opposed immigration, some indifferent to it, some violently for it. Some for the quota system, some against the quota system. Obviously, the commissioners came to this

with some thoughts in their own minds as well, and the chairman, Phil Perlman was just a real pearl; he was extraordinary. He devoted virtually full-time to it.

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One interesting little tidbit. I was at the White House at that time before we had the--as a matter of fact before the commissioners had even been sworn in although they were . . .

FUCHS: Yours was a Presidential appointment, too?

ROSENFELD: Actually it was a Commission appointment, but the Commission took the advice of the President apparently. I had to set up these hearings, which I had discussed with the members of the Commission although they hadn't yet been formally sworn in. I had to start setting up the hearings around the country; we couldn't wait until the Commission got started since we had so little time. I called various people I knew around the country from my dealings with the DP Commission and with the various voluntary agencies, and with the state Attorneys General and so forth, to help set up the hearings which we held by and large in Federal courthouses.

One of the funniest of the incidents I remember took place in Detroit. I can't remember who it was that I had asked to help set up these

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hearings. Of course, at that time the staff consisted of Harry and his two secretaries; and it never was a big staff, it was largely a professional staff. This fellow in Detroit went right about it and I said, "Now, will you please call up so and so and tell them I want them to testify," American Legion, the labor movement and so forth, and so on. So he wasn't operating independently; he was operating on very specific instructions. You know, I want the Governor to testify or the Governor's representative, the Governor's commission and so forth; and the people I called knew these various people.

Well, a couple of days later he called me back and said, "Harry, I've got it all set up, so and so can't make it, but so and so," you know that kind of thing. He said, "But don't ever do that to me again." I said, "Why? I'm sorry if I caused trouble."

He said, "Have you ever picked up the telephone and heard at the other end, 'This is the

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White House calling'?" He said, "I almost had a heart attack." And I thought it was Harry who was so successful in getting these people; it was the White House operator that made it a success. And I never thanked her for it.

FUCHS: Mrs. Hackmeister?

ROSENFELD: I want to tell you one story if I may break the trend of your thought.

FUCHS: It's all right; go right ahead.

ROSENFELD: Two stories, rather. Since I was assigned the problem of working up the regulations and we had some help from the Immigration Service which was very important; and of course Carusi had been commissioner of Immigration, but I was the guy in the trenches with it. We got it organized and the Commission approved it, and then we had to report, just a matter of comity; discuss it with the Secretary of State. So, we had a visit with Mr. [George C.] Marshall, General Marshall. He had a liaison person,

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Mr. Vance--strange, same name as a more recent Secretary; as far as I know unrelated. And we tried to work out a no-nonsense, tough-minded set of regulations which we thought were responsive to what the Congressional intent was.

We were there with General Marshall and Mr. Vance, and we told them what our problem was and what we were trying to do, and General Marshall turned to Vance and he said, "How do you feel about it?"

And Vance said, "Well, Mr. Secretary, we agree in principle with these regulations."

The instant response of the Secretary to Mr. Vance was, "Vance, if you want to knife them in the back, knife them, but don't say you agree in principle." Needless to say, he approved the regulations.

One other story I should tell about another Senator. Senator McKellar, of Tennessee, was chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and appropriations were terribly important to us because we had only a limited life and what we didn't

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get done in that period just was never going to be done. Therefore, we were very careful about appropriations. We were very meticulous and completely honest. Well, one day Mr. Gibson was testifying and I guess the good Senator wasn't feeling well. So he bellowed at Gibson and said, "Get out of here. I don't want to hear anything from you again. Isn't there anyone around here who can testify and make sense?"

Well, we were terrified, but I guess I had more gall than the others and so I said, "Well, Mr. Chairman, may I explain what the chairman of the Commission . . ."

"To hell with the chairman of the Commission. I don't want to hear anyone that has anything to do with him. Isn't there anyone around here who can testify?"

And the other members of the Committee were just horrified, as was I. As soon as I said, "Maybe I can explain what the chairman of the Commission. . ." he picked up his cane and lunged at me to hit me, and I was no further from

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him than maybe a yard and a half away. And the only thing that saved me from being hit by it was a nimbleness on my part in getting out of it, and Senator Ellender, of Louisiana, next to him deflecting his arm.

There we were, and I walked around the table--he had just almost hit me--I walked around the table and sat on the other end of the table where nobody else was located. I said, "Mr. Chairman, maybe I can make some sense on this."

And he turned to me and said, "Good, maybe there's someone in this room that can make sense."

Then I went ahead and testified, since we had all prepared and I knew what was to be done.

The next morning Drew Pearson carried a story of McKellar trying to hit Rosenfield with a cane. I didn't give them the story, but it was all over the Senate by then. One of the top people in the Senate Appropriations Committee called me, and he said, "Have you seen Mr. Pearson's story?"

I said, "I have."

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"Are you going to deny it?"

I said, "No, it's true. Why should I deny it? I didn't give it to him, and I'm not going to take it away from him; and it's true."

So this person said, "Well, you know, the chairman might feel very badly about it and it might have some effect on your appropriation."

I said, "Look," I don't remember his name, Mr. so and so, "let me make it clear, I'm not going to deny a true story, and I'm going to tell a true story. If we don't get our appropriations, I'm going to hold a press conference and tell them about my conversation with you."

"You wouldn't do that to me would you?"

"I'm telling you I am. Now, it's up to you and the Senate to make up your mind. I'm not going to withdraw it, and I will tell the truth of this discussion. "Never heard another word; we weren't touched on our appropriations.

FUCHS: Did you ever see Mr. Carusi after?

ROSENFELD: Oh, yes. Oh yes, we've remained good

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friends and we're on the telephone with each other reasonably frequently.

FUCHS: On the 20th of August, 1952, you went with the other commissioners to see the President to deliver the final report and to say good-bye. Do you have any recollections of that, or of anything that might have been said?

ROSENFELD: You would think I would have some recollections, but I don't. My recollection is that he thanked us, but I don't recall anything much else.

FUCHS: Do you recall any other incidents where you had occasion as a commissioner to see President Truman?

ROSENFELD: Yes, I would see him, oh, maybe every five or six weeks and every time report on developments, since I was handling the legislation. And every time I came back from a trip overseas or a major trip around the United States, I would report in. As a matter of fact, I have a very interesting story about that, about an unwarranted reputation

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I got in the White House as a political seer. At the beginning of the program, before we even really got started, it was terribly important to educate the Governor's commissions on displaced persons, so they could help in connection with sponsorships and adjustment of the people when they got to the United States. They were a terribly important group.

Very early in the program, oh, maybe early October or mid-October of 1948, I was invited to talk to the North California and the South California divisions of the Governor's commission in San Francisco and L.A. Of course, I went out since that was important. And all three members of the Commission were scrupulously careful about staying out of politics so far as our official life was concerned. Remember that was 1948; that was an interesting election. But after my official duties were over in each of these things, I would talk with people; "How is the election coming?" "What's going to happen?" and so forth. And after a couple of

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days in California I got to have a pretty wide distribution of reports from many people. When I got back I reported to some of the people at the White House. I can't remember who it was, but I mentioned that if the election were delayed one week later, Truman would win California. Well, either my message was misinterpreted, or people read it hotter than they wanted, and the President was told that Rosenfield, said that "you're going to win California."

Well, I never said that; but I was never able to persuade the President of the truth of what I said, and he kept saying, "You're the only one that ever told me that I was going to win California." So I got a reputation, completely unmerited. I tried desperately to get it corrected.

FUCHS: That's good.

ROSENFELD: Well, two other stories that come to mind, and then I'm through. One of them is a family story. Our daughter, then nine years old, when Truman was going to run in '48--or when there was

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talk about it--said to me one day when I said to the family, "I'm going to see the President tomorrow; have you got any messages that you want me to give him?"

Marianne had a message. She said, "Daddy, please tell Mr. Truman to run." Like all children, she had a favorite little animal--and she tore a part of her little sponge duck off, and said, "Please give this to the President." It was a disreputable, dirty looking thing, and of course, I was embarrassed. But I had asked her and I was going to comply.

So when I went to see the President I said, "Mr. President," when I was through with my business with him, "I have some more important business." So, he looked a little startled. I said, "My daughter has two messages for you." And that made him even more startled. She says, 'Mr. President, run,' and then she asked me to give you this." I gave him that disreputable little piece of sponge. And he was absolutely delighted.

He leaned back in his chair and said, "God bless her little soul," slapped his knee, and turned

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into his desk and brought out a pen and matches and all the other things that Presidents have around; and I brought them home and I'm very grateful to you for bringing me the copy that the White House files had of Marianne's letter of thanks to him, which is just delightful. It's a wonderful recollection. So, she was part of the Truman family.

And the last story that I wanted to tell you about was a piece of deviltry on my part. One day we were having a tough fight on the amendments in the House Subcommittee, and

we really didn't know how the votes were going to come out. One of the key people was the number one Republican that came from Bangor, Maine. And nobody knew how to get to him in terms of trying to persuade him. By sheerest luck, Jim Ewing, Jack Ewing's son, had only a short while before that bought the Bangor newspaper, and I knew that. The meeting was on a Monday morning, 10 o'clock. On Friday this Congressman went back home, to be back in the district. The newspaper was

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a weekly newspaper and came out Saturday. So, I called Jim Ewing on the phone and said, "You got your editorial put to bed yet?"

He said, "Yes."

I said, "Well, pull it out. Get your secretary on the wire and I want to dictate something."

He said, "Are you crazy?"

I said, "Yes." And I dictated an editorial to the following effect. "Congressman so and so has the opportunity of real leadership. Monday when he gets back that is what's going to come up. The best interest of the American people is for this kind of a vote. We're sure that Congressman so and so, being the kind of a Congressman that he is,"--and he was a good Congressman--"will vote the right way."

He said, "Harry, you must be crazy. I'll have to pull the whole paper apart."

I said, "That's your problem, Jim."

He said, "What else do you want?"

I said, "I want you to hand deliver this thing to him on Saturday so that he won't overlook it."

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He said, "What else do you want?"

I said, "Nothing, Jim, that will do for the while."

He came back and voted for it, and pulled the entire Republican group with us."

FUCHS: Who was that Congressman, do you recall?

ROSENFELD: I'm embarrassed to say I don't recall. He was a good Congressman.

FUCHS: I did want to ask you about the loans made by the Government for inland transportation of refugees.

ROSENFELD: Yes.

FUCHS: What was the payment percentage, repayment? Were they pretty well honored?

ROSENFELD: I must honestly say to you, I don't remember, but my recollection was that they were very largely repaid, because these were taken out by the religious groups and their moral stature is such that they wouldn't want unpaid claims. Now I do not know whether at any time there was a forgiving of

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any of those. I don't know. But my recollection is that the record was pretty good.

As a matter of fact, the voluntary groups, as I think I may have mentioned, were an absolutely essential part of the DP program. They and the Governor's commissioners made it possible to develop a stateside team that planned in advance of the coming of the refugees and then afterwards organized the receptions and other activities so that they were well integrated into the community. Now this doesn't imply that everybody was that way, but the system was organized that made that possible. The Commission was grateful to them--and I think the United States, as a whole, is in their debt for that help.

FUCHS: The original Displaced Persons Act, as you've already said, discriminated against Jews and against Catholics, and do you think there was actually discrimination intended or do you think it was because of the conditions in Europe and the distribution that it was innate that there would be discrimination?

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Do you follow what I mean?

ROSENFELD: Yes, I follow what you mean. Well, let me remind you that I wasn't part of the original drive for the DP programs. There were those who believed it was intentional. I'd rather not believe that. But I do know that getting an amendment to eliminate those discriminations was a mighty hard road to walk. One gets the impression that there was a vested interest of some kind in maintaining that point of view. I would rather believe that it was unintentional.

FUCHS: What were the provisions in regard to agricultural refugees, I guess you'd call it, that were bad?

ROSENFELD: There were certain proportions that had to be in certain categories, and this meant that perfectly valid, good people were not being chosen. Furthermore, you

raise a question. There was some complaint off and on that alleged farmers that we were bringing in were not real farmers. I think what the

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fact of the matter is, you were dealing with different cultures. For instance, in many of those cultures it's regarded as improper for a man to milk a cow; only women milk cows. So when a farmer said, "Well, milk the cow," and the refugee said, "Who me?", he thought he was dealing with a phony. What he was dealing with was a different culture. Furthermore, a lot of the European farms are totally differently organized than ours. Their big farm is out beyond where people live and the people come in and live in the cities so that they are living with people all the time; and they have friends and relatives and so forth. Many of our farms are completely isolated so that a person might be ten miles from the nearest neighbor, and not knowing the language and having a different cultural background raised all sorts of problems.

So, what you were dealing with is translating a European farm life into a totally different American farm life. There were bound to be difficulties, but it worked out on the whole very well.

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Now I don't mean to imply there weren't people who lied as to whether they were farmers; people are people. We tried to avoid that by going into their background. But I think largely the difficulties were differences in cultural and life styles of the farm communities that we brought in; but it was a problem.

FUCHS: Do you have any other comments about President Truman or about the Displaced Persons Commission as far as its success; or anything else that you think I should have asked you and didn't have the knowledge to bring it up?

ROSENFELD: I found in my dealings with Truman as far as I was related to the Displaced Persons Commission, an understanding of different cultures, an appreciation of different political pictures, or situations, a genuine human desire to help people who had been kicked around, and a complete and absolute support for what we were trying to do. We never asked for anything out of the White House that we didn't get in terms of support. When we had trouble with the

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Army in getting their boats because they had other needs for them, the White House would take care of that.

You couldn't want to work for a guy who was more devoted to what he asked you to do for him. After all we were acting as his hired hands. As far as the Commission was concerned, they were the hardest working people I ever knew. I'm not sure I would have

taken the damn job if I knew how hard it was going to be, but I'm delighted because it was in many respects the most exciting experience I ever had. I have a feeling that in dealing with these human beings we helped not only them but we helped Europe with a very serious geopolitical problem, and we helped the United States by bringing into the United States a lot of absolutely wonderful people. I just found the job exciting and rewarding; and having it followed up so immediately by the President's Commission on Immigration and Naturalization was also fruitful to me.

Now the results there weren't as visible quite so quickly. The report was rendered in 1953 and

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the McCarran-Walter Act was repealed in the 1960s, so it took 10 or 12 years. But I think the report constituted the intellectual underpinning of the movement to repeal it; and the members of the Commission, who were extraordinarily gifted people, had such a high reputation in the community that when the Congress was ready to go to work it meant a great deal. Now, I don't mean to give you the impression that we drafted the final bill--we didn't draft anything other than the report--but the fundamental removal of the quotas and that kind of thing comes out of the report. Again I think that's Truman. Truman created the Commission to attack the McCarran-Walter Act. It did, as an independent judgment, and it succeeded in the end. So I would say Truman's record on this score is A-plus. He did a beautiful job, besides which he was a beautiful human being to work for. He was salty, but I'd rather have that than prickly, and he had an extraordinary mind; and what else do you want from the President?

FUCHS: You touched on the fact that there was a charge

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that politics entered into the decision in 1948 to lend immediate recognition to Israel. Do you think that things would have been different, knowing what you do of Mr. Truman, if it hadn't been an election year?

ROSENFELD: No, I don't. As a matter of fact, I don't think it hurt to have an election year then, because it was feasible for Truman to beat down some of the opponents, and there were plenty of them; but I think he'd have come off with the same conclusion. The reason I say that is post that experience having worked with him all those subsequent years. I don't want to give the impression I was an intimate; I was not. But having been to see him so often, and having personally sensed some of his knowledge and judgments, I'm absolutely convinced he'd have come out with the same results, whether or not there had been an election.

FUCHS: That is rather interesting. Of course, that's part of that "what if," but if they had known that his influence in New York was, really, to be vitiated

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by Henry Wallace. They didn't win New York anyhow. Which was what was charged, that the main interest was New York.

ROSENFELD: That's right.

FUCHS: And he didn't get it anyhow. If he had known of the Wallace campaign, might things have been different, but that's another one of those things.

ROSENFELD: Well, I think that he felt that it was right.

FUCHS: That's the point.

ROSENFELD: I think that's what motivated him. I also think he saw a lot more clearly than others the role that Israel was going to play in alleviating the population pressure so far as Jews were concerned. I think he saw that, and the reason I think he saw it was because of our later discussions and his extraordinarily gifted and detailed knowledge about population movements. I can never quite get over that incident when I felt like a little school boy

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after I had written what I thought was supposed to be so important an article. But I'm convinced that he'd have come out with the same result. I think he might have phrased it differently to cope with the political circumstances of the time, but I think the result would have been the same.

FUCHS: As you say he had a lot of information and he surprised his staff many times by talking in various places about local heroes and pioneers and they hoped he would be right so he wouldn't look like a fool and he usually was.

ROSENFELD: Well, bear this in mind, Mr. Fuchs, he read and read and read and read. Isn't it true that he was responsible for the creation of the White House--the President's library?

FUCHS: The American Library Association would present this big group of books to the President, but I don't know whether that started under Roosevelt or Truman.

ROSENFELD: I'm not sure either, but the standard story

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was that he never went up to family quarters except with an armful of books to read at night. And I think that's part of . . .

FUCHS: He was an omnivorous reader. Of course, we have lot of books that have a Senatorial bookplate in them. I can recall when he moved into his offices that every now and then he'd say, "Fuchs, bring up a set of so and so," this set of books, or "I have a little book someplace about so and so," of a historic nature; I'd have to find them.

ROSENFELD: You know, I've been very lucky in my professional career working with very, very unusual people. And talking about libraries and history reminds me of a story of one of my first assignments from LaGuardia. LaGuardia called me in one day and said, "Look, you're supposed to know something about libraries."

"Yes, a little bit."

"When I was overseas, "--he was a consul in Fiume--"I read a book about a man who came to a government office and was kicked from pillar to

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post for years and then finally died out of exasperation. I want that book."

I said, "First of all, what do you want it for?"

He said, "I want to give it to my commissioners so they don't do that to people."

So I said, "Well, now, who wrote the book?"

He said, "I don't know."

"What language was it in?"

"I don't know."

"Where was it published?"

"I don't know. All I know is I was in Fiume. Now I assume it was published in Yugoslav, Croatian, or something like that, but I don't know. Get it."

Well, how do you get a book like that?

FUCHS: Good question.

ROSENFELD: So I went to the then head of the Slavic section of the New York Public Library, a Doctor Yarmolinski, and I said, "Here's what I need."

He said, "I know the book."

There it was.

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FUCHS: Probably a classic.

ROSENFELD: Well, Yarmolinski was like Truman, he read everything; and apparently LaGuardia was the same. Some of these people were just omnivorous readers.

FUCHS: I don't know when they find the time.

ROSENFELD: And that's the point. They took it out of their own wives, out of their own families; but this was part of their life, and was one of the reasons I think that both LaGuardia and Truman, who were not educated throughout all these degrees that so many other people have, were such truly learned people. Because they read and read and read all the time, and weren't ashamed of reading, weren't ashamed of being seen with a bunch of books in their arms.

FUCHS: Thank you very much; you've been very informative.

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