

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training  
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project  
Labor Series

**ERIC KOCHER**

*Interviewed by: Morris Weisz  
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[Note: This interview was not edited by Mr. Kocher]

*Q: Today is Saturday, October 14, 1995 and this is Morris Weisz for the Labor Diplomacy Oral History Project. I'm sitting in the pleasant home on Long Island of Eric Kocher, one of our former Labor Attachés, whom I'm interviewing today and haven't seen for many, many years, probably at least 35-40. Eric will be telling us about his career and the special reference to his work as a Labor Attaché and how that impacted, if at all, upon his career later on, other than as a Labor Attaché.*

*Q: Eric I wonder if I can get you to begin by telling us your background, your social, political, if you wish, education? Where were you born?*

KOCHER: Well I happen to have been born in a place called Trinidad, British West Indies. That took place 1912, just before World War I. My father was a German in British territory so that as soon as war was declared, and Germany was at war with England, we were all thrown in a POW camp.

*Q: Interned?*

KOCHER: That's right, interned, at least my father was for four, four and a half years. It was pretty hard on him with a new family, and at the end of that, after the British had taken most of our property they said, "Alright. Good-bye. You'd better go somewhere else now," which we did. The only place we had to go really was Brooklyn, because my mother had her mother there, and it was a good convenient place to start. We all went there together without any money or jobs or anything. It was an interesting contrast with what life in Trinidad had been, of course, with servants, etc. Now here we were out in the wilds of Brooklyn, Flatbush, and had a rather merry time. I went to public school and enjoyed that enormously. Don't understand even now why the kids have to have the buses call for them. To me it was wonderful to be able to walk the mile and a half or two miles to school with a friend of mine. So that worked out well. Then suddenly my mother and father were splitting up and so I was sent to a prep school. This was in Long Island; Stony Brook, Long Island, and I stayed there for a couple of years. I graduated from that and then the question of a college and somebody...

*Q: I gather there was no money problem then because people who lived in Flatbush in*

*my days couldn't afford a prep school.*

KOCHER: My father, I guess, was very frugal with his money knowing how but a short time it was that he didn't have a job for two years.

*Q: Really? What was his field?*

KOCHER: He was in the field of cocoa export and import. Finally, a friend of his got involved in a new undertaking in Wall Street, I guess it was, with importing and exporting cocoa. Selling it to people like Hershey's and Nestlé's and they made a tidy sum there. I found myself going to prep school for two years and then after that to Princeton, in college, for four years. Specialized in languages, of all things, Spanish and French

*Q: Did you know German?*

KOCHER: Not really, no, no. That's very sad because that could have been so useful many times. I knew some of the words but never really made a full sentence, as far as I remember. Did not know German. I think the attempt was made by my parents that we not learn German because there was too much anti-German feeling at that time.

*Q: My father used to be on the subway, reading the Stadtzeiten, and he was criticized for that and on one occasion they tore it up.*

KOCHER: This was what, about 1919, after the war?

*Q: I think this must have been about then.*

KOCHER: Yes, yes. Well there was, I guess, the feeling. I didn't feel it at school in anything, but he felt it, I think with work. Fortunately he was working for somebody who came from Trinidad, who, I guess, happened at the time to be the husband of my grandmother.

*Q: Really?*

KOCHER: So that was a convenient thing to have, and it worked out well. The firm prospered. They had enough money to send me to prep school and then to college. From then on things took their own course, and it worked out pretty well, I think.

*Q: You got out of Princeton when?*

KOCHER: Got out of Princeton 1932. I majored in these languages and then after that in the worst time of the depression there just weren't any jobs around New York. So she said, "How about going to Harvard Business School?" I said, "That's got a great reputation, but I don't think I want to go into business. I don't know anything about that." He said, "Well, why don't you try it out?" So I went up and did that for two years, and I

got an MBA, and at the end of that time it was the question of getting a job. Nothing available in New York, this was in 1934, and we didn't really have many contacts, so then the Harvard Business School said, "Well, why don't you send him down to Washington because the New Deal is starting and there are a lot of jobs available there and maybe he can find a job." So they gave me a couple of contacts, I guess former graduates of Harvard. And my father said, "Good-bye" to me at the train, or wherever it was, very sadly, and then he said, "Well," he said, "in six months you'll be through and you'll be back up here." Well, of course, I never returned except on a vacation to New York. My heart and soul, I think, was in Washington and what was happening then, with the New Deal I was caught up with that.

*Q: When did you become a citizen?*

KOCHER: In 1924... my father again told us, "For God sake, don't ever move anywhere without becoming a citizen," because he remembered himself in prison camp. So the first thing he did when he came up here was to put in for citizenship, and in 1924, five years later, we became citizens.

*Q: You came under his citizenship?*

KOCHER: Yes because I was less than 21. No, it was a very hard time in the family and a very exciting time for us in some ways. We had a strange English accent because of the British-Trinidadian thing and the teachers at school delighted in calling on me just to get that little accent. Everyone would look around and laugh, or whatever. Gradually I got adjusted to all of this and went through college all right and then the MBA and that was through. I did go down to Washington and one of the first contacts was Louie Bean, whom you probably remember?

*Q: Yes, I remember.*

KOCHER: Delightful family. Dorothy, and so on. They kind of took me in. They always had a séance every Saturday.

*Q: You have to identify them, although I know them and you know them. Louie Bean was a famous statistician.*

KOCHER: Famous statistician and he was working with Henry Wallace in the Agriculture Department.

*Q: On the side he was writing political analyses using statistical data.*

KOCHER: Yes, he was a great statistician and later, after that, he used it on the stock market and did pretty well with his statistics there. No, great family, and it was really a boon to me to have them because I didn't really meet anybody. I finally got a job in Social Security. Eleanor Dulles was in charge to begin with in this research section on old age, insurance and unemployment and something else.

*Q: Was she an expert in the field? I know later on, of course, she was in the Foreign Service.*

KOCHER: No, I don't know. Of course, she got a job politically, even though her family was not in Washington at the time. She was never quite easy with her own family. She didn't agree with Foster very much or with the one who was in charge of the CIA. What was his name?

*Q: Allen Dulles.*

KOCHER: Allen Dulles. Yes. As far as I know she is still living. We kept in touch with her for quite awhile afterwards. I guess I was with her for one or two years and then after that Harry Weiss came in. I had been in touch with him and he was going to head up a new division. God knows what the title of it was.

*Q: In the labor Department?*

KOCHER: In the Labor Department.

*Q: Wage and Hour.*

KOCHER: Wage and Hour. He was part of Social Security and it was some research job that he had with Merrill Murray. Does that name mean anything to you?

*Q: Yes.*

KOCHER: I worked things out there pretty well for a couple of years and I was getting more and more bored with Washington. I had always wanted to do some writing, so in my spare time I would whip off a play or two occasionally at night.

*Q: You had a play produced, I know that.*

KOCHER: Well that was produced later on, yes, but that was as a result of the Foreign Service. We're not quite up to there yet. Finally in 1939, when it was obvious that we were going to be in a war and the bombs were soon going to be falling, I thought, well if you're ever going to do anything in another field you'd better do it now. So, I quit the Social Security Board, although I did have a little bit of, maybe, intelligence about me because I waited until I had five years of civil service and then I was a permanent civil service employee. I was able to explain this to my father that I really had not cut all my ties with the Social Security and the government and I would be able to get back there.

*Q: Did your father have any reaction, of plus or minus, to being involved in the New Deal agency?*

KOCHER: Oh, terrible, terrible. He thought it was the end of the world because he was

an arch Republican. Very much so. He couldn't understand what these people in Washington were doing, these socialists and these communists. No, he didn't understand and this is why he thought I wasn't going to be able to stand it either and would come back soon to New York. No, a very, very conservative family. My mother's just as bad as he is, and this has lasted all through their lives too.

So, let me see. Then I came back and then I went to the Yale drama school, and this is why Princeton, Harvard and Yale stand out. Until finally, one day, somebody said to me, "What's the matter? You can't..."

*Q: What do you mean? You quit the government and went off to Yale?*

KOCHER: Yes. That's right, and went off to Yale drama school, because I wanted to learn more about play writing. I went up there for two years and had a play produced there, but that was nothing professional, really. Let's see, after two years we still were not in the war, this was about 1941 and I could tell it was very close, everybody knew that. I spent about six months in New York, in Greenwich Village, after all I was a young artist, a playwright, you had to have your Village stint. I was there for a couple of years, I'm sorry, a couple of months, five, six months until I was drafted in the Army. I thought, well, all right, just another career open to me. The first thing I knew we were getting uniforms in Ft. Dix and getting told how to get to Camp Claiborne, LA where the training was going to take place.

We went to Camp Claiborne and most of what I did there was my most essential Army job, five years or so, was to build latrines. I was wonderful at building and digging latrines and I did that for hours at a time until finally it came time to go overseas. So we did. We got in a troop ship with, I don't know, how many hundreds down below deck. They had tiers, three four, five tiers and you'd crawl up to wherever your bunk and there you were. No use getting sea sick because nobody was going to pay any attention if you did. Anyway, we arrived in England, that much we knew, but nobody would tell us where we were arriving. We were all guessing, of course, and people who had been there before looked at the landscape and thought, well, it must have been somewhere close at hand where they knew. The first thing we got on a train that was going to take us to our destination, we started guessing again. After several hours, we were exhausted, we hadn't slept at all the night before, and we wanted really to get someplace we could rest, but as soon as we got off the train, the place where we were going to land, it was called Moreton-on-Lugg. At this point, when we heard this, we all burst into huge laughter. Lugg was the thing really that brought out the laughter, very peculiar. Then we walked to the landlady, great lady, of this place where we were going to stay and she was going to greet us. We walked about five miles, I suppose it was. We were heavily loaded with all kinds of equipment and it was one of the few real hot days in July that you get in England. We kept on walking and we thought, "God, now we're really going to be able collapse and rest." Not so, because the grand lady was coming from the chateau to welcome us personally. We waited, and there she came finally and gave us the longest speech you can imagine, 30-40 minutes. God knows what she said. After that she left and then we collapsed. OK. We were to stay there and apparently build an airport, and we

were building that for five or six days and suddenly the army decided they didn't need an airport there, they were going to change it. So they put us on another train and moved us to Cheltenham, which was very interesting and nice, in the Cotswolds and there we were going to build a warehouse. We were there about another week or two and then they decided...

*Q: What was it a construction battalion of some sort?*

KOCHER: It was. This was an engineer battalion. I found myself with the engineers, the 346<sup>th</sup> engineer regiment. I never had any engineering or mechanical training in my life. I didn't know what I was going to do, but somebody, I guess it was the Major in charge of S3, which was supplies, needed an administrative officer, and he saw my record.

*Q: Well with an MBA you were perfect.*

KOCHER: That's right. "This is just what I need." He got me up there and I had a job, because I could do work on his typewriter, type all of the letters and things. Interesting. That lasted awhile, until he, poor man, got in a jeep and he used to have a friend, girlfriend, in the village about five miles away and would go see her at all times of the day or night. One night he got into a terrible jeep accident and had to be shipped home. He was a lot of fun, a Lieutenant Colonel in charge of S3. I think we were just ready to leave anyway, to go from there to Silver End. Silver End was a place again on the eastern coast. They were going to have another project there. God knows what that was. It didn't last. Soon we all found ourselves in London for a bit.

From London we went to Brislington, which is outside of Bristol. Enjoyed it very much because I love the English theater and there was never a day when I didn't go to the English theater. Best of all, is that when we were in Brislington, which must have been about several hours away from London, I was assigned by the Commanding Officer, the Colonel of this unit, to go to London and stay there. I was going to work on the... what was the invasion plan called? Noble? No something that begins with "N". This was a question of mathematics. I was going to go there to represent his whole unit and be sure that the equipment that they had would fit on the right barges and the right LCT's, and whatever it was. I had the dimensions of everything, and I knew the dimensions of the boats. It was a question of arithmetic. I got done in no time at all, and so from then on I sent a report every day to Brislington, to my Army officer there and we kept in touch but I didn't see him for about three months. I spent every night in the theater, meeting theater people having a lovely time. Until the day came, the hard day, when I had to go back to the unit that I was coming from and there we were preparing now for overseas.

I went back there and within a week or two weeks time we were on one of these, I forget how, I guess we must have done it in a boat, we had gotten there about D plus 30. We were supposed to be a follow up to the troops that were fighting. We spent about a week or 10 days in an apple orchard. I remember that. The apple orchard was delightful in a way, but they had too much of that wonderful, awful... what was that? Applejack. The French are great on it. We did that for awhile, and then suddenly found ourselves going,

well, we left Normandy, and then we went to a place not far from Paris. Then we had our first experience in Paris, shortly after that, it was about 10 days after liberation. True enough, the French girls were still very excited about the American saviors in August 1944. We got hailed and kissed and then we had to billet somewhere outside, it must have been about 10 miles away. I forget what it was called. We stayed there a short time until the Battle of the Bulge. We found ourselves in that. It was over Christmas. You'd remember seeing the S2's or S1's over us flaming from the rear end. It was a dramatic spectacle. I thought about, my God, these are all hitting London. What's going to happen to our friends, and I had a girlfriend there and I was very fond of her. We were talking about marriage. I didn't hear and I thought well this is very peculiar. I got somebody else to look them up, and it turned out that the whole block in which they were had been exterminated by one of those things. So, they were gone and that was through.

The next thing the war was over, after the Bulge, pretty soon, and then it was a question of going home if we wanted to. I didn't feel I was ready to go home yet and I'd seen all of the displaced persons on the roads and I thought, "God, what is UNRA doing about them?" I found out that they had put them in camps and that there were camp directors who were there and there were jobs available. I was a Captain by that time. I went and interviewed and got a job.

*Q: You didn't enter as an officer, did you?*

KOCHER: No I was a private. I built latrines. From that I became a Technical Sergeant, and there is nobody less technical than me. This is when I became a secretary of the Colonel who eventually had an automobile accident.

*Q: So you became an officer in the field?*

KOCHER: That's right. Over in England I got a direct commission for Second Lieutenant and then First Lieutenant and then by the time I was sent to London I was a Captain. I was about to be a Major and then the war ended. I was going to stay there and become a director for of the DP camp. Which I did do. I traveled up to Holland, where they were being organized and spent a week or so with them, and became a Captain of a group that was going out to a camp in Braunau am Inn, Austria, which was a place where Hitler was born. There was nothing more ridiculous than the camps because every trace of Hitler was being torn up, broken everything. His statues were all gone. We had about 10 days in our weapons carrier to go all through Germany on our own. The whole team we had intact. Really interesting team. It was the first time I had worked with international people. I had a Dutch secretary, a Brazilian welfare officer, a Belgian doctor and French nurse. I had about five or six different nationalities. To me it was marvelous to see the different international things and to note I would have to learn how to work with them. It turned out to be a very exciting exercise and we did a good job on the DP camp for a year. I left with my welfare office and secretary and we gave ourselves a tour of Europe. As an UNRA officer, we were accepted the same as the Army all of the way through. We saw a lot of places we would never have seen otherwise.

Finally, took a boat back to America after four and a half years overseas and then the same old question. What comes next? Where are you going to go? What are you going to do? My father, by then, had gotten adjusted to the idea of socialistic dictatorship in Washington and he didn't mind if I went down there again once there was a job, because there didn't seem to be anything. I had a lot of contacts in New York and I was using them but it was really making speeches on DP subjects to lady's clubs and getting their money. Which is all right, I did that, but I knew that wasn't going to last nor did I want it to last long.

What happened after that now? Oh yes. I went to Washington and with the contacts I'd had, and somewhere along the line I heard rumors and stories that the State Department was looking around for new people because they hadn't been able to recruit anybody during the war. I went and got an appointment, because at that time, fortunately, you didn't have to pass a written exam, it was all on the oral bases. You just had to appear before a group of four or five people and if you passed that then you were in, which was unusual. If I'd had to get through the written exam, as I read about them later, I never even would have been in the Foreign Service. But, I got through all right.

The first thing the panel asked me, "Well you've passed. Where do you want to go and what do you want to do?" I thought this was unusual to be even asked that question. I had no idea what the Foreign Service was about and what kind of jobs there would be in an Embassy. Immediately, I had heard also that there were going to be Labor Attaché jobs that were opening up, I said, "Labor Attaché." I had no idea what was involved at all and so before I knew it I became a Labor Attaché and they said, "How about Brussels?" I said, "Well I know a little bit about Brussels that would be fine. Let's try that."

*Q: Before you go further, I take it you realize it anybody listening to this questions why would a person with your background, even though everything you did you sort of referred to as being almost accidental, why did you feel comfortable in leaving the conservative background of your father and become, I take it by this time, you're a liberal?*

KOCHER: I was, yes. No I think I rejoiced in opposing my family. I had been under their thumb for so long, and maybe this was the American climate, or whatever, but it wasn't anything I could live with. I certainly wasn't going to live with them any longer in Flatbush. I was prepared to be on my own and this was an important part of my development, to want that and to be able to follow through on it.

*Q: What training did you get before you went out to be a Labor Attaché?*

KOCHER: None. No they wanted someone in Brussels. There was Smith Simpson, who was ahead of me. Do you remember him?

*Q: Oh, yes. By the way he is one of the people who has been interviewed.*

KOCHER: Yes, well he would know a lot about it. I was struck with him, in the sense I

never knew him but I saw some of the things he that wrote when I went through the files. I don't remember in what way I was struck.

*Q: For one thing he wrote very well. He was a very thoughtful person.*

KOCHER: He wrote very well, and I said, "Well, this guy has got a lot of contacts." I don't know why he left the job; maybe it was time to be transferred. There were a lot of things, questions in my mind as to how he filled in. The first question was where do they put a guy like this? Where do they put him in the economic section or the political section? Some embassies were doing one and some embassies the other. I frankly much preferred to be in the political section, because I felt I was much more of that kind of an animal. In economics I never did very well or understood it very much anyway so I would not have felt comfortable there. I think they worked it out so that I had really part of both of these sections and worked together very closely with them and I enjoyed that because it gave me more knowledge about the embassies and what embassy work would be like.

*Q: This is an important subject that comes up in many interviews. The problem of whether to be "independent" or part of a section and if so economic or political? Were there any discussions about that?*

KOCHER: No discussions. I think the embassy didn't know and they didn't really care very much.

*Q: Where were you located in the embassy? Whom did you report to? The political, the DCM?*

KOCHER: Economic. I didn't really like that but I didn't know enough to resist it. I actually worked with the political people just as well. There wasn't this question about where you are and the table of organization wasn't that important anyway. Robert Murphy was the ambassador, one of the few good ambassadors I've ever had. I think he was a damnable Republican, he hated the Democrats. Fortunately, he was accepted by them. I remember I had gone out to meet all of the labor people and I was using whatever initiative I had to get the ambassador close to the labor people. We had a... what was his name? In the FGTB (Federation Generale du Travail de Belgique). The Socialist Trade Union in Brussels. I knew the officers there. There was one officer, Renard, I guess was it?

*Q: Renard. I remember he was an old fox.*

KOCHER: That's right. Kind of a black sheep in that hierarchy. Everybody recognized extremely brilliant, but...

*Q: Louis Major was the head of the union.*

KOCHER: Major and Paul Finnet. Very nice, I think he was much steadier than Major who was more ebullience and emotional. Renard was more or less a creature unto himself. He did think just as he wanted to himself and I guess he had enough of the people working with him.

*Q: The FGTB was the socialist oriented union. They had other unions I'll be asking about.*

KOCHER: That's what frightened our ambassador.

*Q: That's remarkable because Murphy, even at that time but certainly later, became a very sophisticated guy who used labor and became a friend, as I understand it from other sources, of both Irving Brown and Jay Lovestone.*

KOCHER: He was. Very much so. No, he was very clever in being a diplomat. He did not get himself absolutely on one side. It would be only to those with whom he would talk in confidence, I guess, that all of these terrible communists and even socialists, came out. This is why I admire him so well, maybe playing the role in both positions. Very Republican at heart. What did he do when he left the service? He became vice president for international affairs in one of these huge organizations. I can't remember what it was. That may not be important at all. We were good friends. One day I thought he should meet Renard. Renard said, "Fine. OK. OK."

*Q: Was Renard a sort of intellectual in the union? Did Renard have any official position?*

KOCHER: He was the number four, maybe just because he was the youngest. I forget even what the trade union was where he came from. I know that Major was from the train people, train workers. Finnet was what? I don't know. The other one was DeBerg. Very nice statistical minded guy but not very imaginative. Renard was the bad boy of the whole unit and everyone distrusted him somewhat, and yet knew that he had a following and that he was very good and that he...*patron*.

*Q: Against the employer?*

KOCHER: That's right. So, Murphy and I went down to see Renard in his headquarters in Namieux, I think it was. Renard was playing games with us, I know, decided he was not going to be where he was supposed to be, in his office. We went down there to meet him and to spend the whole day and suddenly it turned out that Renard had left with somebody, where nobody knew where he was. The ambassador, of course, was boiling and this is what I'm sure Renard wanted, to show his potency against the big boys. It was embarrassing to me, but not terribly so because I think maybe at this point Murphy started realizing that life with the labor people was not as easy as he thought it might be. We treated that pretty well. After that they met and got along fairly well, but under suspicion on both sides. That's about it until the ICFTU came along which was in about three years, 1949, 1950.

*Q: Before you leave that what were the other unions and your relation to them? They had the Catholic Trade Union. That was under a man named Auguste Coule.*

KOCHER: I knew him pretty well but he was a Dutch secretive and I guess much more Germanic and none of the ebullience of most of the Belgians.

*Q: When you say Dutch you mean the Dutch part of Belgium? He was a Belgian.*

KOCHER: The Catholic Trade Union was strong in the north and the Lemeure and the others were all at the hands of the FGTB. They compartmentalized themselves that way. I have no idea whether they are still that way or not.

*Q: At this point did you get to know VanIstendahl? He was the head of the Catholic equivalent of the ICFDU in Brussels. That is the international organization.*

KOCHER: Very familiar name but I can't place who he was. If they were in Brussels I didn't get in touch with them.

*Q: Originally a Dutchman. It may have been later on because he was much younger than Coule.*

KOCHER: But Coule was a good administrative person but he didn't have much imagination. I would contact him, be in touch with him, but I would never let him go because I wanted to be sure I got his point of view and know what they stood for.

*Q: What sorts of problems were coming up there that you would be dealing with? Were you just reporting on what events took place?*

KOCHER: Could be anything. Sometimes they had meetings that we were allowed to go to and if there was something interesting there I would report it. They would have a once a year convention. There were a lot of things that came up, specifically with the Marshall Plan in 1948. By the time it had hit us, Major was trying to work up a lot of feeling against it. I was never sure why, what he saw there, why he was worried about it. Maybe it was just something international, something foreign that you don't trust them, whatever.

*Q: Didn't it present an opportunity for support that he could find useful? Certainly later on that went on.*

KOCHER: I don't know that that question came up. He was the only one that I could think of in the hierarchy of the FGTB who had any opposition to the Marshall Plan and didn't want to participate in it. I had to go over it with him so many times and then send telegrams. Of course, every telegram, every cable, goes under the ambassador's signature and this ambassador always saw them. The more he saw it the less he liked Major. He said, "Well, this is not one of the people we want to deal with." He had an irrational kind of suspicion of all things American, I guess a good socialist did have, didn't they?

*Q: Yes, but then when that came a little bit later across the opportunity for support, that the international people like Schevenose and those were using to support their educational programs. Major in the days that I knew him later on certainly was friendly.*

KOCHER: He jumped to conclusions very fast, and they were all negative conclusions. I maybe didn't know enough about it to be able to point out the positive factors. In the obvious things yes, but he always thought the capitalists were behind this and therefore something dirty afloat. They were going to take this one for a loop. I don't know that he ever changed that while I was there.

*Q: Well later on there were other people involved. Oldenbrook, Schevenose, do those names sound familiar?*

KOCHER: Yes, Oldenbrook, I remember, was the head of the ICFTU. The first I knew about that, I think, was a telegram that came from Washington saying there was going to be a new organization created. Its headquarters was going to be in Brussels and I should cover them as well as the FGTB and the CFC, the Catholic union. So I did and when the time came I met them all.

*Q: That would have happened in 1949 or 1950. October 1949 was when the ICFTU formed in London and then Oldenbrook was the head of it. They had Schevenose and Gottfurch, the German, was the educational man that I dealt with. Later on your successor, Oliver Peterson, of course, had much to do with them.*

KOCHER: Oldenbrook was fairly close to people. I never felt I was very close to him. We had him for a lot of lunches, and the only thing I can really remember about him was this stupid little thing about being a good Dutchman that they know where tulips should be. Well, in our house we had a bunch of tulips in front in a little garden of mixed colors. He stopped and said, "You can't do this". I said "Do what?" He said, "You're having more than one color of tulip in this garden. You've got to have the same color." I just remembered that with joy and glee but I don't think we did anything about it. That's such a strange thing to remember him by.

*Q: Where did you live, by the way? Do you remember?*

KOCHER: Avenue du Brousseau. Was that it?

*Q: Yes, downtown then.*

KOCHER: I don't remember. At first we lived about 10 miles out of town in the big suburb there. Begins with an "R". For about two years, then the third year we moved into town at the...

*Q: Well if you said it was the Avenue du Brousseau it would be where the new embassy would be established.*

KOCHER: No it wasn't that. Well they did have the new embassy the last year I was there. I remember the ambassador's wife complained all of the time, the closets were not big enough. They had to be bigger because all of her things had to fit in them and they were not going to fit.

*Q: When did Murphy leave and who replaced him?*

KOCHER: I worked under three ambassadors there. The first one was an Admiral, a very nice Admiral. Murphy only came there after the first year.

*Q: What happened to the Admiral?*

KOCHER: He retired, got discharged. He was great for the cocktail circuit and that's about all. He had no feelings about anything otherwise. Murphy was the one who had the first touch of professionalism in that embassy.

*Q: Where did he come out of? He didn't come out of the normal State Department. Wasn't he in the Army of Occupation?*

KOCHER: You mean the Admiral?

*Q: No. Murphy? [Ed. Robert Daniel Murphy 1949-1953]*

KOCHER: Well, he was. He was Eisenhower's delegate to the Free French and Africa, so he built up a terrific reputation there with the Republicans. After that he had any job that he wanted. He got Brussels, and did it, but he was only there for a year or two and they always wanted to move him on because they had him for about in six months in Tokyo and then about six months in Germany. If there was anything to be salvaged. He was well meaning, but he had a certain brilliance, a certain charm about him. He knew the French language, of course. He didn't have any idea why they sent him to Tokyo, there was no special job there for him. He got of there after six months and came back to Belgium. The third ambassador was a political appointee.

*Q: It wasn't Alger? Alger didn't come until afterwards under Eisenhower.*

KOCHER: No I don't know who it was. He was new at the job, didn't know very much, wasn't very interested. [Ed. Myron Melvin Cowen served as U.S. ambassador to Belgium June 1952-June 1953]

*Q: Diplomatic type?*

KOCHER: Well, no I think it was a political thing. He'd given a lot of money to the Democrats, who were in power at the time. They were still getting embassies like that depending on the amount of money they had put in. It was well known that if you only put in five, ten or twenty thousand you were going to get something in Africa. If you

wanted something in Europe then it had to be at least fifty thousand. I guess those days still hold true, don't they?

*Q: How did the nature of your job change after the ICFTU came in?*

KOCHER: Much more work on ICFTU because it interested me more. Besides it was international. I found myself veering a lot towards things that were international and getting to know a bit more about the world. I didn't like Oldenbrook, particularly. He was too in grown, too close. He was afraid of saying anything. I guess maybe he didn't wasn't to give any secrets away.

*Q: Any comment about his relations with the Americans, which had some difficulties?*

KOCHER: I think he got along better with the British. Unfortunately I should mention this to you. I had a wonderful colleague who was the Labor Attaché to the British Embassy and we worked together on many, many things. It was very helpful to have him as a colleague, because we trusted each other implicitly. I saw everything he wrote and he saw everything I wrote. He's a beautiful writer, incidentally, a very excellent one.

*Q: What was his name?*

KOCHER: His name was Conrad Heron. He is now Sir Conrad and his ability has been recognized by the Palace. I suppose it's the people that he was working with who propose him, and he makes a contribution because he's extremely bright.

*Q: He came over very frequently to important Paris meetings later on.*

KOCHER: You saw him didn't you?

*Q: Oh yes, yes.*

KOCHER: Charming guy. Very intelligent. We've kept in touch with him and visited him in England several times, and they've come here and we've had a couple of weeks together. A very dear friend, the whole family. Every time we go to London one of his daughters will always give a party for us. A lot of the information I gave to Washington would have come from him and I did the same thing for him.

*Q: Did he share with you the problems they had with the British trade union people's attitudes?*

KOCHER: He would say things occasionally, yes. I forget the name of the man who would come over all of the time who was the lover of Oldenbrook's secretary who got killed. Do you remember her?

*Q: Yes. Terrible accident in the elevator. That happened when you were there?*

KOCHER: Yes. Just toward the end. Terrible thing. Of course, it was a very old building they were in and she was hasty and wanted to get out too soon.

*Q: Went to get out of the elevator and she was practically cut in half.*

KOCHER: It just suddenly started going.

*Q: I didn't know she was the friend of a Britisher. Trade unionist?*

KOCHER: The one that came over representative of the British Trade Unions. I think he was a good, ordinary and clever, nice guy that I met several times.

*Q: One of the delegates from the ITFCU?*

KOCHER: He may have been. I can't remember the first or last name. He was the friend of Eileen, I think that was name of Oldenbrook's secretary. They were much more oriented towards the British than they were towards us.

*Q: Clearly. It was one of the things that got Oldenbrook in terrible trouble with the Americans, the fact that he was close to them.*

KOCHER: I don't now how they would find out but it was just an attitude that you could sense. I knew that he wasn't really open with me the way he was with Conrad because Conrad would tell me about some of their conversations and it was nothing I ever heard about. That was it for five years in Brussels.

*Q: Before you leave Brussels, which I see you are about to do, we had a whole lot to do after you left. I had to come up there very frequently to check with Oliver about support and what the Marshall Plan's funds were being used for with the ICFTU. The people we dealt with there were Schevenose, who was the head of the European part of the ICFTU and Gottfurch, the German.*

KOCHER: None of them mean anything to me.

*Q: I'll let you leave Brussels now. But let me just ask you a few other questions about the Americans. Americans had great difficulty with Oldenbrook, Beatrieu, who succeeded him, and in every case they supported them at first and then found wanting the fact that although they supported them they were independent. They were international civil servants of the trade union movement and their power base was elsewhere or at least balanced out so that the Americans were not too happy with successive Secretary's General. You were not there when Beatrieu replaced Oldenbrook?*

KOCHER: No, I don't think so. I had Oldenbrook for about a year before I left. I think I came to understand, or feel understanding, about their feelings about Americans and why they weren't really willing to trust them. They'd heard so many stories about imperialism and what the rich American's were doing and tossing their power around. Nothing I

could do to destroy that in their minds. This is why I think that when any American was coming to meet him, I always saw that frown coming across Oldenbrook's face. He didn't want to have anything to do with Americans, he felt much, much closer to the British, and in fact most of the staff came from Britain. Their Chief Research Officer, what was his name? It began with "R"....

*Q: I remember Braunfall, not a British. He was their research man.*

KOCHER: Was he there recently?

*Q: No, he was there in those days.*

KOCHER: The name is familiar. Was he head of research?

*Q: No. There was a British who was head of public information. What was your relationship with the Paris office of the Marshall Plan? You were there at the very beginning.*

KOCHER: None at all.

*Q: Later on it was very interesting how closely we had to work together.*

KOCHER: You worked on labor things together, did you?

*Q: Since we were financing the programs, many of the programs, of the ICFTU, Olive, Peterson and I had to work together on what we agreed on and what we disagreed on, but that was much later on. So you really had nothing to do with the Marshall Plan? You knew Sepas though, my predecessor?*

KOCHER: Yes, Dave Sepas.

*Q: How do you know him?*

KOCHER: He came over and I spent quite a bit of time with him.

*Q: With ICFTU.*

KOCHER: Yes, with ICFTU. We worked together well. I saw him a couple of times in Washington when I went back. His wife we enjoyed too. Is she still alive?

*Q: No, she died. David died in 1968 and she died very much later in the '80's.*

KOCHER: She was very active, we lost touch with them then.

*Q: Who else did you know then? I guess it was Dave who did most of the traveling to Brussels.*

KOCHER: Yes he did a lot of traveling and he was well received.

*Q: They knew him from the days when he was there.*

KOCHER: A good socialist, wasn't he?

*Q: He was never a socialist, but he certainly got a grant to do the first history of the French labor movement before Val.*

KOCHER: I thought he might have been a socialist.

*Q: He was very sympathetic.*

KOCHER: He went under those auspices I believe.

*Q: Absolutely. I really don't know. I knew him so well he was my mentor. I don't think he was an official member. Certainly would have helped him if he had been when he was accused of being a communist. He was a very good friend of Val Owens.*

KOCHER: Yes, I know Val. Val was a dear friend of mine. I was very sorry about that. He never got along with Phil Cos at all.

*Q: No, they disagreed and that's one of the things I'll be asking you about on the substantive side and what should be done in the labor field.*

KOCHER: He always wanted to know whose side you were on. It was a question of taking sides.

*Q: Who? Val?*

KOCHER: I'm trying to think who was saying this.

*Q: You mean Val would ask that?*

KOCHER: Doesn't sound like Val, does it? No, it couldn't have been.

*Q: More likely it would have been Geiser. Later I'll go over the difference between the State Department and the Labor Department on the questions of the Labor Attaché's service. That was the last, the first and last, labor job you had?*

KOCHER: First and last. After five years there I was eager to get out of it because I had come there without really any labor background at all. It was a way of getting into the Foreign Service because of my lack of knowledge of other posts. Otherwise if I had thought about political sections or even consular sections I might have chosen one of those.

*Q: Let me say then we'll go rapidly through the rest of your career with any reference to what, if anything, you're labor experience had to do with that. Then I want to get into your analysis of the thing. You went from there to where?*

KOCHER: Well I went from there to the National War College. I had a year there. From there I was assigned to Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.

*Q: What did you write your paper on at the National War College?*

KOCHER: Something about the Christian Trade Unions. Every year we heard about them and I thought it was something maybe that would be interesting for everyone to have.

*Q: That was what was called in English The International Federation of Christian Trade Unions and in French the CISC, Confederation Internationale de Syndicat Chretien. What made you write on that subject? The Christian Trade Unions.*

KOCHER: Well I certainly could choose a subject I wanted and it seemed to me that this subject might have some interest to people who knew very little about trade unions and give them some idea of it. I had studied this in Brussels so it would be an easy thing and I wouldn't have to do any special research. It came that way and those things really aren't graded and who reads it? Who knows? So I don't know what the result of it was.

*Q: But the interesting thing is that this is the sort of thing that by referring to it any student who is doing research in this field can go back, because they have records of this, and look it up.*

KOCHER: Of course it would only cover that date which would have been 1953, I think. I don't know if anybody has ever covered anything or written anything on this after that, maybe they have.

*Q: Well, we know not that it exists.*

KOCHER: There is such a thing. The exact name I don't know. Does it matter? Was it the NWC?

*Q: No, it doesn't matter. The war college? I don't know which program you were in. The senior seminar or the War College? Out at Ft. McNair?*

KOCHER: Yes.

*Q: Yes well that's the War College.*

KOCHER: I don't know whether they keep all of these things in their files somewhere.

*Q: They are in the records someplace. At least we've established that such a thing may be there.*

KOCHER: Of course at that time we had a State Department representative there. His name was Eddie Page. He was not terribly effective but he was a nice guy. How can you be effective in that kind of job anyway? It's just to represent the State Department point of view.

*Q: It depends on the person. The person who was there the last few years was this fellow who was one of the hostages, who was not kept as a hostage in Iran, but was the man outside. I forget his name, but he did very well in that liaison job. He got them interested in doing projects.*

KOCHER: Well that's it. I don't even know what background Eddie Page had. I know he was from the State Department and it would seem to me to be an appointment because they didn't know what else to do with him.

*Q: That sometimes happens. Langdon. Bruce Langdon who was the DCM in Iran and did very well for the few years he was there and is now doing some excellent public service work. You did that paper, and we have a reference to it, and then you served where? Is it then that you went to Malaysia?*

KOCHER: Yes. As soon as that was done then I was sent to Kuala Lumpur and I was Consul General there, which is interesting because I knew I would get the whole breadth and width of the Foreign Service there and our relations with another country.

*Q: Well you said Malaysia, was that then Malaya or Malaysia?*

KOCHER: It was Malaya. It only became Malaysia after the Chinese, after Singapore pulled out. The Chinese wanted to have the same sort of thing we get now here, the underdog or others who are important but don't have any name to belong to it. It's Malaysia right now, just to satisfy the Chinese. Which represent quite a few people.

*Q: You stayed there how long? How many years?*

KOCHER: I was there two years, half of which time I was the Consul General of Singapore also. We had a Consul General there who was sent away and Singapore and Kuala Lumpur were being turned into a Consul General. It was a good time with relations.

*Q: We didn't have an ambassador at that time?*

KOCHER: No ambassador at all.

*Q: With the little experience you had, you were in the Foreign Service for less than five years and you became a Consul General?*

KOCHER: The highest representative of your country there.

*Q: It's a compliment to the quality of your work.*

KOCHER: Well, I don't know but it was interesting to me to see what the British Ex-Pat was. I guess they had their special type that did their colonial work, colonial service. Some of them were very pompous, very much of a nuisance, not much intelligence. Sir Gerald Templar, particularly. He was the military commander and also the chief of everything there. I was in his bad graces for awhile because there was a British trade Unionist whom I had met, maybe in Brussels, who did not stick well at all with Templar because he represented labor and Templar represented anything but labor.

*Q: Was he with the plantation workers?*

KOCHER: I don't think so. He was traveling around representing the British trade unions because they wanted to know what Templar was doing out there anyway. Whatever his name was, and he was a wonderful guy and we worked together well, and he came and he said, "I need papers and pencils and I don't have any of this." I said, "Of course we'll give you whatever you need." So I did that and it got to Templar right away. It was his secret service. The next reception we went to was Templars and he grabbed me as soon as I arrived there, took me aside and said, "I heard what you've done and I don't want you to do it again otherwise you're not going to stay here any longer." I said, "What have I done?" He said, "Well this was so-and-so and you helped him along and he is a persona non grata here. We don't want to see him here. What's he here for anyway? Just to stir up trouble." I said, "I don't know but this was just being courteous to somebody who needed some simple things."

*Q: Why did he come to you?*

KOCHER: Because he knew I had done it.

*Q: No, I mean why did the British Trade Unionist come to you?*

KOCHER: He couldn't get any help out of his own people. They had known that I was a compatible or sympathetic person. But I had no reservations about giving him any help that he needed. To me we were all on the same side. Little did I realize that the British colonial side is quite separate from our own. I learned that the hard way there, he almost threw me out.

*Q: He was the High Commissioner?*

KOCHER: High Commissioner and most important English person there. He was in charge of the army and in charge of the civilians. He was the one who set the law. He would have these weekly gatherings and Peg and I would be invited and all of the people there had to perform as if we were in a vaudeville show. Peg and I had a couple of songs

from *Oklahoma* that we kept on singing. I thought how dull this must be to everybody hearing it over and over again, but he seemed to like that and it may be the only thing that saved us there. He was a peculiar man. I never got to know him at all. Sir Donald McGuilroy, his number two man, was there really to guide Singapore toward its independence. Particularly so they were left with the legacy of British law, British civil administration, British police and all of these things which McGuilroy did. He was a very clever guy and he was very good. How he got along with Templar I don't know. He was a genuine British civil servant who carried all of that with him into the tropics and saw nothing wrong with trying to repeat himself there, not to act like a military person. He was very well respected, I think.

*Q: How long were you in Malaya?*

KOCHER: Two years there and then Singapore for the last six months because the Consul General there was transferred to something else. The department thought it could save money by assigning me to both places. So they did. Which was interesting to me because I knew very little about Singapore politics and problems. I spoke with a lot of people and I saw the beginning of Lee Kuan Yew. The British hated him and they thought he was going to be the scoundrel of the future. They did everything they could to diminish him, to make him unpopular. Of course they were not successful and he emerged, as you know, and he's still in charge after 30 years, 40 years.

*Q: Any comments on his change from a Democratic Socialist to practically a dictator?*

KOCHER: Well, I think we knew he was going to be a dictator all the time when he was there. That came out all of the time. In fact, I'm not sure how much of a Democrat that he was ever. Maybe it was because he had grown up under the British dictatorship that he thought he had to be also, I don't know. He was a very interesting and a very bright guy.

*Q: Interesting how many times that happened in British and French colonies. The leader of the uprising become, in effect, dictators.*

KOCHER: I think the British finally got the idea about transition people and they sent Templar home before it became independent so McGuilroy could carry out all of the business about organizing the police and the civil service. Templar only wanted to be there to serve him personally.

*Q: I must say that much later my experience in India the High Commission was much more in tune to the leader.*

KOCHER: Whom did you have there?

*Q: Freeman was one who was a very strong labor supporter, but they were in tune with the British Labor Party.*

KOCHER: The British had been aware of this, but Templar had a big name then because

he had been the one who had conquered all of the Communists in the jungle so they let him have this apple for awhile. Finally, when they could, they took him back.

*Q: One other thing. The appointment as Labor Attaché, which must have helped you get the job in Malaya and Malaysia, did that enhance your career? Were you progressing upward in the grade?*

KOCHER: Yes, I didn't think I was when they assigned me to Singapore or Kuala Lumpur because I thought, "Oh my God! A place like that, this must be where they put all of the people with bad records." But I think at that time they were honestly trying to get Foreign Service Officers with much more knowledge about the Far East, which almost nobody had had before. I was one of the ones that was chosen and they really tried to make it out as being an improvement or promotion. It's true that I had very little, in the sense in Brussels for five years, because I had to do with only my small job in labor whereas the Consul General there had everything to do with all kinds of labor. The consular relations, with political, with everything. Later on I realized it was a good assignment.

*Q: Did you get the promotion before then or after?*

KOCHER: No. By that time I was FS02 when I left Brussels. I got two promotions there.

*Q: You got two promotions in Brussels?*

KOCHER: In Brussels. From four to three and then three to two. That worked out pretty well and I was really hesitant but then I didn't think there was anything I could do to say I didn't want it, or shouldn't have it or wasn't there anything better. I settled down and it was a nice trip on the ship for about six weeks it seems, forever those days. It was fun.

*Q: Where did you go from there?*

KOCHER: Two years there and from there back to the department where I became the assistant to Ken Young. Did you know him at all? He was a great man.

*Q: No. The Ken Young I know is, or was, the assistant to Lane Kirkland in the AFL-CIO. This is a different Ken Young.*

KOCHER: No this is a different one and he died fairly recently. He didn't like Robertson either and he thought Robertson was a dictator who demeaned his staff and made fun of them in public. Robertson was the Assistant Secretary of Far Eastern Affairs. A Virginia gentleman, rich, who had gotten the vote because he was close to Eisenhower and had given a lot of money to the cause. He was a miserable man. He was very, very, very anti-socialist, anti-labor, and anti-everything. He was a strong Republican and these days he probably would have been a Republican to the Right. He was a very hysterical, emotional person and he got carried off by things and really became incoherent. I don't know if you remember the name Ruth Bacon? She was one of the few women who got very high in

the State Department in those days and she was his U.N. person. He had a representative in South Asian Affairs, South East Asian Affairs, the U.N., the military, about five or six of us. Ruth was wonderful and one day he got furious with her because she had done something in the U.N. that seemed to have some kind of humanitarian implications and balled her out like hell in front of a whole group of us. This poor woman, who had done her very best, was standing there, cringing, but still holding her own, and I valued her and treasured her, and she did a wonderful job of controlling him and getting him to clam down eventually. I don't know whether it did her career any good or not but I gather later on she became a DCM in Australia or New Zealand and a couple of other places that he had jurisdiction over. Very good officer, I thought she would be an ambassador.

*Q: What was your position? Special Assistant to...?*

KOCHER: No, I was the Assistant Director to Ken Young. He was the Director of South East Asian Affairs. That included six countries that we had there. We had Vietnam, Laos, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaya and Singapore. Of course I covered the Malaya and Singapore areas and learned a great deal about the others at the same time. It was a good assignment but I didn't want it that long because I didn't like Washington that well, I get very itchy and unhappy, especially with somebody like Robertson on board. A miserable man. After four or five years there it was time to move on and I that's when I became DCM in Jordan, which I enjoyed very much. It was a great opportunity. I was also the Acting Ambassador for a pretty long time because our ambassador was on home leave and did other things, so that was very important. I like the Arabs, I like the Israelis. We had a political appointee in Tel Aviv, I forget who it was, but he was very sympathetic to the Israelis side and did well there. I liked trips into the desert and I liked the Bedouin and the other tribes they had there. Fascinating.

*Q: How did you feel about the Jordanian efforts, the Kings effort, to maintain a stable relationship with the United States at the same time he did so with the (unable to determine)?*

KOCHER: He was very good, he was very friendly to the United States. After all, he had been educated in England and knew a great deal about the west.

*Q: He was not yet married to the American woman.*

KOCHER: I forget whom he was married to at that time.

*Q: But not to Queen Noor.*

KOCHER: Queen Noor, no, I think that came afterwards. He's had about four or five of them with different children. His brother was pretty much in a mess, Mohammed, I think, who I think was somewhat retarded. He came up to me at one party, and he had just been reading about somewhere in Africa that exploded and apparently they assassinated all of the British and Americans that were there, and then he sort of smacks his lips and said, "Oh, I wonder how those British ones tasted?" Fortunately, Hussein did not have much

confidence in him and so Mohammed never got anything close to what he wanted. Two years there and I was Chargé also for a good time.

*Q: You say you got to know the Israelis. Was that normal thing for a guy in Jordan?*

KOCHER: No, in Jordan it wasn't. We wanted to go and I got an invitation from our ambassador to Tel Aviv, he was a political appointee who had been somebody at the Herald Tribune, a newspaper person. We had a nice couple of days together and I invited him to Jordan but he never got over there. That kind of relationship, yes, you don't go over there to work but you go over there to find out more about your neighboring countries. This is being encouraged all of the time by the State Department and it should be.

*Q: How long did you serve in Jordan?*

KOCHER: Two years. From there I went to Yugoslavia. George Kennan was there and I purposely tried to get there so I could learn how he was an ambassador. He writes beautifully.

*Q: Do you realize what you've just said? You said you went there to see how he was as an ambassador and he writes beautifully?*

KOCHER: Well, that's it and that's true because he goes off like this and he has two or three pages of telegram and then will cross out one word and then off it goes. Beautifully written. His weakness is that he is not a good ambassador. When something happened, I forget who it was, did something with the budget that he was supposed to spend and he said that he was being accused of ruining relations between the U.S. and Yugoslavia and he didn't have enough power to do this. Nobody could understand that. Therefore he said he couldn't go out, he didn't want to be seen, so he stayed in his office and his home without going to any cocktail parties or anything for over a month. I had to go out and represent him. I had to talk to with him. Ed Murrow was coming and he said, "Cancel that! Cancel that! I cannot see that man. I cannot see anybody at this point." So he's a very sensitive guy, very easy to hurt, and everything is a personal insult to him. If he could get over that he'd be a very, very great man because he does have knowledge and he does have a very wonderful mind. He writes excellently and he meets people excellently but he can't think that he is responsible for the whole U.S. government.

*Q: You were his DCM?*

KOCHER: Yes and then he left after a year and then I became, for a whole year, the acting chief because they didn't get anybody until Elbrick a year later.

*Q: How long were you with Elbrick?*

KOCHER: He was there still when I left after three years, so he'd been there about a year. Kenton was there for about a year and then he left for a year and then the third year

I had Elbrick and then I left.

*Q: How did you get to know Larry Eagleburger, who became Secretary of State?*

KOCHER: He was the lowest man there in the economic section.

*Q: So in effect, he worked for you?*

KOCHER: Yes, for a couple of years. It wasn't long before he and Marlene, his girlfriend, were transferred and she quit the State Department when he left, so that she could be with him in America. He had gotten divorced by then from his first wife so they got married shortly after that. He was doing a job in the message center, there is always a Foreign Service Officer there who routes and reroutes telegrams from the field to whom it should go, and he made a great reputation for himself there. He became very friendly to Kissinger and Kissinger got him up there as his assistant, I forget what the title was, and from then it was all of the way up. He was an extremely bright guy, we all knew that, and we knew that there were big things for him.

*Q: A "Water Walker", as we use to say in evaluation them. I was on the promotion panel. "He walks on water," we used to say.*

KOCHER: But he was extremely effective and he knew how to deal with people. When he had an idea he would push it through and make everybody see the sense and rationality behind it, so that he was way ahead of a lot of people there even though he was at the bottom of the pool. Everybody knew that he was going to have a good career.

*Q: In Yugoslavia I take it you got to know Tito?*

KOCHER: Yes. Nobody ever gets to know Tito. They are always suspicious of all of the foreign people, but when Kenton left my job was to stay in touch with Tito. I had two or three dealings with him. One was at the time of the assignation of Kennedy, when Tito had to show up to sign the book, as they do, in the Embassy and it was his first time he was ever in the Embassy. He came there and he really seemed to be very contrite and very sad and he said, "I felt as if he were my son." I don't think he had to say that, but he knew it would be a nice thing to say. Somehow they had gotten along very well in Washington. The time you really saw him was at his hunts, he had hunt at his big lodge in the middle of the woods. All of the diplomats would be invited there for the whole night and break up at about five o'clock in the morning.

*Q: The diplomats and their wives, or just the diplomats?*

KOCHER: I am trying to remember. I think it was just the diplomats. Maybe Peggy went once and she didn't want to go a second time. I wouldn't blame her because he would sit around and keep on drinking and all of his cohorts would be around him filling his ear with whatever stuff they had and he should know. He would be very proud if somebody had brought down a pig or something in the hunt. It was a beautiful lodge and he had

three or four of these huge places, a palace not far from Belgrade and two or three other things.

*Q: Nothing is too good for the representatives of the working class.*

KOCHER: No communist about him!

*Q: Well, Stalin was the same way. You stayed there two years?*

KOCHER: Three years and then came back. I could foresee the end of my career in the State Department with 25 years there. The Department was starting something new, it was in the administrative section and it was helping to place retiring and resigning Foreign Service Officers.

*Q: I must have seen you about that time because I remember talking to you about that job.*

KOCHER: I loved that job and it was great. I knew it was going to be my next career and I went back to George Washington at night and got a degree in career education. Suddenly, before I had much of a chance to look around, Columbia came to me and said they were just starting a placement office in their School of International Affairs. I thought it sounded interesting so I went and spoke with Andy Cordia there and I was hired. Did you know Willis Armstrong?

*Q: No.*

KOCHER: He is the one who had been there and I had met him first in Malaya when he came to visit. He was a rubber expert at one time with the State Department. He was the one doing the job up there and recommended that I be approached, which pleased me very much at that time. Do you remember the administrative man, Rimestad?

*Q: Yes, I didn't know him but I remember him.*

KOCHER: A vile man. A terrible man. I made a gaffe, that I should never have made knowing my Foreign Service politeness. In the job I was doing for placing the Foreign Service Officers there was also an additional job given to me to stage the first Foreign Service Day. This was back in about 1965. I had to work that out and plan it, which I did.

*Q: That was in the State Department which we now have every May?*

KOCHER: That's right, every May, and I did the first one. To my disaster! I didn't realize that Rimestad felt that much about it, he didn't seem to be interested in it all, so I approached Steeves to be the host to greet everybody at the door.

*Q: Steeves was what position?*

KOCHER: He was the Director General of the Foreign Service. It was the right thing for him to do anyway because more of the Foreign Service people knew him than knew Rimestad, but that didn't suit Rimestad. The day after that he brought me up there and gave me hell. The next thing I knew he had moved everything out of my office and thrown me out of the office. I thought, what happens now? I was about to leave anyway, so I went home and had a good time bike riding for a couple of weeks, until somebody came after me and said, "Well, you know we should put you to work doing something." I said, "What do you have?" So they said, "There's a job in the Army College. They wasn't someone to lecture them about foreign affairs." I said, "No, that really doesn't sound very interesting to me." That was a brutal thing but this is the way the Foreign Service acts and people who are that way think it is all right. They shouldn't. So, I went to Columbia.

*Q: Well that was an interesting career that you enjoyed. At Columbia you were there for how long?*

KOCHER: I stayed there for nine years and put into effect all of the thoughts I had about this kind of service. I started something-called fieldwork. I had a hard time getting this through the guiding council, all academic people. This was a question of giving students course credits for doing a part time job in whatever work they wanted to do. It is still working out beautifully.

*Q: We have a number of interns at the Foreign Service.*

KOCHER: The interchange is wonderful and should be done in more places. I was lucky to be in New York and it wasn't hard to get a lot of the assignments for the kids.

*Q: That's really great. Hopefully somebody will get an assignment to do research in this field. As I've mentioned in some of the things I gave you, one of my jobs here is to speak to faculty and students trying to get them to be interested in research based on academic work as well as on our interviews. Let me go for a few minutes into a couple of the substantive areas. One that I mentioned to you during our break was how you would deal, on the basis of your experience, with the problem of where the Labor Attaché should be located within the Embassy administration.*

KOCHER: That varies in all of the Embassies. A lot of the attachés prefer to be in the political section, I know I preferred it, I assume others maybe did too. I think it can work out well either way and that depends a lot on the personnel involved, the Ambassador and so on. Some of them may have rigid ideas or no ideas at all as to who or what is the Labor Attaché, so maybe the farther away you put them the better. In that case it probably would be somewhere in the economic section, since most of the Ambassadors have less to do with economics than with politics. This is going to vary enormously from one place to another and I think to handle it so that regardless of where you are organizationally assigned there doesn't much make any difference on the kind of reporting that you do. If you are doing a political telegram on labor things then you are going to have to have the political section clear it before it gets sent out, but that's all

right because you are bringing them into your web and they should know more about it. It's the same with economics. I preferred political fortunately because later on most of my work was in the political sections.

*Q: How do you feel about the insistence of some of our people, a few of them, that they have to have direct access to the DCM at least, if not the Ambassador, and therefore it's better to be a free wheeler?*

KOCHER: Nobody likes a free wheeler around the embassy because nobody knows what he is supposed to be doing, and therefore it is somebody suspicious and you'd better watch him. In some few circumstances it might work out great but I don't think there are many Ambassadors that would like that. They want to know where this person belongs because they don't necessarily want to have direct contact with this attaché; they would rather have the head of the political or economic section doing it. The Ambassador just wants to do the important things.

*Q: That is a trial where the Ambassador wants to run everything and therefore he wants to have direct access. The circumstance in which I was with Bowles I always found it necessary, after leaving his office at his direct call to me, to let the appropriate people know what the subject matter was and that way you run into a problem of the Ambassador called me up and asked what we should do about that and I told him this.*

KOCHER: You didn't belong to either section?

*Q: No, I was a counselor on my own. Technically I reported to the DCM, but even there it depended. The personality of Bowles was such that the staff had to take care of seeing to it that you weren't considered a free wheeler.*

KOCHER: That's right and maybe everybody would say they wanted to be a free wheeler, too.

*Q: Then you have no coordination.*

KOCHER: But I have only been in one place, Brussels, where there was a Labor Attaché.

*Q: Then the other thing I wanted to ask you was the background of the person who is to be the, what is now and wasn't in your day, Special Assistant to the Secretary for International Labor Affairs. I mentioned in our conversation the issue as to whether it should be a trade unionist with all the advantages as against a regular Foreign Service Officer with the advantages and disadvantages. What's your feeling about that?*

KOCHER: I think it's going to differ in every single situation. The only time I had any awareness of this was a time when the Marshall Plan assigned a labor person to have contact with labor and in Brussels, Belgium. Well they assigned a very nice guy from the electrician's union, married and his wife was there, but they couldn't stand it. They weren't used to an international life, they never left their apartment and weren't

interested in what the Belgians were doing.

*Q: Were they interested in labor in Belgium?*

KOCHER: They met, I introduced them to everybody I knew. They didn't speak the language and the Belgian person didn't speak English so there was no contact there and I would be helpful if I could. I think they got closer to people like Oldenbrook who were not as suspicious of them as they would be of me. They got so homesick that after six months they said they wanted to go home, so they got sent home. They were just beginning at six months. That may be an extreme case but that is one I am most acquainted with and I would think a lot of these people have never been out of their country before and don't know anything about languages and are not interested in international things. They should not be assigned.

*Q: I should say that is about the worst type in terms of getting along. Others, that were appointed, became so good that they were made mission chiefs.*

KOCHER: You see where we have had both sides.

*Q: It argues for the careful selection and training of these people.*

KOCHER: I don't think that these electrical people had been trained at all.

*Q: Mike Harris, who is the labor aide in Sweden or Norway, one of the Scandinavian countries, became their Chief of Mission. We've had a number of cases like that.*

KOCHER: The opportunities are enormous.

*Q: In Paris we had some terrible appointees. A whole lot of people who just turned out to be unhappy, as you say.*

KOCHER: Nostalgia. They're not used to foreign living, they're not used to the comforts they had at home and the language is terrible. They can't express themselves. His wife, particularly, was desperately unhappy and he was unhappy and they decided they wanted to leave.

*Q: Were they replaced?*

KOCHER: Eventually, I think, but I have no memory of the replacement. Maybe it was towards the time I was going back home.

*Q: I'll come back to that in a moment, but I will tell you the other extreme is a man like Leonard Woodcock. Have you ever heard of him?*

KOCHER: I've heard of him but I don't know him.

*Q: An uneducated in the academic sense but one of the best educated people who came out of the depression. He went all the way up to the top to succeed Walter Ruther as head of the UAW. He's appointed Ambassador to China by Carter and proceeds to learn Chinese and learn the philosophy of speaking Chinese.*

KOCHER: Did he have enough time before he went out there to do all of that?

*Q: He had been interested, that's why he was chosen in the Orient to begin with.*

KOCHER: How did he do out there?

*Q: He did, under Carter, very well. Everybody was happy with him.*

KOCHER: You see there are two extremes.

*Q: Now let me ask you, and don't forget this is an unclassified tape, but by now so much time has gone that I can say one of the great embarrassments in this field is when Oliver Peterson tells me a new guy has been appointed to the Embassy, in Belgium, as a Special Assistant and is going all over the country giving out money carrying out labor programs outside of the Marshall Plan, outside of normal embassy things. He was an employee of the CIA. That created great difficulty.*

KOCHER: The CIA must have infiltrated it then, I hadn't thought of that. I am not aware of any of it but I can see where it would be wonderful for them.

*Q: We're getting in to a study of that. A very high official of the CIA, whom I knew very well in India and who became head of counterintelligence in the CIA, is going to have a session with us on the question of the conflict in objectives and administration of programs between the labor officer in the embassy and the CIA. That's a very important research subject which we should get into because we've found cases in which the CIA was doing for it's purposes things many of us felt were not in the best interest of the United States. How do you deal with that problem? They have an agenda of their own and you're not supposed to know what's in that agenda. You never had any experience like that?*

KOCHER: No, but I certainly think you would want to keep the CIA out of it. The relations I've had with the CIA in every one of these countries have never been productive, helpful, interesting or worthwhile. I am really very much down on the CIA.

*Q: What would you do, if in your capacity as the DCM, Ambassador or Acting Chief of Mission, to find out what they were doing and whether it was harming your objective?*

KOCHER: It's awfully hard to find out because they don't tell you everything. We all of us have had feelings that they were never really being quite honest. There were things that they could tell you, that they were probably geared to tell you but you'd dare not prod further. There are things going on behind the Ambassador's back, unless relations

are that perfect personally, there is always the suspicion, that they are not getting the whole story. I don't know whether the CIA is changing these days, they are supposed to.

*Q: It is changing but the problem is, is the Ambassador on behalf, in my case the Labor Attaché or another section on his own behalf, given all of the information that will enable him to make a decision or should they pass on to Washington any apparent conflict? I'm sure you are not saying there is no intelligence function, the question is what are they doing that you don't know anything about.*

KOCHER: I think that the CIA does in the country must be known by the Ambassador. This is the man, the American, who is responsible for every single American in the Embassy. If they don't know it all there is not anything they can do, especially if there are things kept from the Ambassador. The CIA people go wild sometimes and they keep everything to themselves so precious even the Ambassador can't know. I think they've been a menace most of the time. I'm very much against them.

*Q: For instance, this friend of mine in the CIA says that when Ambassador Keating, who was coming out to take Ambassador Bowles' place in India, was going out he had to brief the Ambassador, because at the time he was in Washington in the intelligence field, about India because he had been there so many years. He says he was taking Keating around and telling him everything he could tell him, which was everything, and Keating says, "My God! I was on the Senate Intelligence committee and I didn't know you were doing these things and I'm glad I didn't know." That's the point. He was glad he didn't know.*

KOCHER: You see that's the special assignment that he had. Most Ambassadors aren't involved with the Senate or Congress, are they?

*Q: No, but what he was saying was that when he was a senator he was on the intelligence committee and he didn't know what they were doing, and he should have known, and he was glad he didn't know.*

KOCHER: Then he's not doing his job. I think they've got to know and they've got to be able to handle it one way or another, I mean slap the Ambassador down, whoever it is.

*Q: Well, the other thing I wanted to raise with you, which verges on the discussion of intelligence, is the appropriate function of the American labor movement in connection with the Labor Attaché work and in connection with their careers, selection, administration, appointment and promotion possibilities for the Labor Attachés that were carried on by both the AFL and the CIO and AFL-CIO. In this subject you have to include Irving Brown, Jay Lovestone and Victor Ruther. Was Mike Ross there for awhile while you were in Brussels?*

KOCHER: No.

*Q: What did they do that you had any reaction to, what is the appropriate function, etc.?*

KOCHER: I can think of somebody like Sam Berger, remember him?

*Q: Sure do.*

KOCHER: Apparently he was the prime attaché, and maybe he was one of the first but he was one of the brightest. He did a remarkable job so that when he was in England he was very close to the Ambassador because he had something to offer the Ambassador, and could be helpful to the Ambassador. This reputation spread to every post that he went to until finally he became Ambassador.

*Q: He sure did in a number of places.*

KOCHER: New Zealand or Australia somewhere?

*Q: Greece, he was Ambassador to Greece for awhile, I think. He was also in Vietnam for awhile in a very important way.*

KOCHER: He was on his way up, in fact he was the DCM in Tokyo at the time Nixon came and heard to his horror that we were having somebody who was talking about, I guess what Sam was talking about, was the danger of communism or fascism in Tokyo. Nixon thought it was quite the wrong approach to have and so he wired back to the State Department saying remove this guy so he was sent to New Zealand, I think.

*Q: Someplace down under.*

KOCHER: Or Australia.

*Q: Did you know him at all?*

KOCHER: Not well but I knew who he was, in fact it was through Sam that I decided that I should try and get into the War College because Sam had not been there and he was always debating whether he should go there or not. He could have gone there if he had wanted to. He said to do that would be very good for me and my future and I did but I didn't think it was that good for me. I didn't fit in there very well. A miserable character this Nixon to do this sort of thing. If you're not honest you'd better be dishonest, I guess, and you have to tell me all of the nice things about Japan and how they are going to be great friends of the U.S. This misleads people and I think you should be punished for it, when you're telling that sort of nonsense, and if the person can't stand the truth then something's wrong with them and better do something about it.

*Q: What experiences did you have with the AFL-CIO representatives and I hasten to add that Rutherford was accused of accepting CIA money and did admit it later on. Victor was the international representative of the UAW on the CIO, who was a very good friend of mine.*

KOCHER: I don't know anything about that.

*Q: You were not in at the time?*

KOCHER: I met Victor once when he was in Brussels. I didn't see him beyond that and know nothing about him, really. I never met Walter.

*Q: Lovestone?*

KOCHER: Lovestone I must have met once and I don't remember why or when? Was he in Brussels?

*Q: He must have been. He used to come to the ICFTU meetings frequently.*

KOCHER: Did he visit Irving Brown?

*Q: Yes. Brown, what about Brown?*

KOCHER: Irving Brown was a dedicated guy.

*Q: Lovestone was the head of the Communist Party of the United States until he became their arch enemy and Brown was one of his people in the UAW, the war production board and in the Foreign Service. He was an operator but not the theoretician that Jay was. Very effective in many places but criticized very severely by some people.*

KOCHER: No, I knew none of them at all. I knew they had their hands in it some how but I didn't know what. I'm sure that Irving was keeping them all advised.

*Q: Your successor again, Oliver, had some problems with them also.*

KOCHER: I think I tried to be helpful to Irving and in a way it was demeaning to him. For example, offering him an Embassy car to go somewhere, which was not quite right but still I thought it was a friendly gesture that was not going to hurt anybody. Instead of Irving being, I don't want to say grateful, but aware that I was doing something because he was he and we were on a friendly basis I think he held it against me, shall I say, or treated me as an inferior.

*Q: Really.*

KOCHER: I think so.

*Q: The point is it would not do him well for the purposes he was there to be seen driving around in government equipment. Whatever support he received from the government was secret.*

KOCHER: It would be just to drive to the airport or to the station, when I guess Lilly, or

whatever her name was, couldn't get in there.

*Q: He was a strange person.*

KOCHER: I'm surprised that he died that early. He seemed so healthy.

*Q: Well, no, he had that stroke and lasted for years thereafter.*

KOCHER: Was he in bed after he had the stroke.

*Q: Yes, he was in the hospital for months, but he came out of it and got back to work but his memory was going and he was never effective after that.*

KOCHER: This was while he was in New York, wasn't it?

*Q: He was in Paris and he had two jobs, Director of the International Department in Washington and, you couldn't get Paris out of Irving or Irving out of Paris, he was also the European representative and went back and forth. He worked very, very hard and now that the files are opened you see the amount of correspondence and the relationship he had, when Jay Lovestone was the head of it, just a remarkable amount of work.*

KOCHER: Does he say anything about Oldenbrook and the ICFTU?

*Q: The files are full of it. He was very critical of Oldenbrook but I haven't gotten into them really.*

KOCHER: I imagine he would find Oldenbrook really off because he wasn't active enough. Wasn't imaginative enough.

*Q: It wasn't the activity, it was the fact, and this is my analysis and my evaluation, that they never trusted people who weren't as anti-Communist as they were because only they knew the danger of Communism. Only they knew.*

*I'd like to know if there is anything else you'd like to say on this because this for you.*

KOCHER: No, if anything later on comes along, but I think we've covered about everything.

*End of interview*