

Oral History Interview
with
LEO R. WERTS

Manpower specialist, Office of Price Management, War Production Board, War Manpower Commission, 1941-45; manpower, labor advisor, director manpower division, U.S. Military Government, Germany, 1945-49; U.S. Representative manpower directorate, Allied Control Council, Germany, 1946-48; associate director, Office International Labor Affairs, Department of Labor, 1949-50; deputy executive director, Defense Manpower Administration, 1950-53.

Washington, D.C.
August 4, 1977
by James R. Fuchs, Harry S. Truman Library

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FUCHS: Mr. Werts, to start, you might say when and where you were born and something about your education and your first job that led to your going into the Government.

WERTS: I was born February 7, 1905, in Wren, Ohio, which is in Van Wert County where I went to high school. I graduated from high school there and then worked for the YMCA a couple of years in Van Wert and then went to YMCA College (which later became George Williams College) in 1925. I graduated in '29, took another degree at the

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University of Chicago, which was a Bachelor of Philosophy, and finished in '39. As you know, that began the depression years. So after working for the Y for a short while in Chicago, I took a job with the Cook County Unemployment Relief Service. My job there was trying to place people who were on relief in specially created public agency jobs. This then led to employment in the Illinois State Employment Service. There I worked with Martin Durkin who was then the Director of Labor. I had various jobs with the Employment Service, but finally was the Associate Director. Then came the preliminaries to World War II and I took a job in Washington with a war emergency agency; and later with the War Production Board, the Manpower Commission -- in which I worked with General Frank McSherry and Paul McNutt. Then, as the war wore down, I went with the U.S. Military Government in Germany. Marty Durkin had recommended me to

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Joe [Joseph Daniel] Keenan. I knew Joe. General [Lucius] Clay was the military governor. So I went to work as Chief of the Labor Supply Branch in the Manpower Division of U.S. Military Government.

During these first months in Germany, July and August 1945, I followed with great interest President Truman's participation in the four power summit which took place just outside Berlin. I was located in Berlin during part of the period of the meeting.

In 1946, I moved up to Director of the Division succeeding General McSherry. From Germany I came back to the Department of Labor. That's my first experience of employment in the Department of Labor. Phil Kaiser was the Assistant Secretary for whom I worked, [Maurice] Tobin was the Secretary and Mike Galvin, the Under Secretary. Those last three months of '49 through '53 covered the period that Mr.

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Truman was in the White House while I was in the Department of Labor.

FUCHS: In other words, your going into labor affairs overseas was the result of your work in Illinois. That was your early experience.

WERTS: My experience is pretty much in employment, labor, and manpower in Illinois and in Military Government, and in the Department of Labor.

FUCHS: You were under Joseph Keenan overseas most of the time?

WERTS: While Joe was in and out of Germany, he was Labor Advisor to General Clay, but he didn't get into the day-to-day operations. As the director of the Manpower Division -- I reported directly to General Clay, but Joe and I worked together. Our offices were adjacent. I think, as I told you on the phone, when we were in Germany, the military was rather conservative since many of

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the civilians who were on the staff were rather conservative. I think most of the people who were for Mr. Truman in 1948 were in the Manpower Division and I think Joe was one of the few people who was convinced that Mr. Truman was going to be reelected in '48.

FUCHS: Did you contradict him at that time?

WERTS: No. We were all doing a little wishful thinking.

FUCHS: You were a Truman man?

WERTS: Yes. An interesting sidelight was the day after the election when it was clear that Mr. Truman was reelected, you never saw such a quiet place as it was around the Military Government headquarters, because most of the people were all for Dewey. But the Manpower Division, really had a big day. Which reminds me -- I, obviously, was not there, but some of

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my friends told me that the night of the election, when it was clear that Mr. Truman was elected, on the third floor at 14th and Constitution -- the Department of Labor was at 14th and Constitution, and the third floor was the Secretary's office and he, of course, was a presidential appointee -- people got gloriously drunk and the place was just flowing in liquor. It was a big night because of the election.

FUCHS: Is there anything else that stands out about your service in Germany?

WERTS: Of course, you couldn't be associated with General Clay without recognizing his brilliance. He was just tremendous. Obviously he was working closely with the President, directly or through the Defense and State Departments. But I think he, as much as anyone, whether he had the President's prior approval or not -- you remember when the Soviets closed Berlin, it was General

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Clay who instituted that airlift. I remember at a staff meeting, there was a report to the effect that the Soviets were stopping some of the trains and Clay gave an order just like that, "Run that train, if it starts a fight we'll fight;" and he backed them off. But he was a person who kept the Soviets in their place. He had the guts, brains, and one got the impression that sometimes he was out making decisions and Washington was backing him up or maybe modifying it. But the airlift really stands out.

FUCHS: He operated rather autonomously over there.

WERTS: I got that impression, yes; but you never know. Bob Murphy was the top State Department person as political advisor to General Clay. How much communication there was, most of us were not privileged to know. But the relationship with the Soviets, the British and the French -- there was an overall military council

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on which all four countries were represented. Then there were sub-councils. There was a manpower council in which I represented the United States and on which there were British, French, and Soviet counterparts. We'd get together two or three times a month for discussion. Actually we were the preliminary legislative body. We would recommend Military Government rules and regulations, labor standards -- the whole range of labor and manpower. Whatever we could agree to at our level then went forward to the overall council on which General Clay and the Soviet, French, and the British Commanders sat. So those are the big events as far as I think of it now.

FUCHS: Were you working in Berlin?

WERTS: Yes, we were in Berlin.

FUCHS: Did the blockade affect your work in any substantial way?

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WERTS: Yes. I guess only mostly in the way we did it. You couldn't travel freely. You actually couldn't get in and out of Berlin as often as you might like. If you wanted to go down to Frankfurt, where our zone headquarters were, we'd just go out and arrange to get on a flour or coal plane and fly back to Frankfurt. Then when we came back you just went out to the airlift because there was always a plane going to Berlin.

FUCHS: Did you come in touch with David Morse over there in any way?

WERTS: Yes. Although I was recruited by other individuals, Dave, as the former Chief of the Manpower Division, interviewed me in Washington, D.C. I guess his military period ran out and he wanted to get back into civilian life. So General McSherry was assigned and I'd worked for General McSherry in Washington. Before my date was set for going to Germany, Dave Morse (he was then

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a lieutenant colonel) had come to town and he called my office and we chatted about function and what my job was and something about the conditions I would face over there. Then, I would think for two or three months, Dave was in and out of Frankfurt where I first stopped for four or five weeks and then in Berlin. So I got to know him very well. Subsequent to that, I saw him in Geneva on a number of occasions, which I guess was after the Truman period. During the Truman period I was with Secretary Tobin on three occasions when he went to Geneva to make his annual speech to the ILO [International Labor Organization] convention and so I got to meet Dave there, too. I guess once during the Military Government period while Dave was Assistant Secretary for International Labor Affairs he called a conference of people in military governments in Austria, Germany, Korea, and Japan. We had a weeks conference talking about programs and

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exchanging ideas in labor affairs in the military governments. One way or another I got to know Dave pretty well.

FUCHS: Were you briefed in the State Department, too, before you went overseas or just in Labor?

WERTS: There was a Foreign Economic Administration and I think Irving Brown, who was formerly with AFL-CIO, had a special division to recruit people for military government. So my first appointment was on the Foreign Economic Administration payroll. We had five or six weeks orientation at the Foreign Economic Administration headquarters. I'm not sure exactly where FEA was attached. Well, obviously, we had briefings in the State Department and Defense Department -- War Department in those days. Very little if any from the Department of Labor.

FUCHS: How did you feel at the time Roosevelt died? Do you recall your reflections then? Had you

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ever seen Vice President Truman?

WERTS: First about Roosevelt. I think everybody had a high respect for him. I would even say an emotional attachment. But I think most of us recognized that his health was not good, in spite of the fact that it was pretty well closely held. So I think that, although everyone was pretty well shocked, they were sort of expecting he might pass. Because of the Truman Committee, Truman was well-known in the country, and I think those of us who had concern about ethics in Government were highly pleased with what Senator Truman was doing with the Senate Committee. I think, at least in the circles I traveled in, people were highly pleased Mr. Truman was stepping into that spot (the Presidency). When I was in Illinois with the Employment Service, we went to conferences and at some time in the thirties, Chester Hepler and I and others were in St. Louis

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at some kind of a meeting. In the evening we had a poker game going in the room in the hotel. I have only a vague recollection of it, but Chester Hepler, a friend of mine in the Employment Service (he's now dead), told me that Senator Truman stopped in and spent a half hour watching us play poker. So, if that were the case, that was my first experience.

As you may know, before coming to Washington, Mr. Truman was the Director of the National Reemployment Service for the State of Missouri. So he had a very deep interest in the Employment Service which was reflected in the years later when I was in the Department of Labor. At a later (1950) time in terms of meeting the President, I'd come back and was in the Department of Labor and there was either some kind of a trade bill or some international affairs activity -- there was a signing in the White House. For some reason I was sent to participate in that event. I remember meeting

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the President on that occasion but I don't remember the legislation. The thing that was most impressive -- there must have been 15 or so people -- and here was the President with a great, grand smile standing at the entrance of the Oval Office, and as each of us came in, he shook

hands and smiled and had a little chat, and then we went on to stand behind the desk while Truman was signing. I never will forget, here he was, obviously a busy man but relaxed and giving you attention as though you were the most important person coming into that room. So those are the only two occasions when I had personal, individual contact with the President.

FUCHS: What about his appointment of Judge Schwellenbach to succeed Francis Perkins? Did you know Judge Schwellenbach?

WERTS: No, I didn't. As you know, Schwellenbach passed on and Governor Tobin was selected to

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replace him and that was prior to the '48 campaign. Then I came, I guess, about a year later.

FUCHS: I realize that. I was just thinking that as a man interested in labor affairs you might have had some reflections at the time.

WERTS: I just had a vague impression of that event, and of course being off in Berlin and not having daily newspapers couldn't follow things, too much.

FUCHS: Yes. The Labor Department, as I understand it, was rather haphazardly handling international labor affairs up to the time David Morse came there. Have you discussed this?

WERTS: Only subsequent to the events. As I heard the stories, it's clear that Dave Morse was the prime mover, I guess with support from Schwellenbach and Tobin. But he put together

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an international labor program. I guess maybe even with the encouragement of Secretary Perkins who was always very much interested in this actually. She may have created the circumstances which made it possible for Dave Morse to put this thing together. I came away from conversations with people who were in the Department of Labor during the period with the impression that international labor affairs programs would not have been put together if it had not been for Dave Morse and his own initiatives, his own ideas. It has, I think, prospered considerably since. I think the labor statistics officials of a variety of countries did have some kind of an international association, and so they met and talked labor affairs. I was only vaguely aware of that.

FUCHS: Now, when you came back as Associate Director of the Office of International Affairs, who was

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the Director at that time?

WERTS: Arnold Zemple was the Director and he reported to Phil Kaiser who was the Assistant Secretary. I don't know just what the titles were but I think Zemple was the Director of the office. I understood the distinction to be the Director was in charge of operations and the

Assistant Secretary was in charge of policy and was responsible for the whole range of international labor affairs. I guess Dave Morse must have brought Zemple in because Zemple was a major in the early military government days in the Manpower Division. Zemple was in Germany when I arrived in Germany. Then he came back and went to work for Dave. I'm sure he worked for Dave Morse when Dave was Assistant Secretary.

FUCHS: Dave had another assistant who had been with him in NLRB [National Labor Relations Board], Millard Cass. Do you know him?

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WERTS: Yes, very well.

FUCHS: What was he doing when you came back into the Department?

WERTS: I think he was then Special Assistant to the Under Secretary and the Under Secretary then was Mike Galvin.

FUCHS: What kind of a man was Galvin?

WERTS: I'll be very honest. Mike was very erratic, hard to figure out. I'll tell you a couple of incidents. As we talked earlier I told you I was Director of the Manpower Division and reported to General Clay. Mike sent word that he wanted to come and visit Germany. He was then Under Secretary. So I went to the Chief of Staff and I said, "I've got to have a special plane to bring the Under Secretary of Labor, who will be in Geneva, to Berlin and to get him around Germany."

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The Chief of Staff demurred a bit and I said, "Now listen, every other top official from any other department comes over here, there's never any question about their getting all these facilities. So I should have a plane for the Under Secretary."

He finally agreed. This was during the airlift, and usually when you were sending a special plane you load it up with other people who needed a day away. So we got on the plane early and went down to Geneva, a couple hours flight or more. We arrived in Geneva and I went up to the hotel and Phil Kaiser was there and Mike was there. Phil had already offered me a job in the Office of International Labor Affairs, and so he said, "Leo when are you going to report for duty?"

I said, "Well, it looks like it will be such and such time," and Mike Galvin sitting there said, "What's this?"

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Phil said, "I offered Leo a job in the Office of International Labor Affairs."

Mike says, "You can't do that. You've got to get clearance. You can't just appoint anybody."

Well, Phil was just flabbergasted and looked at me and I said, "Don't worry about it Phil. I know how political process works and if it does materialize, fine."

Anyhow, this was before noon. So at noontime I checked with Mr. Galvin to set a time to fly back to Berlin. He did not. This went on all day and until after dinner. I finally said to the Under Secretary, "I'm sorry, I can't delay this any longer because I've got these people..." He said that he would arrange to get to Berlin some other way. Well, this is the kind of a guy Mike Galvin was.

And actually one of the things that he was concerned about was that Jimmy Roosevelt was in Geneva, and he wanted to travel in those

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circles. So actually he came to Berlin in the plane that was down there bringing Jimmy Roosevelt. Mike had some strange notions of priorities and he had a very good opinion of how important he was, and he made it known.

FUCHS: Now one of our interviewees, a former Department of Labor official, said very strongly that Tobin and Galvin were poor administrators.

WERTS: I would think that adds up to be correct.

FUCHS: He said he got along with them very well.

WERTS: Oh, yes. I don't know of anybody that didn't get along with Tobin. Mike's another question. Mike was hard to get along with. Mike could call you in and give you holy hell and then the next day call you in and he could be as pleasant as your greatest friend. One example: Later Mr. Tobin wanted to go to Geneva to make a speech. This was the first time he went over.

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Mr. Truman had made available to him his personal plane to take him over. Mike Galvin told the Secretary, "The guy you've got to take along and help you run that plane and so forth is Leo Werts." Because I'd worked these things out for Mike -- and parenthetically, I should say, when Mike wanted to come back to the United States, there was a Senator in Rome, and he wanted a plane to pick up the Senator and get him back to Washington to get his vote on the Taft-Hartley 14B. One way or another I managed to get a plane to pick up the Senator and get him back to Washington to get his vote on the Taft-Hartley 14B. One way or another I managed to get a plane to pick up Mike in Berlin, take him to Rome and pick up the Senator, and get him back to Washington. Anyhow, with all this going on, Mike said, "The only guy that you've got to have is Leo Werts, to show you around Europe."

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So the Secretary called me in one day and asked me if I'd like to go to Geneva with him, and I said, "Nothing would please me more except Phil Kaiser is in Geneva, Zemple is in Geneva, and I'm supposed to be staying home and taking care of the store."

The secretary said, "Oh, that makes sense." He didn't press the point.

The next day I got a call from Mike and I was out somewhere. He got a hold of me on the phone and he said, "What the hell are you doing?"

I said, "I don't know Mike, what have I done?"

He says, "You can't say to the Secretary that you're not going to go with him to Europe."

And I explained. I said, "Well, Mike I'll do anything you say but if you insist that I go I think you ought to call up Phil Kaiser and tell him what you're doing and let him know

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and let him participate in the decision."

WERTS: Mike got Phil on the telephone and so I go to Geneva. I went to Geneva three years in a row with Tobin. I say this only to let you know that I knew Tobin extremely well. Each time we went on a trip together he took a member of the family. The son once and a daughter once, and then another time Mrs. Tobin and the other daughter. The whole family participated in these trips. Mike I don't think understood administration, so he was rather erratic and always highly protective of the President, the Administration, and the Secretary. After all, the Department was very small and you could play around and make a lot of bad decisions and you wouldn't hurt anybody.

Mr. Tobin -- and this goes with the story about how well I knew him -- was a very heavy drinker as these stories may bring out. His

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habits were such that his secretaries would never make an appointment in the office before 11, because -- and I've done this many a night -- we'd just sit up and drink until midnight and go gloriously to bed. Mr. Tobin really only gave attention to the top policy.

FUCHS: He arrived rather late in the day.

WERTS: And left early sometimes. This was part of his personality; he was an extrovert. I used to be with him in Boston on occasion. He went in almost any bar to have a drink, and everybody knew him and shook hands and all. The same way even in Ireland. On one of these trips to Europe we stopped in Ireland and he was just a hale-fellow-well-met everywhere. He was well-liked, always had a good story, very personable, very thoughtful about people. Whereas Mike, on the other hand, was deadly with people. So the fact is, people in higher places

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approached Tobin to say that he was not doing himself any good to keep Mike Galvin and he should make him an Ambassador somewhere. They even brought pressure on Tobin but Tobin would not. He was loyal, they were loyal to each other, and Mike and his connections were very important in Tobin's master political system; so that nobody could pull them apart. But I think the Secretary appreciated the difficulties that Mike was creating in terms of administering the Department of Labor.

FUCHS: Could it be said that in this period Galvin was more or less functioning as the Secretary of Labor?

WERTS: I don't think so because I think most people who had important issues could always get to the Secretary. Of course, some problems are created because sometimes they would be dealing with the Under Secretary and get a decision they didn't

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like, and then they went to the Secretary without telling the Secretary that the Under Secretary had made a different decision and the Secretary would make a decision which was in conflict with the Under Secretary. Well, of course, the Secretary's decision would always prevail, but this created problems both for the Under Secretary and the Bureau Chief and the Secretary.

As I say, the Department was fairly small. Most of the programs were traditional, so the decisions were really not far-reaching. I think the big issue in the Department during that period was the Taft-Hartley 14B, and I think in the campaign President Truman had committed himself to the repeal of 14B of Taft-Hartley. Of course the Secretary of Labor had the responsibility in that area so he carried the ball.

FUCHS: 14B was the...

WERTS: I think 14B is the situs picketing. In

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the building trades before 14B the plumbers could go on strike and all the other trades would automatically go on strike. Under 14B all the trades had to go on strike before you could close down a job. Anyhow, this was the big issue Taft-Hartley law. And 14B was one of President Truman's major problems with respect to labor issues. Most of the difficult struggles were over that point.

FUCHS: I've read that, as you have indicated, from administration to administration change was more a matter of emphasis rather than the Department's changing in a big way. Is that correct?

WERTS: Right. That's not only true between Democratic administration but when the Republicans came in. Of course, Marty Durkin became Secretary following Tobin. Although he was a Democrat he was appointed by Eisenhower. Then he didn't last long and Jim Mitchell came in. Well, during

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those periods even between shifts from Democratic to Republican administration it was a matter of emphasis rather than any major shift in programs.

FUCHS: Did you think Galvin was quite an influence on what policy had to be made or not?

WERTS: Well, I think in a negative sort of sense. Without being able to put your finger on it. The Under Secretary usually has to be the internal manager. Now, if he's effective and people are being used properly and policy questions are being developed then the Secretary has a good basis for decision. You at least can do much better what you are expected to be doing. I got the feeling that Mike was creating conflict and, therefore, a lot of energy was being utilized in ironing out little conflicts which were really not important but people were wary of each other -- maybe mad at each other. You didn't get any feeling that there were any great issues, like

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Madam Perkins may have had, during the Tobin-Galvin administration. To that extent Mike's functions seemed negative rather than positive.

FUCHS: Rather a standard question, is about the position of the Labor Department vis-a-vis John Steelman, and maybe more important now would be your personal reflections, if you have some, about the interaction there, or conflict.

WERTS: I think this was a serious problem and, although I wasn't a part of the policy process, I sat with Secretary Tobin on many occasions when other things were discussed. I know one of the things that always stuck in his craw was the fact that a very important area of his responsibility was held by Mr. Steelman. There were a number of occasions where he tried to get that changed. Now sometimes he would talk to someone who tried to get to the President, or maybe he'd talk to somebody who talked to some

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leader on the Hill who might try to bring pressure on the President. It was never very successful and I think basically because of the point I think you make. The White House -- the President or not I don't know -- really didn't have confidence in the ability of the Secretary and the Under Secretary to run important, sensitive issues like labor-management relations. This I think goes to your question about the influence on the Department. I think because the Department was messing around with those little internal conflicts it missed the big picture. Therefore, they lost the confidence of the White House and, therefore, did not have the opportunity to take on the full responsibility which a Secretary of Labor should take. Now that's the way I see it after all these years.

FUCHS: In other words, this is to say that if there had been a different Secretary of Labor and different Under Secretary of Labor, that Steelman

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might never have gotten to the point of power that he did?

WERTS: I think he would not have to the same extent; he may have still had some of it. He wanted it. He had been in charge of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. So this was his bailiwick, labor-management relations. Most people when they move to another job like to take with them the thing they like to do. So I think, anyway, that this would have been a problem; but if you had had a strong -- for instance, one of the things I know, Secretary Mitchell did, was make a deal with Eisenhower, that there would be no Steelman in the White House.

Otherwise he didn't want to be Secretary of Labor. Had Mr. Tobin been more effective, had he had more clearly in mind what he wanted, he might have demanded and got it on a political basis from the President. Because I think he was not as effective as he might have been,

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he didn't.

FUCHS: Do you think we really need a strong labor adviser in the White House?

WERTS: Oh, I don't think so, and I don't think since Steelman there's been one.

FUCHS: In other words, if they staff the Department of Labor properly, it really isn't needed?

WERTS: Right.

FUCHS: Of course, this is taking place in other departments now, State to name one.

WERTS: Of course you've got a person in charge of domestic affairs. Nixon gave that a lot more power than the current administration. I think it all depends on how the President himself likes to operate, and I suspect that the reason Carter doesn't need the intermediate layer is because he likes to handle a lot of detail. If the

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President doesn't do it, he's going to have people to do it, and apparently Nixon's interest was the big picture -- the international -- and so he was quite willing to delegate. Although I think the President can delegate and have staff people do the coordinating without giving them authority to direct Cabinet officers. I think quality and caliber of Cabinet officers will be high or low depending on the authority that you give them. My own view of organization and administration, the administration of programs clearly should be in the Cabinet officer and most policy issues with appropriate coordination with other agencies, because now political life and society is so complex that no one department can do all the things that they have to do without touching other various responsibilities. So there's got to be some coordination; but I think that can be held at a very minimum.

Addressing problems which obviously affects

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government as the population growth concentrates in the urban areas, we're facing problems which we never faced before. I suspect a lot of this began to be evident in the mid-fifties and following. Before that there wasn't as much government. Problems weren't as complex and, therefore, I think Government has got to be modified in order to deal with these more complex problems.

FUCHS: Do you think there's any inherent disadvantage in things being taken to the White House too soon in labor disputes?

WERTS: Well, my guess is that the policy pronounced by the Secretary of Labor Mitchell makes a lot of sense. Because I think in the Steelman days nobody settled because they thought they could do better at the final stage; where if you're not happy with what you're getting, you held out until the final stage. Whereas, if the policy

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is no interference from the Federal Government and they really stick to that, then the parties will probably settle it earlier and more appropriately than waiting for all these layers. So I think the last place for it is in the White House, unless you have a strike that is extended over months and months and months and you begin to have national and international repercussions; but it should be only at the very extreme. These are my personal views.

FUCHS: Who proposed you for Associate Director of International Labor Affairs?

WERTS: I assume it was Phil Kaiser; I don't recall where I first met him. But whether he checked it out with anybody else or not, I don't know. But I might tell you the sequel to the story about when Mike Galvin raised the question, saying, "Phil you can't appoint this man, you've got to have clearances." Marty Durkin

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and George Meany were at the ILO Conference that same year, and they came up with Dubinsky and two or three others to visit Berlin and other places in Germany, and we had dinner in Frankfurt. My wife and I and some more people in that group met together for dinner. After dinner we were sitting around and Marty Durkin said, "Leo, what are you going to do when you get back?" So I related this story about Mike. Durkin didn't say anything more about it. The next thing I knew Durkin had come back to Washington, went over to see Tobin and he must have said something like this, "It doesn't make any sense. Leo Werts is one of my friends and you ought to take care of him." I guess this created a little problem for Tobin because of Galvin's political -- well, the plumbers had a regional man in Boston, Regan. So Durkin talked to Regan who talked to the politicians in Massachusetts, who apparently put his mind straight; so, that's how I got into the Department of Labor.

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FUCHS: Do you recall some of your first duties when you started to deal with international labor affairs?

WERTS: Yes, one of the things, which had to do directly with the program that President Truman initiated, was related to the so-called Point IV program. When I was in Germany, partly, I think, as the result of the President's program -- I'm not sure about the timing -- anyway, we sent over German labor leaders to see the United States and establish a relationship. Then after the President's Point IV program -- which came first I'm not sure, but I think Point IV came almost at that time.

FUCHS: It was proposed in '49, in his inaugural address.

WERTS: This was probably just getting under way. Anyhow, the Department of Labor began to plan programs and conduct tours for a variety of

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European labor leaders and Japanese and others. Provision for that fell to my lot and that program has grown, and the Department is recognized now as one of the best managers of these international exchange programs in the labor field. The fact is, they are conducting programs which normally would not be done by the Department, but they developed the mechanism and the organization structure, so both the State Department and the Agency for International Development calls on the Department for programming.

FUCHS: The Marshall plan was proposed in '47, and then appropriations followed in 1948. Did that affect your work on the manpower activities in Germany?

WERTS: Not in Germany. Except the idea of the exchange programs and having the German labor officials and union people come to visit the United States. I think that idea came from the

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Point IV program. Along with the exchange program, although maybe not directly responsible, I did have some responsibility for developing ideas for the ILO meetings, and we'd come in on a lot of international labor policies. At this point I don't remember very specifically how I actually divided my time.

FUCHS: Did you have other contacts in the White House with whom you dealt with?

WERTS: No.

FUCHS: David Stowe was an assistant to Steelman. Do you recall him?

WERTS: I knew Dave before but I didn't have any business with him. Most of the interagency relationships with White House contacts in the international field were handled by Phil Kaiser, and if not Phil, then Mr. Zemple. I didn't get into that. Actually, I think I was in international

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labor affairs at that juncture only for about a year, then the Korean conflict came along. The Secretary established a new unit to handle manpower in connection with the Korean conflict, called the Defense Manpower Administration, and I was moved over.

FUCHS: Was this in the Department of Labor?

WERTS: Yes, it was headed up by Bob Goodwin who was also Director of the Bureau of Employment Security. The Defense Manpower Administration coordinated the Department's activities in respect to manpower problems for the Korean war effort, production and so forth.

FUCHS: I was somehow under the impression that that was under the Office of Defense Mobilization.

WERTS: The Office of Defense Mobilization came later.

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FUCHS: But you did help set up a Defense Manpower Administration in the Department of Labor.

WERTS: I stayed on for I think a couple of years and then when Secretary Mitchell was on the job he asked me to go back into international affairs as Deputy Assistant Secretary.

FUCHS: What staff meetings did you attend in the Department? Would they be held by the Assistant Secretary or who?

WERTS: There were two kinds: the regular staff meetings with Mr. Zemple and people who reported to him, and then Phil Kaiser would occasionally have meetings with all of us, too. Then on infrequent occasions, I'd participate in Tobin's staff meetings, either with Kaiser or Zemple or maybe when they were out of town, because they did a lot of international travel; so I would substitute for them then in Secretary Tobin's meetings, although, as I recall, he

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didn't have a lot of meetings.

FUCHS: Who would normally be in the staff meetings?

WERTS: Well, he'd have the Solicitor, the Director of Information, and I think the Librarian in those days, and the directors of the bureaus. There were no Deputy Assistant Secretaries so the bureau directors reported directly to the Secretary and Under Secretary, like the Bureau of Labor Standards, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bureau of Employment Security, and the Wage and Hour Division.

FUCHS: He had the bureau chiefs there, too, plus the Assistant Secretaries and the Under Secretary.

WERTS: Right, on occasion.

FUCHS: Were they well-organized meetings?

WERTS: Well, I just have a very vague impression.

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Usually I think Tobin would call a meeting when he had some issue he liked to kick around. Somebody would present the issue and we'd have discussion and then he might come to a conclusion or he might take it back to a smaller group and come up with a policy. But you see, the Department was really very small and a lot of things happened informally as between the bureaus. The bureau directors were really the powerful people in many respects. At one point,

when Madam Perkins was there, there was only one Under Secretary and maybe one Assistant Secretary, and that grew to where it's now four or five.

FUCHS: Did you deal with any of the bureau chiefs intimately? Do you have any comments about any of the particular bureau men?

WERTS: I would say that when I first came into the Department, and I think it's true pretty much

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since, the bureau chiefs were highly qualified professionals. You had Clague in the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Goodwin in the Bureau of Employment Security, Connally in Bureau of Labor Standards -- I can't recall the name of the chap who was Wage and Hour administrator or the director of Veteran's Reemployment Rights. But they were all people who were to some extent political, but they were selected because of their professional knowledge in the field. They were all experienced in the program and also experienced as administrators. That's another reason why the Secretary's office probably didn't have a lot of meetings. Issues that one bureau director had might not interest the others, so they might individually go to the Secretary. There was always a lot to do in the Wage and Hour Division. Way back when the wage and hour program was initiated the law gave the administrator independent authority. Then

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in early '48 or '49 the President recommended the reorganization act which took that authority away from the Wage and Hour and put it with the Secretary. Before that the Secretary really couldn't run that program. So during that period before the reorganization, Madam Perkins got a hold of it by establishing a large Solicitor's office, and established sort of a parallel organization to the Wage and Hour Division, and required the Wage and Hour Division to clear with the Solicitor's office on legal implications. Unfortunately that sort of parallel organization with dual responsibility persisted up until the time I left. It may have gradually changed some, but this was an example of how you add a layer in order to get control of the situation.

FUCHS: There has been discussion about bringing the Federal Mediation Conciliation Service back into the Department. Do you think that's better off outside the Department?

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WERTS: Well, as a practical matter I don't think so. Bill Usery, the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Labor-Management Relations, got involved in a lot of dispute settlements, and then he was appointed by Nixon as the Director of Federal Mediation. Up until that point, and even during that period, Usery used to come into Secretary [James D.] Hodgson's staff meetings, so they had informal coordination there. But Usery became a figure and a personality in his own right. But in all the periods that I'm familiar with, including the subsequent period in the Carter administration, the Secretary of Labor was the dominant person, and the Secretary of Labor dominated the Director of Federal Mediation until Usery. The Director of Federal Mediation handled a lot of routine things without reference to the Secretary, but when he got into a real national issue like the steel thing, the Secretary of Labor usually got involved, if not the White House. The reason

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for making the Federal Mediation independent I think is now passed. In the Department of Labor, a certain number of the Assistant Secretaries were nominated by the CIO and a certain number were nominated by the AFL. When those organizations, the AFL and the CIO, joined together, the Department of Labor shifted away from being an extension of the AFL-CIO to being much more objective. But during that period the Federal Mediation, really, in fact as well as in reputation, more often followed the AFL and the CIO line -- the labor union line -- than the impartial line. So now the Department approaches problems much more impartially. There is no reason why Federal Mediation shouldn't be in the Department of Labor.

FUCHS: In other words, in a sense, the Department of Labor represents both management and labor now, rather than just being a labor union representative.

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WERTS: Yes, the Department now is looked at as a service to all the citizens and all interest groups. Obviously there would be real pressure from the employer groups not to put it back in, but my guess is that in the Carter administration reorganization this will be one of the things that will take place. That sort of thing will come back.

FUCHS: I guess Cyrus Ching was considered a rather strong person...

WERTS: Yes, force of personality, I guess, and confidence, he kept independence; although he looked very closely to the Secretary of Labor, as I recall.

FUCHS: Did you ever come into touch with Donald Nelson while you were in WPB [War Production Board]?

WERTS: Only at meetings, not personally.

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FUCHS: What about [Julius A.] Krug?

WERTS: He used to on occasion sit in on meetings with Sidney Hillman. He was one of the Associate Directors and I was in the War Production Board in the Manpower Division under General McSherry. I didn't know Nelson nor Mr. Krug except by reputation.

FUCHS: Did you know Bill Green and George Meany?

WERTS: I've met them both. I knew Meany pretty well because of Durkin. Durkin and Meany were so close. Even to this day if I run into George Meany he'll say "Hello, Leo." That was because of meeting him on social occasions. Labor people you know, are very clannish. If I'm a good friend of Martin Durkin, then I'm a good friend of George Meany. That's the way it works.

FUCHS: When you were working on International Labor

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Organization affairs, did you get into the struggle between the AFL and CIO to get representation?

WERTS: Personally I was not ever involved in that.

FUCHS: Of course Meany was very much concerned about Communist domination.

WERTS: I was on the interesting end of it, in two respects. The CIO joined the World Federation of Trade Unions, which was Communist dominated, and at one point a delegation of some 20 or 30 CIO people came to Berlin. Labor was my area and I sort of had to help them get around; they stopped off a couple days in Berlin before they went to Moscow. So Sid Hillman and Jim Carey and Fitzgerald, who was listed as a Communist, and others came. So I got to talk to them; and, of course, the AFL sent delegations. So, to that extent, I was in the middle listening to these arguments about what

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we should do in terms of our trade union labor policies which would be anti-Communist. Well, we were anti-Communists in the Military Government, there was no question about that, although we had some characters who turned out to be Communists. But there was always somebody putting pressure on.

Jay Lovestone would write two and three-page letters to General Clay, and General Clay would sit down and dictate two and three-page letters back to Jay Lovestone. Before he'd send a letter he'd call me and hand it to me and say, "What do you think of this?" Well, what the hell could you think?

He would write a letter back, ready to sign, to Jay Lovestone, pounding the points which Lovestone had written to Clay about, what the others were doing in Germany. Clay would hand it to me and say, "Well, what do you think?" Well, he expected me to tell him right then and there.

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So, I'd spend a couple of minutes looking at the points. I'd say, "Well, that's one way to handle it. I don't have any objection." But Lovestone was so anti-Communist, as you know.

FUCHS: Just who was he?

WERTS: He was a former Communist who established a splinter Communist party, Lovestonites; and Jay Lovestone, for years, during all of my period in Military Government and up until recently, was Meany's adviser on international labor affairs. So Lovestone was credited with having a major influence on Meany's international policies. Whether it has to do with labor union organization or what. As you know, the AFL-CIO will not receive and really vetoes the ILO. They (multi-Nationals) were never used to meeting international standards and they'd do better if we were in than they would outside, because the multi-Nationals would have

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to meet those standards. By more radical policy groups they would be hurt. The AFL-CIO, of course, would not be affected by that and they're becoming more protectionist, so in some respects they don't lose anything by leaving the ILO. But anyhow, I think the United States Government ought to look at it and make judgments in terms of what's good for the total international relations rather than for just one interest group.

FUCHS: You mean Kissinger was really dictated to by the AFL-CIO?

WERTS: That's my opinion. We've been through this several times, twice in my experience, and it's political.

FUCHS: I was reading an article in the paper this morning that labor...

WERTS: Yes, the UAW [United Auto Workers] saying

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they would rather stay in and the AFL-CIO hasn't clarified this position.

FUCHS: It's better to be in there and have a voice they feel, than to be on the outside and have to be sorry about decisions.

WERTS: At some point we might come back to that.

FUCHS: What about the trip of George Allen?

WERTS: Well, as I indicated, Secretary Tobin decided to go to Geneva, this was in 1940 (the first trip I took). On each of the three trips, the President made available one of his planes to take the party. We slept on the plane and there were usually only half a dozen or so people. In June 1951 George Allen joined us, he had somebody with him. George Allen, you know, wrote the book called *Presidents Who Have Known Me*. He was a very close, intimate friend of Eisenhower's and obviously close to President Truman. Well,

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he was on the plane. The purpose of Allen's trip was to talk to Eisenhower to see if he could influence him to be the Democratic candidate to succeed Truman.

We got to Paris and George Allen took off to see Ike and the rest of us went to mass. I guess in a couple of hours, we got a call from George Allen saying that Ike had invited us to lunch. So we go out (to Versailles Headquarters). The point of this -- I don't know who cooked up this idea -- was that Tobin would be a good vice presidential running mate. At least that's what I heard, sitting around in informal conversation. Anyhow, we went out. I guess there were two Tobins (maybe three), myself, and there was a gentleman who was head of S. Klein Stores who volunteered his time in the White House. I can't recall his name. Anyway that group plus Allen. We had lunch with Ike and Mamie and Mrs. Dowd, who was Mrs. Eisenhower's mother, Major Eisenhower

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and his wife and young child. So that was the luncheon group. It was lively. Then after lunch people began to break up. Eisenhower and Allen and Tobin were in one group. I was not in on any of those. But the whole idea was for George Allen to take a message from President Truman to Eisenhower to get him to accept the candidacy of the Democratic Party in '52. The issue of whether Truman was a part of this or not. I don't know. The idea was that if Ike decided to go Democratic, Tobin might be his vice-presidential running mate. So that's being in on a piece of history.

FUCHS: You're really quite certain that Truman was offering Ike the nomination?

WERTS: That's what George Allen indicated.

FUCHS: Of course, there've been disputes about this through the years.

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WERTS: I'm always interested in seeing these references because I was there. I wasn't a party to the conversation but if there is any credence to George Allen it was clear.

FUCHS: Mr. Truman kind of wavered in his later years, at one point, about his friendship with Allen. I've forgotten the quote now, but something came out and I remember Mr. Truman made some caustic remark then about George Allen; but he hadn't always felt that way I'm sure. He did this in his elderly years.

WERTS: It may be, Allen may not have pressed his point, you know you can't tell. Anyhow this is an interesting part of history. What kind of questions do you have?

FUCHS: You've got some points that you'd like to make I'd like to hear those.

WERTS: I guess the only major points that I haven't

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mentioned, except briefly, are President Truman's earlier experience as the State National Reemployment Service Director. A Veteran's Reemployment Representative, I guess in Missouri, who was in the President's military battalion in World War I, had a direct line to Mr. Truman and whenever -- I can't recall this Veteran's reemployment representative's name.

FUCHS: Was this Ted Marks?

WERTS: Yes, I think that's the name. Whenever there was a crisis in the Employment Service the Employment Service people talked to Ted and Ted would go in to see the President. What he could do about it, I don't know; but, anyhow, as far as the Department of Labor program was concerned, which had the Employment Service, it always felt that it had a special friend in the White House and apparently got a lot of help, at least when it came to administrative action. As far

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as I know, it got favorable action in recommending budgets and legislation to the Congress.

FUCHS: The Bureau of Employment Security kind of bounced around.

WERTS: It was over at the Federal Security Agency, and then came back to the Department of Labor in a reorganization plan. I guess Truman must have been responsible for that.

FUCHS: Where did you think it rightly belonged?

WERTS: Well, I think in the Department of Labor program. I guess you could argue unemployment programs could be in HEW as well as Labor; but, I gather that the basic argument is that if it's in the Department of Labor it has less of the welfare tinge, which is what Labor was trying to accomplish.

Well, I guess my last point hasn't been covered. I happened to have the pleasure of

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being present at the Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner where Mr. Truman spoke and announced that he was not going to run again. Adlai Stevenson was there and, of course, that changed all.

FUCHS: Did that come as a big surprise to you?

WERTS: No, I think it was partly a surprise. I guess a lot of people were hoping Mr. Truman would run, so it may have been a disappointment. But there had been enough rumor and discussion so it didn't come really as a surprise.

FUCHS: Of course, his popularity was at a rather low ebb then because of the scandals and so forth, most of which have been largely forgotten now.

WERTS: Yes. He's high on the list now, isn't he?

FUCHS: Yes. Back to the Defense Manpower Administration. Did you work with Frank Graham in 1951?

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WERTS: That's right. He was director at one point. At first Bob Goodwin was head of that -- it reminds me of the big issue between Tobin and the -- I forget what it was called -- Defense Mobilization. In fact, it was General Clay who had been brought in. I guess this may have been an effort on the part of the White House to buttress this activity because of the way it was being handled by the Department of Labor. That's as near as I could figure it out. But Frank Graham came in and did a terrific job in terms of giving us stature and was able to get appropriations from the Hill, from former colleagues of his. I think a lot of people had assumed that the manpower problems would be like World War II problems, but it turned out that the burden and

demand for manpower was not nearly as great. The problems were not so challenging and, therefore, after a short while, Frank Graham moved on to bigger things.

FUCHS: I understood that Wilson had wanted civilian

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manpower requirements to be handled by him, and Graham really wanted it voluntary rather than a draft of labor of any kind, and they disputed that.

WERTS: I remember it a bit, but it's not too clear in my mind. I knew there was some trouble.

FUCHS: Yes. Well, you were as I have it, Deputy Executive Director. Now who was the Executive Director?

WERTS: Goodwin was the Executive Director.

FUCHS: You worked under him. Is there anything, any problems that stand out in your mind?

WERTS: Well, actually, since Goodwin was also Director of the Bureau of Employment Security, I was doing the day-to-day work. If they were policy issues they were up to Goodwin. But the actual connection there was, Goodwin had the authority over the Employment Service, so by

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combining his job there and the Defense Manpower Administration, it, in a sense, gave us control over the Employment Service. But as far as dealing with the defense establishment, it was done largely in my office, by advisory committees; and then we would develop possible policies which Goodwin would check. Then he would go to the Secretary and then they would go into the interagency committees. It was my job to sort of follow that.

FUCHS: Labor really won out over Wilson because Labor wanted to keep the defense manpower requirements in the Department of Labor. Labor had little trust in the Defense Department

WERTS: Right, right.

FUCHS: Does anything stand out in your mind about the steel strike of '52?

WERTS: Only the things that were quite well publicized.

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FUCHS: This was when Truman tried to take over the steel mills and Judge Klein ruled against it.

WERTS: I just remember it but I don't have any particular impressions about it. Kennedy also had a brush with the steel industry.

FUCHS: Well, unless you have some further comment, my points have been covered.

WERTS: Well, I'm glad you did your lesson and developed those questions, because I was fearful that I'd be wasting your time.

FUCHS: No, you haven't.

WERTS: I thought about my experience at the Department of Labor all those years and I didn't see very much that was very significant to talk about.

FUCHS: Thank you very much.

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