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

STEPHEN M. BLOCK

Interviewed by: Morris Weisz
Initial interview date: November 26, 1993

[Note: This interview was not edited by Mr. Block.]

Q: This is Morris Weisz and the Date is November 26, 1993. I'll be interviewing an old friend Steve Block, who was the Labor Attaché in a number of posts including New Delhi. Steve, if you will, describe your family background briefly: the type of family you come from, your early education, and then let's go into your entry into the Foreign Service.

Block: I come from a trade union family. My father, Harry Block, who is no longer living, his last position was Secretary of the AFL-CIO for the State of Pennsylvania. He, among other things has been president of District Council Number One of the IUE. Interesting and relevant to this interview is the fight that took place within the UE in the Philadelphia area, in which my father with other people led the fight against the Communist takeover of the UE, which as you know, they successfully did…

Q: Excuse me, Steve, I know, but I don't know if the people who are going to be doing this research will know, the IUE was the breakaway organization from the UE, the Union of Electrical Workers, which we all felt was communist dominated in the early days of the CIO. The breakaway group was led by Terry, was it?

BLOCK: Right, Terry and my father basically were responsible for organizing the IUE , which ultimately became the more powerful of the two unions, although the UE continued and exists to this day.

Q: Is it still independent of the AFL-CIO?

BLOCK: I haven't followed it, Morrie, but I think that they've come together. I'm not absolutely sure of that at this point.

Q: Do you remember, or were you too young during the war. I vaguely recall meeting your father as a UE official.

BLOCK: That's right, he had the same position with the UE as head of that district, which was headquartered in Philadelphia.

Q: FILCO Local, was it?

BLOCK: Well, it was the regional organization, as I recall, for the Mid-Atlantic states. You mention FILCO, that was really the beginning of my father's trade union career. He and Jim Cary organized the workers at FILCO, where my father was working as an assembly line employee. He and Cary organized FILCO and that was really their first major success, as best as I can recall.

Q: In the late thirties?

BLOCK: It must have been in the late thirties. I was born in 1936 and at that point my father was already well into his trade union career.

Q: In '42 I came to the War Production Board and I was in charge of the labor aspects of the radio and radar division, and that's where I met all these trade unionists from Philadelphia, mainly. And especially from FILCO. That was my first recollection of meeting Cary and your father, and I don't think that it's amiss and certainly relevant to the matters we've been discovering in these interviews generally. But I looked upon your father – possibly because I was close to the group myself -- as actually a socialist at that time. Was he a member of the Socialist Party?

BLOCK: I don't think that he was actually a member of the Socialist Party, but certainly his political inclinations were in that direction. He was very active in Democratic Party politics…

Q: Later on, yes…

BLOCK: …So I don't know that he ever became involved in the activities of the Socialist Party. But I'm not sure of that, Morrie.

Q: Doesn't matter. But he certainly had an in-built finger-tip feeling about the Communists. He, because of his associations politically.

BLOCK: Yes, and he saw what was going on within the UE and how they contrived to take the organization over, using all of the classical tactics, which you know more about than I do, Morrie, but I'm sure that made clear to them what was appropriate. I guess it was also during the War time, too. He observed the shenanigans of the Communists during the war and understood them for what they were. He was never, I should say, rabidly anti-Communist in any crazy sense. Certainly he was very strongly opposed in a very dedicated way to McCarthyism and all that it stood for. He had, I think, a measured attitude toward the Communists and who they were and what they were about. But he was not by nature a fanatic in any sense of the word.

Q: Well, you illustrated the type of people and the type of communists in the CIO. Who believed they were conducting the hearings against the Communists on a very different

basis than the House Un-American Affairs Committee. This was in 1950-51 period, when the Communists were (inaudible), the CIO wakened up the hearings, which were models for how to fight Communists on the basis of their trade union activities, rather than on a McCarthyite investigation.

BLOCK: I do remember, for example, as a young teenager growing up, my father's defense of people who had been victimized by Hugh Ach and by McCarthy. People who had been victimized locally, schoolteachers who had been thrown out of their jobs… he was certainly very sensitive to that and had no time for it. So in terms of background, I was from the earliest aware of being in a trade union family. It was a vocation with my father. We were talking earlier today with my daughter and my wife about this and it was almost the kind of presence in one's house of having a religion. As if one grew up Catholic or Jewish. The trade union movement had that kind of importance to our family. I remember to this day the war stories my father told me about various strikes. Indeed I remember a processor coming to our house to serve my father with warrants of arrest in connection with labor disputes. So these are very real and vivid images and certainly played a major role in my own choice of career and what I did.

Educationally, I should note that my father never graduated from high school. He came form a very large family. I think there were 13 kids, and he supported the family when his father died. It was a household composed of the children of two marriages. And so when I graduated from high school and then went on to college, this was a major step for the family. I went to the University of Pennsylvania after completing high school in Philadelphia. That was certainly a significant achievement for the family. And then I went on after military service -- I spent two years in the Navy…

Q: Before we leave college, let me ask if your background affected in any way your student activities at the university.

BLOCK: I was a student politico at the University of Pennsylvania. I was there from '53 to '57, which was the McCarthy era. The University of Pennsylvania at that time was very much dominated by the Wharton School, which was very conservative. It was kind of a blue-blood institution then; I don't know about today. I was a commuter from Philadelphia, not a fraternity person, not a part of the elite mainstream of that institution. I became involved in the Students for Democratic Action, which was the student arm of the Americans for Democratic Action. I became President of the chapter of SDA – not to be confused with later versions of SDA – but this was a student affiliate of ADA. Joe Rauh and people like that were folks that I had contact with. And I suspect that I fell into this quite naturally as a result of the family that I grew up in. Those were very exciting times and difficult times, and I was certainly in opposition to a lot that was happening at the University of Pennsylvania. For example, very briefly, and to this day it seems an anachronism, the University itself maintained separate off-campus housing lists for black and white students, and…

Q: You mean they were generous enough to permit blacks in? (laughs)

BLOCK: If they wanted to live off campus, the University's policy was that they were not going to rub the landlords' fur the wrong way by subjecting them to black students. So blacks, if they wanted to live off campus, had to have their own housing list. So we entered a campaign to force an end to that. We were successful. It was a contentious time, though. There were angry words and threats leveled; it was a good time, though.

But at the same time I was very mainstream. I was a member of the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps, and so no one could impugn the loyalty and what we did in that regard was beyond reproach. So my major student activity was with SDA and that lasted essentially for all the four years we were there.

Q: Was the communist student organization strong there? Did this involve the left-wing split between the Socialists and the Communists?

BLOCK: I became aware of the effort of various communists to infiltrate the SDA without identifying themselves, which was a tactic that they'd used effectively. I remember the national convention of SDA, in which the Communists in fact tried to move and take over. And Joe Rauh and a group of people, including myself, organized to prevent this from happening. This was a convention at Sarah Lawrence, it must have been in 1955 or 1956.

Q: Does the Name Leon Shell mean anything to you? He was one of the ADA adult leaders.

BLOCK: Yes, exactly. My father was also involved in ADA up to the point where the labor movement split from ADA. A number of labor people became dissatisfied with ADA, I can't remember the issues…

Q: Well, they supported Eisenhower for President in 1948 over Truman. That's when I quit.

BLOCK: Did they really?

Q: Joe Rauh, dear soul, in 1948, he came to the conclusion that Truman couldn't win, and we had to run a candidate we knew nothing about. As a member of ADA we knew nothing about Eisenhower's politics but we thought it was okay to support him.

BLOCK: I remember the Democrats sought to nominate Eisenhower…

Q: But that was before your day.

BLOCK: At the time ADA was very active in Philadelphia politics. This was the time of Joe Clark and Richardson Dilworth, who basically succeeded in getting rid of a very powerful Republican machine in Philadelphia, headed by then-mayor Samuels. As a

student at University of Pennsylvania I was very active in that campaign. At that point, though, there was still a good rapport between ADA and the trade union movement.

Q: You got out of college in what year?

BLOCK: 1957.

Q: And went into the military before studying law.

BLOCK: For two years.

Q: Now before we get out of college again, were you the only child in the family, and were you the only one who went to college?

BLOCK: No, I have a younger sister – there are four years between us -- who went on to college, again the first in the family to do this. She went to Temple University and studied education, became a schoolteacher later.

Q: Only two children?

BLOCK: Just the two of us, yes. Served as your model American family at that point.

Q: You were more fortunate than those of us who were a little older and were forced to go to school under more difficult circumstances.

You're going into the Navy…

BLOCK: As a junior officer, I was assigned for about one year to a ship that was part of the Sixth Fleet. This was about the time of the Lebanon crisis so I was packed off into the Mediterranean. On completion of college I married a girlfriend whom I had been dating for about two years in college, a Bryn Mawr graduate. And so we packed off to Norfolk, Virginia, where the ship I was assigned to was stationed. I was on that ship for one year.

For the second year I was assigned to Little Creek amphibious base, which was just outside Norfolk. I was initially the security officer for the base. They sent me to the Navy School of Justice at Newport, Rhode Island, and put me through that course. I was assigned at the completion of that course to the base legal office. At that point I had already indicated that I had some interest and proclivity for the study of law. I had a very good experience prosecuting special courts martial, defending wayward sailors, and providing general legal counsel under the supervision of the lawyer at the base to sailors who got in trouble, as they were so prone to do.

That was two years in the Navy. Then I went to Yale Law School where I concentrated in labor law with a person who became dean of the Law School later, Harry Wellington. There was also a person named Harry Summers, the other professor at Yale who

specialized in labor law.

Wellington had clerked with Felix Frankfurter and had a very special view of jurisprudence and what the role of courts should be. For him, labor law was a superb model of what the role of courts and an administrative body, the NLRB, should be in the area of labor. That was very fun. I also spent two summers working as a law clerk for a small firm in Stamford, Connecticut, which did labor law, Baker and Diamond. These were friends of my father. Diamond had worked for the IUE as staff counsel, and he and Baker had set up this practice in Stamford, servicing unions in the New England area. A lot of arbitration, as a law clerk I did a lot of research.

Q: NLRB cases?

BLOCK: I think they did representation work as well, the whole gamut of labor law cases. I took the bar exam in Connecticut with the expectation that I would work for them. During law school my wife and I went off to Japan for half a year. This was a program through Syracuse University's Maxwell School. That put the Foreign Service bug in our ears and led us not to Stamford practicing law but to a foreign service career. But when I entered the Foreign Service, I very much was oriented from the very outset to doing labor work.

Q: You took the exam or was (inaudible)?

BLOCK: We took the exam when we were in Japan, actually, and then came back and finished law school.

Q: Did you meet our labor attaché there at the time, Lou Silverberg?

BLOCK: Actually not. This was in 1960, and there was still someone associated with AID who was involved in Labor affairs and I did a labor project. I did a little study while I was in Japan of the Japanese labor movement. I drew on contacts that this person provided. But I think his connection was with AID, rather than with State. I really don't remember his name, indeed throughout the course of this interview you'll discover that my memory for names…

Q: That's why we're rushing ahead to get this interview before it gets any worse!

BLOCK: So I entered the Foreign Service in 1963, finishing law school. Wanted immediately to begin doing labor work but was not permitted to do so. I was initially assigned to the operations center as a junior watch officer, and that was a good experience.

Q: That was 1963?

BLOCK: Yes, we just observed the anniversary of Kennedy's assassination and I was in

the operations center at that time. I remember the pandemonium that broke loose.

Q: Our son David worked two summers at State, one of them was in the Operations Center.

BLOCK: Oh really? I have a good Kennedy story. One of the things we did was to prepare a summary of the night's events, sort of a news summary or a cable summary. And I remember an error made in summarizing a cable. It was a significant error, and I remember the White House calling and we were chewed up one side and down the other, and that memory still persists.

Q: Was that your mistake?

BLOCK: I don't think it was, but I was certainly party to it. I certainly felt very chagrined, as everyone did. I was just the junior guy there, but it was an embarrassment, and a good lesson for everyone.. having the White House ring your bell…

Q: Normally the first assignment in the foreign service is something like that – all the visa work in the post, or something.

BLOCK: Actually I wanted very much to go overseas. Most of the people in the entering class went overseas, so my wife and I were very disappointed.

Q: You refer to "we took the exam." Did Minnie take the exam too?

BLOCK: No, I guess I misspoke.

Then I was on a two year tour in Washington and the second year I was assigned as a staff aide to Walt Rostow at the Policy Planning Staff. And that turned out to be a very good assignment because I worked with a chap by the name of Linebaugh. Do you know him?

Q: Yes.

BLOCK: He suffered a terrible accident coming back from Pakistan.

Q: Oh yes. He was so affected, physically, by that terrible accident that he never recovered.

BLOCK: He was a very bright guy, I'd say even brilliant, and I didn't know him beforehand but his mental faculties didn't seem to have been affected.

Q: He also was one of the people in the regular foreign service who appreciated labor work, as I recall.

BLOCK: Rostow asked me to assist Dave to write a paper on what U.S. labor policy

should be. This was at the request of the SIO Guy at the time, Phil Delaney. And so I remember the meeting when Delaney made his pitch to the Policy and Planning Council. It was then a council, it later became a staff – it was given less status, less importance. But under Rostow it was a very important organization.

Q: Well, because of other things, Steve, and unless you have a limited time, I'd like you to go into the question of Phil Delaney. Did you get to know Phil?

BLOCK: Not really.

Q: He was a basic trade unionist, as you must have known if you'd known him for five minutes. And in the course of these interviews the question often comes up, 'what sort of person should be in SIO?' What are the advantages of having a person from the trade union movement and what are the disadvantages, as against having a regular foreign service officer, whose tie to the labor movement was less direct and therefore subject to the advantages of his detachment, in terms of what can and can't be done, and the disadvantage of not having this line to the labor movement? Delaney was able to go over there and get things accomplished in a way in which other people were not. Which again, served as a disadvantage in the Department because people might suspect him of being a labor agent rather than State Department. Do you have any views on that?

BLOCK: Delaney asked Rostow, and it was a formal meeting with the whole council, to do this study. Delaney was seeking a certain legitimization of the labor function, and to have a blue-covered policy book declaring U.S. policy toward labor. Apparently at that point there had not been such a policy, or not in that format, at any rate.

Q: Was a blue book ever developed?

BLOCK: It was indeed produced by Dave Linebaugh. He did the bulk of the work, I was just a kid at the time. But I made some contribution. And it was published. As I recall there was a meeting of the council and Delaney and his associates were present. It was adopted. I'm not sure what the formal import of that was, but it was approved and it was published as the State Department's labor policy.

Q: Did the Labor Department have any part of it?

BLOCK: That I don't remember. (inaudible) At that point I first became acquainted with people like Harold Davies and others over at the Labor Department.

Q: George Weaver?

BLOCK: He was not involved in it. If you mention a few of the other prominent names I will remember individuals who were consulted by us. It came out as a State Department publication, rather than a government-wide policy. It was not an interagency policy.

Q: But this is one of the many advantages of having a person like Delaney--who happened to be a dear friend of mine, but I saw him and I felt in a more objective way--this is one of the advantages of having a guy from the trade union movement. Because beginning with that policy, and it evidently took two years, Delaney started pressing for the appointment of a senior person as a labor counselor, and that's how I got into the State Department in '65. It was at his insistence, with the almost accidental support of Chester Bowles, who wanted to have someone at a senior post, that they decided to search for someone who was senior enough that it wasn't a raise or a promotion, but who could come over to be the first labor counselor.

BLOCK: I think in retrospect, having someone from the labor movement, who had strong political endorsement from the labor movement, was important. The analogy I would draw is to the political ambassadors who have access to the White House. That gives them a standing within the State Department bureaucracy that I think is important. I think the labor movement is entitled to that kind of influence. Certainly Delaney was not your typical State Department Ivy League-educated pin-striper…

Q: Although he always pointed out that he was Harvard educated… he went to the Harvard Trade Union School…

BLOCK: That's funny. In terms of places where it counted, having someone with political credentials of his own would outweigh, in my opinion, any difficulties he might have had communicating, for example with the career foreign service. I was impressed favorably with him then and never had occasion to reevaluate that opinion.

The labor function, I think, is a very special kind of thing, which I'm sure you're developing throughout all these interviews. You've got to have individuals in it at all levels who believe in the labor movement, in free trade unionism. I think that's the premise of being a labor officer. At the same time, that kind of commitment cannot act as a set of lenses so everything else is seen in terms of the labor spectrum, because that will very much restrict the ability of the individual to be successful within the bureaucracy. So the person has to have a point of view, Morrie, but it's a point of view that does not impair the individual's credibility and his perceived objectiveness in performing the labor and the diplomatic function. So it's kind of a fine line to be followed.

You got me through my assignment with Dave Linebaugh and the enactment of this policy. That, as I recall, was the first two years of my Foreign Service career. So I began, though it was somewhat fortuitous, working on a labor project. And to Rostow's credit, he was sensitive to the people who worked for him, and he knew that I had a labor background. And when the time came to ask Linebaugh to do this, he asked me to work with him, and that worked out very well.

Q: Well Rostow, Walt Whitman Rostow, he had a father who named all of his children…

BLOCK: Exactly. When I was at law school it was Eugene Debs Rostow. Who then as

you know returned to the State Department. He was Dean of the Law School when I was at Yale, and I had no contact with him as a professor. I do recall talking to him about this idea of taking off a half year and going to Japan. So I had contact with two of the brothers.

We went off after Washington to West Africa, and I was the junior man in a three-person post. In terms of substantive officers there was the ambassador, Clinton Knox, his DCM, and myself as the generalist. This was in Dahomey, which then became Benin. Our third child, in fact, was born in then-Dahomey. And there were trade union activities. There was nothing like a country-wide union. In terms of union activity it was very much limited to the coastal area. But there was agitation and it was basically much done in a political mode. And it was on that occasion that I first met Irving Brown, who had been coming through. Irving had been working with some of the trade union organizations through the AFL-CIO's foundation, which was working in Africa.

Q: The AALC.

BLOCK: Right. I was very much impressed by Irving. I liked him very much, a very attractive personality, a strong person. I was impressed by how effective he was at dealing with the Dahomeyan trade union people. He knew them well, and they knew him.

Q: Did your family background assist you any in getting to know Irving?

BLOCK: I'm sure it did. My father, I don't know how well he knew him, but he certainly knew Irving.

Q: Well he knew him at least from Europe. When your father would visit us in the early '50s he was hosted by Irving and Irving looked upon him as one of the reliable people who came over from the CIO side. There were some people who came over from the CIO side who Irving didn't trust because their political neutrality or from his point of view, sort of fellow traveler. There were people like that in the CIO who were less critical of the Communists. And he looked upon your father as one of the better ones from the CIO, a good guy.

BLOCK: I never had that conversation with my father about Irving. One regrets in retrospect the conversations one hasn't had with a deceased parent. At any rate, I had an easy relationship with Irving. Whether it was in part was attributable to my father, I just don't know. But they were two good years there. Did a lot of reporting to the degree that there were labor activities. The government was always in a state of flux – there were constant coups, constant military takeovers, but I was able to follow the labor scene. I did also a lot of general political reporting. I did most of the Embassy's reporting on all the political stuff.

Q: The DCM was an economic type?

BLOCK: Well, he was pleased to let someone else do it. I had a good relationship with Clint Knox, whom I liked very much.

Q: Was he a political appointee?

BLOCK: No. I'm not sure how he came into the Foreign Service. He must have come at a more senior level. I'm trying to recall if this was his first ambassadorial post or not. He was subsequently sent to Haiti.

Q: Was he black? I remember him.

BLOCK: He was a black Ph.D. from Harvard – absolutely first rate. Very sensitive to the fact that people were somewhat patronizing toward him as one of the very first black ambassadors. He was very insistent, quite rightly, that he could hold his own without reference to his skin color. And that his Harvard Ph.D. was well and fully earned. And he would not tolerate people who would presume to patronize him. I liked him a great deal. He was assigned later as ambassador to Haiti, kidnapped, held at gunpoint by his Haitian kidnappers, and shortly thereafter left the Foreign Service. I think he began his career in the State Department in INR, if I'm not mistaken, perhaps as an academic. But I'm not dead sure.

Q: After Dahomey?

BLOCK: After Dahomey we went off to Tunisia. And again this was an area where Irving Brown had spent a lot of time working.

Q: Good friend of Bourguiba's.

BLOCK: Good friend of Bourguiba's, good friend of Hadi Ashoor, who was the head of the Desdoors labor organization until he split with Bourguiba, and he was then forced into exile by Bourguiba. I was there, a three-year period, as labor attaché, or labor officer, more precisely. So I did the labor thing, as well as general political work. I maintained contact with the Ashoor family through Ashoor's son, who was not in the labor movement and still quite young. Had studied in the States, as I recall, but was able to keep me posted about what his dad was doing and what was going on this labor movement, which Bourguiba had really suppressed. And this put Irving Brown, I believe, in a very difficult position. On the one hand he had been very supportive of the labor movement, very supportive of Bourguiba, but at the same time, he had been close to Ashoor.

Q: Well, Bourguiba was a friend of the labor movement in the early days. Then after '57, I think it was, as a political leader he began to go against independent unionism.

BLOCK: That's right. Of course he saw it as a challenge to his political supremacy. You know they developed this great personality cult around Bourguiba. It ended in a disaster.

He tried to collectivize the entire country, including the small peasants, the people who owned just a handful of olive trees, and he tried to collectivize the retail sector. The small corner *jerbin*, as they were called.

Q: The souks, the markets…

BLOCK: He tried to get hold of everything in the economy and it ended in disaster. The thing that I remember most was the ambassador, Francis Russell, was of the view that Habib Bourguiba could do no wrong and that he was our great friend. And Francis Russell did a very effective job of censoring and suppressing the political reporting from the embassy. I'm sure it's an old story, it's been repeated many places. But one that I experienced. It turned out that people like myself in the embassy were right and Francis Russell was wrong. Because Bourguiba ultimately declared that this policy was wrong and tried the person he had selected to administer and run this policy for treason. I remember attending this man's trial.

Q: Was he successfully prosecuted?

BLOCK: Of course he was successfully prosecuted. It was a show trial. And then bin Salah, who was just the handmaiden of Bourguiba in this economic collectivization policy, was sent to jail. Later, I'm told he escaped from prison, I presume with the government's connivance. But it was Bourguiba first real come-uppance.

Q: Did he retain his friendship with Irving, Bin Salah? I thought he did.

BLOCK: No, I think at that time the split between Bin Salah and Bourguiba was definitive. The man was sent to prison.

TAPE 1, SIDE B

Q: What sort of work did you do with the trade unions and on labor issues while in Tunis?

BLOCK: Well, when I was there, which was '67 to '70, the trade union movement was really kept under wraps. There was very little that was going on on the surface. I guess Bourguiba, the Neo Destour party, set up a trade union organization. My recollection at this point, Morrie, was that it was minimally relevant. Certainly in terms of the critical issues of the day, which was mainly this collectivization of the economy, the trade union movement was not heard from at all. My main focus was keeping track on what was going on below the surface and I did this largely by talking on occasion to Ashoor's son, who was in contact with his father and with other people in the labor movement. So there was not a lot of labor activity at the time.

Q: Was the AALC openly active there?

BLOCK: No, it really wasn't. Irving made a number of visits to Tunis when I was there, but there was no activity of the foundation, no. It wasn't possible.

Q: What about your relations on the business side, were American business companies operating in Tunis? Were there many of them? Did they have labor problems? Did you get involved in those?

BLOCK: At that time there really was very little American corporate presence in Tunisia. The major foreign economic activity was French. The French, both there and in my former posting in Dahomey, really were the greatest power. We were certainly very close to Bourguiba, having been his principal ally in the fight for independence from the French, but it was a different kind of thing. The whole history of our involvement was different. I'm just trying to think of the Tunisian fight for independence -- it was nothing like the Algerian experience. Afterward, the Tunisians continued to welcome French presence, and the French were certainly the dominant foreign power in Tunisia, notwithstanding our support of Bourguiba.

On the labor side it was not a lot going on, because the government kept it pretty well under wraps. And Bourguiba had a very effective secret police and they kept things under control

Q: Was it at that time that people began worrying about his sanity, frankly?

BLOCK: There wasn't so much a question of his sanity, it was more a question of his health. We were continually predicting his departure.

Q: Did he have high blood pressure?

BLOCK: I don't remember what it was. I remember my last air-gram talking about Tunisia after Bourguiba. It was this great, brilliant piece and I had it premised on the fact that Bourguiba was not long for the world and he lived for quite a few years thereafter.

Q: But toward the end he was quite ineffective.

BLOCK: Well, this was 1970, at that point he made his influence felt.

Q: I meant just the last couple years of his life…

BLOCK: Oh, of course. In later years he was thoroughly displaced, locked up in his home in Monastir, effectively a prisoner in his own home. That's many years later.

Q: All in all it was an enjoyable experience you had in Tunis.

BLOCK: Absolutely, it's a splendid place. We had a number of labor attachés' conferences there. It must have been at least in part due to the excess dinars that we

generated.

Q: You learned about India or the use of foreign currency. The thing I recall about Tunis, it was so charming. We came in late at night, Oliver Peterson and I, and they took us by cab to our hotel. And the next morning we opened our windows and found Carthage! Whoever I'd heard, read about Carthage, I don't know, it was only a dozen miles or so…

BLOCK: Our home was a home that actually Terry Todman had picked out. He had been the predecessor of my predecessor there, and this home was about a mile from Carthage. Right there on the water, it was a magnificent home, just truly wonderful.

Q: Well, from there… all during this period, Minnie, your wife, was she active teaching? She taught in India later.

BLOCK: Her background was in chemistry, graduated Bryn Mawr with a degree in chemistry. It may have been in Tunisia that she began to teach, and then… maybe not, maybe it was not until our next posting, which was in Uruguay.

Q: The reason I raise it is the spousal project will want to raise it, but I'll talk to her about that.

BLOCK: We at that point had three young children. And I think she was basically full-time engaged in taking care of our daughters.

The next posting was to Uruguay after Spanish training back home.

Q: Did you need French language training?

BLOCK: Yes, I also had French language training before going to Dahomey. And I commend the FSI for its language training, it really works very well.

Q: It really wreaks havoc to your home life because you have to spend so much time…

BLOCK: Actually, Minnie took French and Spanish with me. So that was great fun, and we delighted in being able to work in a different language. Minnie, who has since given up teaching and has become a physician's assistant, works at the HMO that George Washington University operates in downtown Washington and does a lot of work with the Hispanic patients. So her Spanish now is much better than mine. So you don't have to worry about the benefit of FSI Spanish language training.

Q: What about training in labor subjects. Did you ever get any labor training?

BLOCK: No. Not that it wouldn't have been useful, because the knowledge I had was basically derived from my family background, personal reading, and my appreciation of the American legal system as applied to the labor movement. I was already a member of

the bar and had some experience working in a labor law firm and saw things, to some degree, as an attorney looking at what was going on abroad.

Q: What sort of assignment was it in Uruguay?

BLOCK: Uruguay was a very different assignment. The assignment began in '71 and we stayed there until '73, so about two-and-a-half years. And when we arrived there the Tupamaro urban rebellion, the best word to characterize it, was in full bloom. We were met at the airport with armed guards and basically throughout our tour there, everywhere I went, I had an armed guard. Americans were prime targets for kidnapping. You may recall that the Tupamaros kidnapped the British Ambassador and held him for a God awful time in this underground cellar, which we later visited, after it was discovered. But these were very, very smart and technologically savvy urban guerillas.

Q: Political orientation?

BLOCK: They were, I think, a hodge-podge. Basically the closest thing that one could look at today to compare were the Shining Path people in Peru. Certain Marxist, anarchist, very much opposed to the existing regime. The thing about Uruguay, why it was interesting, in many ways it was a sort of welfare state gone wild. These people had acquired significant wealth as a result of World War II and Korea. They sold beef and wool, made a great amount of money and then spent it all. They just basically spent beyond their resources. And that produced a kind of tension in the system, in the society that, in a very simplistic way, led to the Tupamaro rebellion. And it was a movement -- rebellion really isn't the right word, more like a civil war. Families were divided, almost like what happened in this country with North and South with families split along the geographic line. Very scary.

Q: Although it was anarchistic and Marxist, what was its relationship with the Soviets -- as I recall, not too close.

BLOCK: Oh, not at all. I don't think the Soviets were to be the benefactors of any success on their part. There was a strong anarchistic quality about the movement. They were anti-establishment people.

Q: What sort of trade unionism, if any, did they believe in?

BLOCK: At the point that I was aware of them, that really wasn't part of the agenda.

Q: So they really didn't have the single-course orientation that many anarchist groups did?

BLOCK: They may have, Morrie, but it was not apparent at that time. The communists were very strong and dominated the labor movement. But the Communists in Uruguay were not Tupamaro supporters, they did not identify with them. I think they were less

threatened by the Tupamaros than Americans and people associated with the West generally. But the Communists were certainly at the top of the labor heap.

It was there that I first really met an active foundation program. Afield was very involved in Uruguay, trying to set up a trade union movement to rival the Communist federation. I worked very closely with the Afield director, Chuck Wheeler. He worked very hard trying to promote a non-communist labor movement. Unfortunately it never really, in my opinion, got off the ground. I don't know that we really spent an enormous amount of money supporting it but there was a lot of money spent, in relative terms. My impression was, frankly, that it was always a little bit contrived. And not successful in terms of what it was trying to accomplish. Of course, they were operating in a very difficult period: the Tupamaros on one hand and the communists on the other.

Q: You say "we spent" a lot of money.

BLOCK: It was AID support for Afield.

Q: This is also important for other interviews. Were you in a position to help design them and influence Afield activities, to evaluate them? What sort of an independent evaluation could you give?

BLOCK: All of the above. I tried to develop some objectives, something that we could use as benchmarks to evaluate what they were doing. And I remember the Afield folks were not very pleased with that. They didn't want to have that kind of an evaluation, that was certainly my impression at the time. It was a very cordial relationship, but I was asked for an opinion about the success of the Afield program and I did provide it.

Q: You were asked by…

BLOCK: By the AID mission.

Q: Was the AID mission positively oriented toward the…

BLOCK: My appreciation was they tolerated it. It wasn't a major piece of their budget so it didn't represent a terrible expenditure.

Q: Your relationships with the Washington people, Bill Doherty, Jr.?

BLOCK: They constantly came through. I had good relations with them. They understood that they were dealing with someone who saw his responsibility as one of evaluating what they were doing. That created a certain tension but it wasn't unreasonable; it was always cordial.

In my mind, at this point, I'm not sure it was worth the candle, frankly. I would be very surprised to learn that anything has survived from those years. It seems to me that its

essential motivation was that it was anticommunist, and that was its real flaw. I don't think you could develop a labor movement whose real rationale was anti-communism. I had relations with people outside this Afield-sponsored confederation and I always thought that these other unionists were stronger and more successful. That's the clear impression I have to this day.

Q: One of the things that I would explore if I were doing research in this field, is the question of whether or not an open anti-communism is a necessary condition of success of a trade union movement in a country such as Uruguay, where there's a high degree of politicization of the trade unions. Do you have to have as part of your objective the fight against communism? How do you work it into your normal activity? That's an interesting issue to look into.

BLOCK: I think in Uruguay it simply wasn't relevant. These were difficult economic times. People had known a higher standard of living, had received tremendous welfare benefits -- there was a travel allowance, for example. Every time you had another son or daughter in your family you received an additional payment from the state. These were people who enjoyed that kind of security net. And then when the net became frayed people were angry and the issue was not communism. It was, 'how are we going to find gas for this 40-year old car?' It had one of the greatest collections of any country of old cars still running. It was amazing -- Model T's on the streets when I got down there, just collectors' stuff. But that was the situation. So the communist hype, I think, was something that the Americans imported into the country.

Q: How do you relate that type of irrelevance of anti-communism to the situation in places in Europe, where the Soviets are so close that there is a more obvious danger of the political consequences of not having an open anti-communism?

BLOCK: I've never served in Europe, Morrie, so I can only answer in a theoretical way. I think the question is really what country you're talking about and what the people mean when they vote communist. What do the French mean when they vote communist? What do the Italians mean when they vote communist?

Q: One of the difficulties in the AALC operating in Africa was the attempt at the beginning, which was revised later on, of Irving to apply this litmus test: you have to be an anti-Communist. It was relevant in Europe because of the existence of a Soviet threat to his work later on. And he certainly in my point of view changed a bit. When he came there he was sort of using the same standards and then later on realized that he was in a different atmosphere and therefore could not demand as a condition of his support, or the AALC's support, the sort of open anti-communism as a sine qua non to get American help.

BLOCK: In Uruguay there had been significant American investment. When I got there a major packing company had closed down because beef was the major industry there, beef production. But there still was a very significant American corporate presence so that

complicated the labor initiative, but I think in a healthy way. It gave the American trade unionists who were working for Afield credibility in taking a labor position and not essentially doing the corporate bidding in that situation.

Q: Anything else that was remarkable about that assignment?

BLOCK: Throughout the entire period that we were there we all dealt with the Tupamaro threat. When we arrived there Dan Mitrione had just been murdered. He worked for AID advising the police about security. And this movie had been made alleging that Mitrione had been involved in teaching the Uruguayan police torturing methods. That was the environment in which we worked and that persisted throughout our tour.

Q: How did your family take the need to be protected?

BLOCK: We got used to it and kind of worked around it. We had to live in an apartment house but when the opportunity availed itself we rented a house for the summer months so we could have a swimming pool. It was a little house with a postage-stamp size swimming pool.

Q: How did you defend yourself against the possibility of trouble?

BLOCK: Everywhere we went, for example if I met with trade unionists in the evening, I would take a guard with me. Or it was selective. For example, I developed very close relationships with the longshoremen and they were not in this union, this confederation that Afield was sponsoring. And this was a serious and very legitimate trade union movement. And when I was with those folks I felt secure. And these were tough cookies who took care of their own.

Q: What about the children? Did it have any affect on the children? Did they have guards going to school with them?

BLOCK: Not that I can recall. Although when the police raided a safe house of the Tupamaros they discovered an index which included the names and locations of the American diplomatic officers, including myself. So that gave us some pause.

Q: So you went from there?

BLOCK: After Uruguay I took a year sabbatical at Harvard in their Master's program for mid-career people. I did a master's in public administration at the Kennedy School. I considered leaving the Foreign Service, and thought I might do better as an academic. But I was offered the chance to go to New Delhi as labor counselor. When that was offered I very happily took it. That was a four-year posting following Herb Wiener. I must have had some very brief overlap with Herb, but very little. The continuity that I enjoyed and I guess most in Delhi have enjoyed was through Christian, who, as you know, is one of our senior Foreign Service National assistants in matters of labor.

Q: I should mention to you that when he was here last year he spent three evenings with me, and I taped his recollections of all of the people he worked with. What we will have now is a continuity of tapes with all of the labor attachés beginning with Burgess, when Christian came on board, through at least Leader… no, Kernan, also. And there are a couple of missing -- Dan Horowitz hasn't completed although he's promised to, Miller was recently interviewed. It will be an interesting research project using Christian's tapes and all of the interviews for some student to go through our relations with the labor aspect of U.S. diplomacy with labor issues to try to draw some conclusions as to its value and deficiencies. It will be very interesting. In fact I'm going to be interviewing Larry Samuels, who was an assistant labor attaché and there are three other assistant labor attachés who we should be getting.

So you entered…

BLOCK: This was in 1974 and we stayed there for four years until '78. It was the time when Mrs. Gandhi, perhaps in '76 or so, declared a national emergency and basically assumed dictatorial power. It was also when she agreed to an election and was defeated and the Janata Party, this hodge-podge, as she would call it, took over with our friend Fernandes involved in it. That proved less than successful, to put it mildly. So I saw an interesting transition from Congress Party rule through an emergency or dictatorial period, the restoration of democracy with the Janata, and then the total lack of success in that political experience in Indian history.

Q: Let me ask a few questions based on my experience, including my experience while you were there. In the middle of that four year period, I wonder if it's as fresh in your mind as it is in mine, we had the pleasure of coming through in '76, I think it was, on a six-week tour of India on my return from Australia. We stopped in a few places and had lectures arranged for mostly in India but also in Bangladesh and Pakistan and Israel and other places. But the crowning experience that I remember was coming there, meeting you for the first time, and it was a terrific experience but it allowed me to pick up on a lot of things that I had noted and seen the differences.

First, as to your relations with the trade union movement, the same business of trifurcated labor movement that we cooperated with, plus the Communists. That is the Intac, the HMS, and a variety of independent unions. The Intac group was pretty much split between the textile group and the others, miscellaneous ones. How did you find the experience of working with them? What could we have done more than we did? Was it a hopeless situation?

BLOCK: When I was there the Intac seemed to me thoroughly co-opted by the Congress party. The Intac leaders seemed to me to play a subservient role to the political sector. They're nice people, I remember Dugwati, the president of the Intac, just a very wonderful, sweet person, and fairly well intentioned person.

Q: Didn't he come out of the farm movement?

BLOCK: Very well could be. A nice, gentle person. But one has the impression that he didn't really make much of a difference.

Q: He was the president but the general secretary was this guy from down south, Ramanna.

BLOCK: He was much more of a firebrand, and much more dynamic. But, I was not aware, and this certainly does not mean that it wasn't otherwise, of any independent force or effect that Intec had, in the country. And maybe that's a bit overstated, but that's certainly the general impression that I had.

Q: One of the problems in my raising questions with you is that I tend to reveal what my observation was on the same thing, and I don't want to be too leading in the questions. I certainly agree. The point is that I would not have described Ramanna as a firebrand. I never felt that he would, under any circumstances, take a position that would create a problem with him or the congress party. That's really what it amounted to.

BLOCK: So we're in agreement, Morrie.

Q: Whereas some of the TLA people showed some independence when they thought the union was at risk, they did express some anti-government, especially since the wing of the Congress party that was in power had some…

BLOCK: That was less apparent when I was there, Morrie.

Q: Did you have much to do with the TLA crowd?

BLOCK: Not to any great degree, but with Christian's help we pretty much covered the waterfront. We traveled a great amount, Christian and I.

Q: Did you ever have trouble getting money for travel from the embassy?

BLOCK: Not at all.

Q: Then that was much improved from when I…

BLOCK: Actually I did a fair bit of lecturing. One of the things I did while in India was to draw on my labor law background. Christian would organize conferences at various places and I would hold seminars about American labor law and trade union practices. Maybe that facilitated getting funds. But I never had any trouble getting money to travel.

Q: That's very interesting, because I used to have to get much of my money from AID and

USIA. They paid my way and then I did lectures for them.

BLOCK: No, I never really had any trouble.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you were there?

BLOCK: The one who was most notable was Daniel Patrick Moynihan. He was succeeded by this chap who'd been attorney general in Ohio, William Saxbe, and I guess attorney general from the U. S., but basically from Ohio. I was under whelmed by him, let's put it in that indelicate way.

Q: And I guess you were overwhelmed by Moynihan?

BLOCK: Pat Moynihan was something special. And he had a very warm spot for labor law and the labor movement, and if it were a visiting fireman he would go out of his way to be hospitable. So that was easy.

Robert Goheen was the third ambassador. He was the son of a missionary and later became president of Princeton University. He was just first rate. He was an intellect and very sensitive to the Indians and what they were about, and I think very successful. So I worked for three very different people.

Q: Moynihan did not show any interest in the labor work, though, did he?

BLOCK: Not really. The labor office pretty much operated on its own within the political section. We were subject to the supervision of the political counselor and that was fine. That did not present a problem.

Q: Let me ask you to comment on that, your position within the embassy. Were you a member of the country team?

BLOCK: That's right.

Q: Were you the only one in the political section beside the political counselor?

BLOCK: That's right.

Q: And your relations with the economic side as a result of your being…

BLOCK: Very good, very cooperative. The labor officer has to be credible in that context. If the labor officer is perceived as having a bias or having an ax to grind, then you can't work successfully. And there's a certain tension in the problem as it's set up. If you're going to do labor work you've got to believe in the utility and importance of organized labor. At the same time you can't have that perspective overwhelm how you see everything. And I think if you saw the Intac as much more than I described earlier, for

example, you would not be credible.

Q: You would be doing a disservice to the embassy and to the function.

Let's get into that after we discuss your position within the embassy, because there is an important one there. What is the appropriate place for a labor officer -- in the political section or not? At the beginning of my stay in New Delhi I had an independent relationship because of the tripartite function I had as a counselor because of the way Bowles set it up. I was administratively and functionally responsible for the work of the labor information at AID, but administratively within the embassy, and therefore had a somewhat direct relationship with the ambassador. Which was accidental because of the way I came in there and Bowles preferring it that way. But as soon as Bowles left -- I'm now going into what I should say in my interview but I want to get your reactions to it -- I felt that it was a mistake to be such an independent person. And even though the head of the political section was actually junior to me in status in the department, I felt I had to be part of that, provided I didn't have to take on a whole lot of duties, like what is that, you have to be the weekend officer, or be the deputy chief of the political section. I didn't want to be because I had a whole lot of labor work to do. So I became a member of the staff, and I felt that I could do more, in terms of giving the labor picture in terms f the context of the overall political scene. And similarly in the economic, I used to clear up many things with them. (inaudible) in the state, and as soon as he got there, because of a special relationship he had with the DCM, like I had with Bowles, he arranged for himself to be directly responsible to the DCM, and that created certain frictions.

Is there a way from your point of view to determine these things in an administrative way for all time and all posts, or do you see some advantage in changing it in some ways because of the individual relationships?

BLOCK: I saw the labor function as principally a political function. The impact of the labor movement clearly is economic, but the labor movement as it exercises its economic impact does so in a political way. It does so through political devices. Either through its relationships with the political parties or through various kinds of labor activities such as strikes and what have you. And these smack of political behaviors. My own sense is that the labor officer is probably well placed in the political section. The labor officer has to know, in great detail, what is happening within the country politically. And I think that can only work if he is in constant contact with colleagues in the political section. Whereas in terms of economic development, he can keep abreast of what is relevant for his concerns with a somewhat more distant relationship to the economic section. I mean he need not be in daily contact but can work with them as particular problems come up -- strikes in particular sectors or whatever it may be. So I think that the labor person should most appropriately be in the political section.

Really, in the final analysis I don't put much stock in these distinctions. I think the critical question is what kind of rapport the individual labor officer has with his colleagues in the embassy. Because he should be talking to everybody. He should be talking to the military

types if they're there. One of the things that I think is a contentious issue is whether or not the labor officer should be doing other things. For example should he be doing other domestic political reporting? Should he be doing other kinds of things such as having part of the foreign portfolio? The issue is one of time, but the question again also is one of credibility within the other people in the mission.

Q: (inaudible) whether or not it's desirable to do all the work in the embassy. I want to do a lot on that because you did do a lot of that that I know of (inaudible) because of your legal background. The decision has been made, and there had been so many cutbacks in staff that labor people are frequently given time-consuming assignments in non-labor fields. I see the advantages you mention, but let me put that question to you in terms of what that does to the ability to cover labor. Because if you want to cover the labor field adequately, it may mean that for most of the time you're not doing any reporting there, you're sponging, making contacts, which people in other parts of the embassy also do. But you're not given credit for it from the other parts of the embassy, which has so much maybe less important, from my point of view, or as important (inaudible). And they therefore resent the idea that a guy's going around having lunch with the whole trade union movement. What I want is someone to go up to this ministry and do that. So while I like the idea that the labor person has the ability to determine the time spent on labor as opposed to other things of his being a member of the staff in a full name, I know what has happened in recent years as we train the labor attachés at FSI: they go out and then don't do any of the things that we think they should be doing. I just want to throw that out.

BLOCK: I never was in that situation where the other things that I did, and I did a lot of other things, really took away necessary time. I always felt that I had more then enough time to do the labor work, and the other things that I got into were almost things that I volunteered for. So I wasn't in the situation you just described where labor officers were essentially given assignments. These were things that I sought out and I did this work. I developed a schedule which could accommodate my principal responsibility, which was on the labor side. But you're describing a situation that from the labor perspective has gotten out of hand.

Q: What sorts of things did you do and what impact did it have on your ability to do labor work? Was it relevant at all? And what sort of impact did it have on your status in the embassy?

BLOCK: I'll answer the latter question first. I think these other things I did enhanced my credibility and enhanced my ability to be persuasive generally. In India, for example, I reported on India's relations with Bangladesh and Nepal. Which gave me an opportunity to visit those two countries, which I otherwise would not have had. I also became interested in following the Indian government's ability to develop missile technology, which had nothing to do with the labor movement whatsoever. But in a sense you could say that it did, because it gave me an insight into the high-tech sector in Indian industry, which I otherwise would not have had.

Q: So in other words, as I said at he beginning of the interview, you were involved in helping the mission of the mission.

BLOCK: Absolutely. So when I spoke about labor affairs I did so as one who was not off in some niche which certain people regard as totally parochial and not altogether germane to the essential mission of the embassy. But I was able to keep the labor side very much in front of the ambassador and the DCM when it was necessary, because I had credibility.

I guess in the other assignments I had I have done more general political reporting. This was so in Tunisia during the Bourguiba period that I was describing, when he collectivized the economy, and in Uruguay during the Tupamaro period. I was able to contribute to the embassy's understanding of those events, and that, I think, enhanced my credibility when I talked about things that were procedurally labor. I think it could have the downside that you suggest if the labor officer did not have time, as you say, to absorb as a sponge what was going on in the labor area. That's unfortunate.

Q: You did something in the legal field in India -- some school problem?

BLOCK: That's interesting, that was strictly extracurricular, Morrie. I was the president of the school board for two years and that was great fun. One thing I did was to introduce collective bargaining to the teachers and to the school board. They'd had very difficult relations up to that point, and indeed collective bargaining was not the panacea, but at least it provided a civilized format for the two parties to sort out their differences.

Q: Why do you refer to that as extracurricular? It seems to me very curricular.

BLOCK: Oh, it was very curricular, but it was not part of my assignment. I was elected to the job. It was a community school and there was an election -- not that there was any heavy-duty competition -- not a lot of people wanted the job.

Q: But that too enhanced your credibility with other people in the community.

BLOCK: It was a difficult period. The school principal, we effectively did not renew his contract and that was a painful moment. So it wasn't an easy thing to do, but it was a rewarding thing to do.

Q: What about your relations other than the economic part -- I want to raise a question of the Commercial interest.

BLOCK: I worked closely with the commercial counselor in India. The United States did not have a major corporate presence. There were companies that were there, of course.

Q: Did they have the American Chamber of Commerce, or something like that?

BLOCK: Yes, both in India and in Uruguay. I would attend those meetings and brief them.

Q: It was very interesting because the first year I was in India we had this terrible case in which 12 people were killed in a Bechtel Corporation strike. And as a result of that, the ambassador insisted that I come in each month and just update them on the situation, which was helpful, I think, to them and to us, in avoiding some of those things.

Science work?

BLOCK: The science work was this project with their missile technology, which was principally a military issue, but also a science issue. I remember working with the science attaché.

Q: Did you have anything to do with the Indian government's review of its labor policy. I guess it was '66 that they came out with this position on labor. They were considering adopting, very foolishly, from my point of view, the, quote, American system of exclusive collective bargaining. It just wouldn't work in that system and a country like India. And for years afterward I understand they were arguing about this National Commission on Labor report.

BLOCK: I don't think it ever came to fruition. Christian must have told you about it, but my impression was that it was one of these things that was studied to death and never happened.

Q: Other parts of the embassy, USIA? Did you used to give lectures for them?

BLOCK: We did this monthly newsletter and that was something that Christian and his assistant did, and we had funds to do that, I presume it was USIA money. My memory is not clear.

Q: It was in my day. As a matter of fact we got some technical support from USIA to put it out, duplicating, and preparing materials.

BLOCK: I thought that was a successful and useful thing to do. We got good feedback from the readership of that.

Q: What about the AMPARTS program?

BLOCK: We didn't have very many folks. You were one of the few people who came back to India.

Q: That was Christian, he recommended it. Did you have any qualms about it?

Any pressure from American trade unions to put something on?

BLOCK: No, the dispute, or the issue, I'll put it this way, with the American labor movement concerned AFLI. But in terms of visiting firemen there was not a lot of interest in India at that time.

Q: What about the IVP, international visitor program, sending people from India to the United States?

BLOCK: We did. I can't remember now who we sent, but we did take advantage of that. We sent Buch once to the States. I was impressed by what they were doing, and they had this organization known as Sela, which was this woman's organization…

Q: Oh, yes, I knew her very well. We hosted her. Who then became too independent for Buch, and he found himself in disagreement with her. And also you assigned me to taking care of Buch when he came here. I was very happy to do it.

Now let's get to the problem of AFLI. That was an important problem in my day and with every person succeeding, and even to the present day that have problems. Suppose you describe it from your point of view.

BLOCK: The Intac people believed that AFLI was suspect. They didn't see AFLI as a legitimate representative of the AFL-CIO, it had some other status. I guess they viewed it essentially as a government effort rather than a trade union effort. They also saw it as somewhat demeaning, in that the AFL-CIO wasn't dealing directly with Intac on a one-to-one basis but did so through this intermediary, and not a friend to them. So there was sort of this status sensitivity.

Q: Did they respond to the answer we'd give to that, 'why is it that you have the British Council, you'd accept assistance from them,' and the Germans also? And the Soviets, too. We were always in the position where the Soviets had that advantage.

BLOCK: I think what was going on, in part, was that they were reflecting a certain anxiety about working with Americans generally. Mrs. Gandhi, probably to her dying day never fully trusted the Americans. I remember while I was there, Moynihan sent back a cable discussing a conversation with Mrs. Gandhi and it was leaked, and it was a great embarrassment. He spoke very candidly about Mrs. Gandhi, whom he had very many reservations about.

Q: He speaks candidly about Mrs. Clinton, too… both Clintons.

BLOCK: He's obviously in a somewhat different posture as a Senator rather than as an Ambassador. So she never fully trusted the Americans and I think that was part and parcel to the attitude toward the American trade union presence.

Q: We're talking about the suspicion that Mrs. Gandhi had of Americans and the whole

CIA business was tied up and all that. But I think a double standard was being…

BLOCK: You're right. But I don't think that she had the same anxiety about these other countries that she had about the United States.

Q: They never, to you, responded adequately to this business about you're treating us differently than you treat the British and the Germans. I could never get an answer.

BLOCK: It was a conversation that was going nowhere, frankly. And I guess I was always puzzled by the persistence of AFLI of trying to work in India with Intac. I guess what happened after I left was they picked up relations with other organizations -- the TLA and I don't know if they ever…

Q: The TLA, when their relationship with Intac decreased. And the HMS?

BLOCK: I don't know about that. Not while I was there, although they were in touch with HMS people.

Q: In Bombay, especially. An interesting and curious background there, because some of the HMS people were royalists and they had a close relationship with the Lovestone group, although Lovestone disagreed with what they were doing at that point. But there was sort of a friendly relationship. Howie Goldberg would come and had quite a lot to do. His goddaughter was the daughter of a famous old royalist there. Did you have anything to do with the royalists?

BLOCK: At the point that I was there, not very much, but through the group in Bombay I met people. Karnic, who was a great friend of Madivan.

Q: How did you find her?

BLOCK: We were just totally in love with her. She was just a most wonderful person. She was tough and honest and just a very decent person. She spoke her mind freely. By the time I was there she was getting up in years, and as sometimes happens when people get older they speak more freely and she spoke very freely.

Q: And she didn't care about what other people thought. She'd come to Delhi and stay with us. Can you imagine another trade union leader staying with us? And she was very fond of our family.

BLOCK: She was very generous with our family when we visited there… feeding us and presents of saris for the girls… she was just very special.

Q: The person who impressed me most, though, was the other HMS leader… oh my, I forgot his name.

BLOCK: I confess that I had a sense that the HMS people had bona fides that most of the Intac people did not. Maybe it was because they weren't just a Congress party institution. They had a life of their own and a legitimacy.

Q: And very important industries -- railroads and docks. Those are crucially important. And I must confess that I was more impressed by them than by the other organizations.

BLOCK: We shared the same view then, Morrie.

Q: There was something that those people had that I cannot describe except as a genuine radicalism and a genuine trade unionism.

BLOCK: I remember one time this chap, the secretary general of HMS, saying directly that the only reason the American labor movement was doing this kind of work was effectively to minimize the difference in labor costs. So that would make India a less attractive place for American investment.

Q: We used to get that in Europe considerably in the Marshall Plan days. And we had Matt Weinberg coming over from the UAW and telling the Germans that they were allowing too much profits from the Volkswagen and other automobiles and they should make greater demands. And the answer from a research person, who subsequently became the finance manager of the Social Democratic Government, said 'that's all right, we're going to take the markets over, first we're going to get all the markets back and then we'll fight for higher wages.

BLOCK: Wonderful. But I remember that kind of statement came from the HMS people but not from the Intac people. The Intac people operated on a different level.

Q: I don't think the Americans were guilty of that, quite, but that may be the reason for their interest.

BLOCK: I think their motives were nobler than that, that certainly….

Q: More mixed.

BLOCK: There you are. The other recollection is about George Fernandes. We can't leave off without talking about George. Two points I guess I would make. One was Madivan always had reservations about George Fernandes, about what he was doing and in the name of whom. She was somewhat suspicious of him in terms of what he was really about. I always found Fernandes and his wife very, very attractive people. She had been very close to the couple, apparently had been involved in the marriage somehow…

Q: Oh yes, we all were involved in the marriage, Yetti and I were not only the only Americans, the only Europeans at the wedding and we gave them a gift and all that, we were very close to them. They're divorced now.

BLOCK: Oh, I didn't know that.

Q: He's taken up with another woman, I don't know if he's married her. But we all were suspicious of him. I remember an airgram I wrote when I first knew him, because he was the labor leader involved in this tragic Bechtel strike in which 12 Americans were killed, and I don't want to go into too much detail when I talk about my work in India. He once said to me, and I tried to get a copy of the cable when I was there in '79 but they wouldn't show it to me because it was still classified, my own cable…. He said to me, when he was a young trade union leader when I got to know him well, after I settled this Bechtel thing, I said, 'what do you want to be, what's your objective?' And I wish I could get a copy of it, but he said something to the effect of 'I want to be the Mussolini.'

BLOCK: I remember when he became a secretary of government when the junta party took over, he became minister for industry or something like that.

Q: That's when we were there. We visited him in his house and he served some concoction that he called 'our version of Coca-Cola.'

BLOCK: He led the movement to ban Coca-Cola because Coca-Cola would not release its formula, and came up with some Indian version of it, which was awful.

I remember an airplane trip I took with him in which he, the minister, gained access to the cockpit and was having a great time being the VIP on the airplane. So he really enjoyed being the minister.

Q: That's right, but there are the suspicious circumstances of his relationship with this German complex. I don't know just what happed there, but it always turned out that somehow or other he was gaining something for the party, of course.

BLOCK: I guess I should recount for the record. During the emergency, Fernandes tried to make contact with me. He was underground at the time. He was on the run. And it was very, very difficult and very embarrassing. Because if we had established contact with him, this would have confirmed Mrs. Gandhi's worst fears and beliefs about the Americans. I remember during the emergency how the police tailed everyone. I'm sure all my movements were very carefully followed. I saw physically one of our officers in Calcutta being tailed there.

Q: How did he try to get in touch with you?

BLOCK: Some intermediary came to the house. And I would have been delighted to have established contact with him just as a way of gaining access to what was going on. But it was obviously too risky and we had none of it. But that sort of stands out in my memory.

Q: What about your relations with any of the unions that were independent? There was

this fellow, I'm beginning to forget names, too. There was this fellow down in Madras who was the head of this union.

BLOCK: Tea pickers?

Q: No, no. The tea pickers and there was a colonel or captain Paramow.

BLOCK: Oh yes, that's right. Actually, AFLI was working with them, and that was fairly successful. That worked out well. I was impressed by those folks.

Q: They were real good. But again, there was the business about Madivan being close to them. How she came to be close to the tea pickers I don't know, but she introduced me to them and that's how I got to know them. I'm thinking of the fellow in Madras with the bicycles… He was an independent unionist, but he too, you always worried about the nature of these deals. He arranged for everyone to sacrifice and rupee a month or something like that toward the purchase of a bicycle that cost 156 rupees. But then it turned out, it was a good deal because the people got a method of getting around by that bicycle, but it turned out that he got a little bit of money from the contract.

BLOCK: I don't remember…

Q: The other person who impressed me down in Madras was the head of the dock workers' union. A former Oxford student, in fact, he really belonged to Sri Lanka somehow, but he was located in Madras.

BLOCK: That doesn't ring a bell, Morrie.

Q: What about Geery, was he still around when you were there?

BLOCK: Right, but minimally.

Q: Oh, he wasn't still president?

BLOCK: No, for sure he was not. He was retired at that point.

Q: He was a great asset to me. Well what else about India do we want to talk about? Any relations with the CIA that you feel appropriate?

BLOCK: No, the CIA in India, it seemed to me as best as I can recall, really did its own thing. And I can only infer from that that I was probably not privy to much of what they did.

You asked in the break about relations with Washington. I never had a sense of any great interest on the part of the State Department in Washington in labor reporting. Except where the labor issue became enmeshed with politics. The principal readership for labor

reporting was the Labor Department, and I was always impressed that they read what was sent very carefully, had questions, were critical of it where it was appropriate to be critical. And so I kept close relations with the Labor Department people. In the course of other work I did at the embassy, I had close contact with the State Department desk officer and people like that. But in terms of labor reporting, I felt that my principal readership was the Labor Department. And I wasn't troubled by that.

Q: Who was the SIL while you were there?

BLOCK: I guess it was Dale Good. I should have qualified what I said a moment ago. I was thinking of the regional bureau when I responded about their lack of burning interest in labor stuff. Because certainly SIL followed what was going on. Every time I came home to debrief, whoever was in that office was very much up with what was going on.

Q: How did Washington act as a business agent for you in terms of your career, next posing, promotions, and things like that?

BLOCK: I never felt that they played much of a role. The assignments that I had sort of flowed one from the other. And it's very likely that SIL was involved, for example, in my being assigned to Tunisia as labor officer, and in my posting to Uruguay, and for sure in my posting to New Delhi. But these were things that I sought, and I presume that when I indicated interest in these places, they endorsed it. But I was never aware, let's put it that way, that they played a great role in any of this. And in terms of promotions, I was at the mercy of the promotion system, these boards over which no outsider had any real influence. As you know I later became the director of the office that ran the promotions system. And I know from that experience that these boards were truly independent.

Q: You did get promoted.

BLOCK: I did conclude my Foreign Service career in the Senior Foreign Service, and that was a matter of pleasure and relief to me.

Q: I want to cover one other thing with your relations to Washington, and that is your relations with the AFL-CIO.

BLOCK: The principal focal point in each of my assignments was with the foundation people, rather than with the international office. When I went back home or before leaving an assignment I would go through 16th Street and talk to those folks there. I don't remember much about those conversations at this point.

Q: Who was in charge of it? Lovestone himself?

BLOCK: No, it must have been after that. Ernie Lee is the person I remember most. But I certainly spent more time with the foundation people than with anyone else for all the assignments.

Q: What were the circumstances of your leaving New Delhi, except sorrow?

BLOCK: Well four years was just fine, and the assignment was billed as four-years. It was a good time. My wife at that point was teaching full time, became interim director of the elementary school as well as teaching, and so from all regards, family-wise, professionally for me, personally for me, just very, very satisfying.

Q: You came back to Washington?

BLOCK: We came back. I was assigned to personnel as a career development officer, someone who provided counseling and assignment work for Foreign Service people. I was assigned to do this for grade four officers, who are now the equivalent of twos. They changed the numbering system about that time.

Q: Did you seek another labor assignment at that point?

BLOCK: At that point we had been overseas about 13 years. The kids were going to finish high school at home in the States, and so it made good sense to return to the States. I had this assignment in the personnel system which was a good insight into how that system worked. What I really wanted was an assignment as a desk officer or a deputy office director in a regional bureau, and I got that as my next assignment. I became deputy director in the Office of Andean Affairs, which was responsible for the five Andean countries. And that was absolutely first rate, because it gave me the chance to have responsibility for the political operations of country management, if you will.

Q: Did your labor experience affect in any way your effectiveness in that job? Was it relevant?

BLOCK: Sure it was relevant. I think everything I've done has been relevant. The countries were in various stages of turmoil. Bolivia was in a state of upset. This was the time when the *trafficantes*, as they were called, the drug traffickers were taking power in Bolivia. I can't recall at this point, Morrie, that there were specific labor problems. There was extensive American investment, for example, in the petroleum sector in Ecuador, which was one of our countries, and labor was a factor there. But I don't recall crises in the labor field, per se.

I don't recall labor work as qualitatively different from other political work. In a sense it's harder because you're dealing with people who play a different role in the society. These are people who are not middle class, let's put it that way. Labor leaders come in all stripes and flavors. But it's maybe a more difficult sector to establish relationships with successfully. So I've always thought that a successful labor officer can be successful in probably any kind of political reporting. Now maybe that's kind of chutzpah on my part. So it's not really that different than other labor reporting. If you can establish good rapport with a trade union leader you can probably establish good rapport with most

politicians.

Q: We're now in the late '70s, early '80s, are we?

BLOCK: Yeah, I came back in '78, spent two years doing this career counseling thing, and then after that became deputy director of Andean Affairs for two years.

Q: So we're up to '82.

BLOCK: And then they sent me to this senior seminar, which as you know is this splendid year, an amazing sabbatical at government expense, which was just a glorious experience.

Q: What did you write on?

BLOCK: This was in the aftermath of the massacres in southern Lebanon at the PLO refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila. I seized that as an opportunity to look at the question of what the American Jewish community and the American Arab community thought of the possibilities for peace in the wake of that horrible happening. And in brief the conclusion was, although it was stated in very guarded terms, both the American Jewish community and the American Arab community thought that there could be a land-for-peace deal at that time. This was in '82, I guess mid-'82. The paper was summarized and provided to the Secretary, I was told, by his special assistant for Middle Eastern Affairs. The paper was provided in summary form; it never was published beyond that. But I basically did the paper because it was an area that interested me and in which I hadn't done any serious work before.

Q: It must have been interesting.

BLOCK: It was fascinating. From AIPAC to you name it, I spoke to everybody here in town. It was just splendid.

Q: Was Tom Dine at AIPAC? Do you know what his new job will be? He's going to be director for Europe for AID. He was with us in India, you know. He was one of the bright people that Bowles brought into the government as a personal assistant.

BLOCK: I didn't know that. I was impressed by him. And he, I thought, among others, was really encouraging about the possibility for a land-for-peace deal at that time.

Q: Well. you were only wrong for about 10 years.

BLOCK: That's right Morrie I really thought at the time that the weight of these terrible massacres at those refugee camps could serve as a spur.

Q: Did you speak to the labor people on the Israel side of it?

BLOCK: I didn't go to Israel. The focus was entirely on the American perspective and the view from these two communities.

Q: Now, after Senior Seminar…

BLOCK: After Senior Seminar I was made the director of the Office of Performance Evaluation, as it was then called, the office that ran the performance evaluation and the promotion system and the performance awards system for the Foreign Service. And did that for two years. That was really the first time I'd had a major office. When I was deputy director of Andean Affairs I was responsible for supervising the work of the desk officers of these particular countries and maybe one or two additional people, but the first real managerial job I had was running the promotions system.

Q: I think you were there in '83 when I was on contract from the Labor Department to be on the promotions panel for the people who were going to go into the one area at this time.

BLOCK: I think I remember that.

Q: And that leads me to a question. What you said before on the question of your situation of promotions in your career, that the labor officer had nothing to do with it, that it was all in the hands of the panels. I want you to comment on the fact that the reason I was put on that panel was because the labor function had been so disadvantaged that the Labor Department wanted an old experienced hand to be assigned to be the Labor Department representative in that promotions panel, where we had such a deficiency.

BLOCK: This was a promotion from two to one?

Q: Two to one, yes.

BLOCK: Is this the old system or the new one? This is below the Senior Foreign Service.

Q: The promotion to the old two, which is now Counselor in the Senior Foreign Service.

There were no promotions in the labor field and I was assigned to that job with the understanding that I would really try to find out why it was that people with good labor attaché recommendations didn't seem to make the grade when compared with political officers. They were in the political cone at that time, but they were a separate segment within the political cone. The political decision was to put them into a separate sub-cone within the political cone.

BLOCK: With their own members.

Q: With their own members. And the panel decided that, I think it was out of nine people, we would promote four of them. Which was exceedingly out of proportion with what the promotions were in the other…. But that was not on the basis of how brilliant I was…

BLOCK: Oh, Morrie, I was about to say that it was.

Q: No, it was on the basis of showing that when you adopt the standards within the sub-cone, that these guys were doing so well and had been discriminated against, because when thrown in with a bunch of political generalists they didn't shine.

BLOCK: These folks that were promoted the year when you did this, were they promoted in competition with the generalists or within their sub-cone.

Q: Within the generalists they were promoted, but they came out of an assessment in the sub-cone, then we threw them into the big cone, and that resulted in their promotion as against the others. They were evaluated on the basis of their labor work.

BLOCK: This really goes to the heart of much of what this exercise is about. Namely, what is the function of the labor officer and how are they to be evaluated ultimately? It seems to me that they have to sell themselves as being relevant to the overall mission of the embassy and of the State Department. And if they're perceived and indeed conduct themselves as working on behalf of a separate labor function or separate labor problems, they will not be regarded as credible and probably should not be regarded as making an adequate contribution.

Q: But that validity of setting them up into a separate sub-cone was that they should be judged among themselves and then see which ones were…

BLOCK: I have no problem with that.

Q: But then, when they're put into all of the others they are compared to the others they stood up very well. The reason they stood up very well is that they were doing a good labor job. Then, within the entire political group you had to show the value of that labor job. Therefore the people in some crucial posts -- I remember Austria was one of them with Becker getting a promotion, Lieder was another, he had made a good contribution in India, and I forgot who the other two were-- each of them, based on their work in the labor field established himself as making a contribution to the entire political section.

BLOCK: That's what is required. It has to be seen as something that is not parochial. I think that's the problem set, to show that they are making a contribution to the general picture, not just to a particular segment of it.

Q: I can't think of anything else to ask you about that function of yours.

BLOCK: The job at PE put me in a novel situation that I hadn't had thus far in my career.

I ended up negotiating regulations in this area with AFSA, so I found myself as a management official negotiating with AFSA. And that was interesting. I wasn't overly impressed, frankly, with the way the Department managed its negotiations with AFSA. I thought it was done in a somewhat heavy-handed way. But nonetheless I think I made a contribution in that regard, helping to bring parties together.

Q: And this was in your function as…

BLOCK: As the Director of the Office of Performance Evaluation. In that capacity we had regulations which acted as precepts for the boards. The question, for example, of these separate cones or sub-cones. I tried, for example, to introduce changes in the evaluation system, which as you know is notoriously unobjective and has all sorts of problems with it, or it did then. So I found myself frequently in negotiating situations with AFSA. And sometimes the regulations to be negotiated concerned the foreign affairs community more generally so we'd have USIA and AID involved in these negotiations. So I just share with you that I had yet a different experience negotiating with the union and with AFCI at one point, because they had representation with USIA.

Q: Yes, they've lost that now and AFSA's going through some problems in that regard. You had been a member of AFSA until you got this job, and then you had to quit, or had to remove yourself as an active member?

BLOCK: I think at that point I did drop my membership, because I thought it was a conflicting interest. And then after that, Morrie, I had a year away from the Department. I was seconded to the Community Intelligence Staff down on F Street. This is the body that coordinates intelligence throughout the foreign affairs community. It includes State, INR, all of the uniformed military services, DIA, CIA, the FBI, and NSA. I was the vice-chairman of something called the Critical Intelligence Problems Committee. The organization of the intelligence community staff was by committee, and they had committees to cover the whole spectrum of the intelligence functions. And this committee that I was the vice-chairman of handled ad-hoc problems which were red and hot and that needed attention. The work was done on an interagency basis. I was still in the Foreign Service at that point and my responsibility was to run the organization on a day-to-day basis. The chairman of the committee was a senior official of the Intelligence Community Staff. She was the deputy director of the Intelligence Community Staff and I ran the organization on a day-to-day basis. I basically had the responsibility of a colonel or Navy captain in the military, or GS-15 levels in other agencies. My deputy was a career agency person. So it was a whole new world.

Q: You've had a fascinating career. When did you leave the Foreign Service?

BLOCK: After that I was asked by Hank Cohen to be the Director of the Foreign Service Grievance Staff. My year at the intelligence community had ended and I returned to the State Department. I was still in the Foreign Service. I accepted Hank's request to become the Director of the grievance staff. At that point my wife decided that she wanted to

pursue a career that really kept us Stateside. She trained as a physician's assistant at GW and that's a career which did not at the time afford employment opportunities for us overseas. So at that point I knew that I had to leave the Foreign Service. And so I continued to work as the director of the Grievance Staff for three years and then I really began to return to the law because the responsibility of that staff was initially to adjudicate grievances, and two, to represent the Department before the board. And that was really a tremendous experience. What I did during that time was to increase the legal sophistication of the staff because we were getting clobbered by outside attorneys. And so I initially turned to Foreign Service officers who had legal backgrounds and brought them into the staff.

The major case I handled, which you should note for the record, was this quasi-class action case, a challenge to the promotion system by the Class One officers who were denied promotion into the Senior Foreign Service. That, unfortunately, produced what I now understand are a lot of bad feelings. The Foreign Service officers who were challenging the promotion system ultimately lost. The Foreign Service board denied their grievance, which I think is the right income, frankly, in terms of the law and also the equities. But there were a lot of angry people, and I think to this day there are probably some bitter feelings in AFSA. But it's interesting, when I left, there were the usual round of farewell luncheons, and the AFSA people who came to the luncheons were really very generous and kind in their remarks. And there was an attorney who represented ASCI who had worked a number of cases with me and she was also very complimentary in terms of my essential fairness.

Q: Well, you were leaving, you couldn't do any more!

BLOCK: That's right, I couldn't hurt them. But I learned later that there was some bad feeling about that case, and the fact that they lost and I was responsible for their defeat.

Q: Who was the head of AFSA at the time?

BLOCK: I can't remember, there was a young guy who was the head of AFSA, I can't remember his name.

Q: Is there anything else in general you'd like to say about your career, your attitude toward the labor function?

BLOCK: Only good feelings toward it at this point, Morrie. Very pleased to have been there and to have done it. I'm sure most of us who have been through the Foreign Service feel this way. I can understand the anger of the Foreign Service officers who sought promotion into the Senior Foreign Service and who were denied it, and who had to be, in effect, forcibly retired. It's a career that you leave very reluctantly. I made a conscious decision not to continue because of my wife's career and what was appropriate for the family at that point. But you leave this career very reluctantly and I can understand the people who don't do it voluntarily but who are forced out have a sense of outrage and

bitterness.

Q: This is all part of something I want you to comment on, because of your experience in personnel, and this is this up-and-out business. I've had a couple of cases in my recollection where people who were just wonderful at their work. I remember one guy in particular in India, who was so wonderful in dealing with people who were getting visas. Normally they can be greeted so shabbily. And he always used to answer the phone, 'Arthur Massias, how can I help you?' And the idea of a man saying, he was so happy at that. And yet another person in a similar job that I knew, who was wonderful at the accounting, budget officer, whatever the hell he would do, he was so good at it they promoted him. But they gave him another assignment. He would have been happy to stay the rest of his life but he had to be promoted because "up or out." He had to be promoted, he was unhappy, he was not good at the new job. How do you evaluate the whole business of up and out? It's too military, don't you think?

BLOCK: I guess I was persuaded by it, Morrie, because my vision of the Foreign Service is an organization that is relatively small, that people have more to do than they have time for, "lean and mean," to use the trade expression, and there should be a flow of bright new people recruited into the service. And at the exit end of the tube you are going to have some bright people who haven't spent the entire span of their career, who haven't been 'spent' if you will, but who will be forcibly retired. I think probably system-wise it's very beneficial. In terms of the individuals, who have a lot to offer and who are forced out, it's very devastating. It's unfair to us, because I was promoted into the Senior Foreign Service and I can't really empathize with the people who were not. My sense of it is that this is what you bargain for if you come in through the exam route. This is what you expect when you come in.

Q: I hate to end this interview on such a discordant note, but I feel that what enters the Foreign Service is a bunch of guys who think they might be good ambassadors 25 years from now. Is that what we want, or do we want some people who are content to be a budget officer, even though it's very dull? A budget officer who's better at budgeteering than he is as an ambassador? How do you get people satisfied?

BLOCK: I think the difference, Morrie, is it's not the general schedule, it's not GS, and this is a very elitist kind of notion, but I do think that you really want to recruit people who, if they're not going to be ambassadors, if they're administrative track folks, who are going to be Counselor of Embassy for Administrative Affairs. And they should not be permitted to find a niche as budget officer and spend a lifetime as budget officer. That's the way the GS system is in this country, Stateside, but I think in the Foreign Service it's different.

Q: So would you advocate having two sets of people abroad: Foreign Service officers and GS-types?

BLOCK: No. We have gone through these various permutations. We've had reserve

officers and they have been the specialists, typically the staff people doing admin work. I see no reason why you can't have everyone in this kind of fast-track system, and the people who are not good enough will fall by the wayside. It sounds brutal but I think it produces a quality of performance which is appropriate to the task -- namely, representing this country abroad. And that's different than the way government is otherwise staffed. I'm not troubled by it, but I could well have a different attitude if I had got the short end of the stick, Morrie. And I fully recognize that.

Q: I don't object to the system of promotions for practically everybody, except for the people who really are GS-types.

BLOCK: What I'm saying is the Foreign Service should be organized in such a way that being the Budget Officer is really a way station for a person who ultimately is going to be Counselor of Embassy for Administrative Affairs.

Q: But a person who has qualities that would lead him to be an excellent ambassador, those qualities might be precisely the ones that would lead him to be an inefficient administrator.

BLOCK: Which I think is why I think the cone arrangement is appropriate. And someone who is going to be an ambassador should pass through the various administrative cone functions, including the ones that are not very exciting.

Q: I guess I give you the reflection of someone who was a reserve officer, and therefore could never have become anything but a labor officer. Whereas I think I would have been a great ambassador.

BLOCK: That's right, Morrie, you were just brought in at a point where that was not offered to you. Whereas if you had come in, say, at the different end, you would have had your cake and eaten it, too.

Q: Well, thank you so much. I think this was really very nice of you to spend so much time. You will ultimately, when we get the money see it in a transcript of it and it will be very useful. And especially useful in terms of the broad range of your activities. Thank you very much.

BLOCK: Thank you, Morrie.

End of interview