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

MARTIN C. FORRESTER

Interviewed by: James F. Shea and Don R. Kienzle
Initial interview date: December 19, 1995

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

Kienzle: The date is December 19, 1995. I am Don Kienzle; Jim Shea and I have the honor of interviewing Martin Forrester, who served as the Labor Attaché. Martin, shall we begin with a little bit about your background, education, and how you got involved in labor matters?

FORRESTER: Well, education is simple enough. I graduated from Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in 1956. After that, I needed a job and started working in New York City. I worked for about a year with TWA (Trans World Flight Center) in the Westside Terminal, and I looked around for a job, something more permanent. I stopped by the U.N. and so forth, still with a foreign service orientation. That's because I spent a year, actually my junior year in high school, abroad. My mother got a fellowship to study at Oxford, and so she dragged me with her. I spent the first three months in a little school in Switzerland and then went on to England to Oxford, the Municipal School for Boys.

I had that year, and at the time they still had a large number of displaced persons roaming around Europe. I realized that "hey, there's a real big problem that I never realized back in the U.S." of displaced persons. That gave me one experience, living in Europe aged 17, a very sensitive time in anyone's life, and also the concern of these displaced persons. So that was my foreign service policy orientation, which is why I went on to Georgetown.

Then came the big job hunt. My mother had been very active in social work, Executive Secretary of the Urban League in New Jersey. She herself had a Master's in economics. A number of her friends, when they saw me with this great educational background and my mother's own history of social involvement --(she'd walked picket lines with Adam Clayton Powell on 125th Street. Back in the '30s and '40s she was very much involved in the Harlem Renaissance and all the rest of it.) --thought that I was sort of doing the wrong thing. They thought I was just working for some big capitalist company. One friend, Rita Toya, a doctor who was teaching economics at NYU. She was also teaching labor economics for the International Ladies Garment Workers Union Training Institute in New York. She said, "Hey, Martin, this is a waste of time. Let me introduce you to Gus Tyler. Maybe you want to go on; you belong in the labor movement."

So she introduced me to Gus; Gus interviewed me, and I went into the Training Institute, which is a year program, about six months in class, and then six months being assigned to various unions, organizing, going around with business agents, educational work and so on. I graduated from there in 1958 and was assigned to a Local 62 in New York. Mattie Shoenwall was the president, and he was the son-in-law of Dave Dubinsky. That was one of the largest locals in New York, undergarments and negligees. We had some 60,000 members. I was organized in my Spanish, which I had picked up at the University of Madrid when I was an exchange student my junior year at Georgetown. So I had the Spanish, and that was useful because we had a large number of Puerto Rican and Dominican workers. And I was a fairly successful organizer. Then I was assigned some shops, making me both a business agent and an organizer full time. With the union along came the elections; our union, the Garment Workers had the primary responsibility of organizing the campaign for John F. Kennedy.

Kienzle: This was in 1960?

FORRESTER: Yes. We had the only rally in New York state, which was in the garment district in New York City. So Gus, I don't know what he saw, but he borrowed me -- Gus at that time was the Director of the Political / Educational Department. He borrowed me from the local as the nuts-and-bolts guy; I was to go around to all the precincts and get all the permits and go to all the shops and talk to the shop stewards, cheerleaders and what-not. I was just the nuts-and-bolts of that rally there in the garment district. It was very successful; we had, I dare say, 20,000 people out there. And then after that ...

Shea: I remember that, Martin. It looked like 100,000!

FORRESTER: Well, did we have a million men in the March? Gus invited me to leave the local and join him in the Political Education Department, which I did. I was there with Gus, working away on a number of projects.

Kienzle: Just one background question: had you grown up in New York? You knew the New York scene, then?

FORRESTER: Yes, although I left New York at age thirteen and went to Englewood, which was just a few miles down the road in New Jersey. Also, I went to a little Quaker school in upstate New York, in Poughkeepsie. I really finished high school in Poughkeepsie. I'm a New Yorker.

Then one day while working away there in the Political Education Department, Mable Springer came in; she used to come in and out. She was very close to Dubinsky, advising him on Africa and other things. She saw this little black guy sitting off in the corner, and she came and introduced herself and asked, "And what are you doing?". I said, "I'm having a great time here." "Well, what kind of a future do you have? I mean, just this little cubicle. You're doing wonderful stuff in research and education." One of my jobs was teaching Spanish to our engineers, who had to go into shops. Just basic Spanish: "What's your problem? What's your Social Security number?" And all kinds of great

projects. So she said, ". There's no future here. You really need a career track." She said Peter Ottley, who was president then of Local 144 Hospital Workers, had just started organizing hospital workers in New York. There was SCIU (Service Employee International Union) on one hand, and the Local 1199, on the other, organizing hospital workers. She said, "He needs organizers out there, and I understand you're marvelous at organizing. You've got Spanish. Why don't you go talk to Peter?"

So I talked to Peter for about six months. He's the kind of guy if you ask him about the time, he's going to tell you about the watch and this and that. So finally I said fine, and I left the ILGWU (International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union) and went to work with Peter Ottley, directing the organizing campaign. About a week, or at the most two weeks, after I left, I got a call from my former boss, Gus Tyler. Gus called and said "Marty, how are you doing?". I said, "I'm having a great time" He said, "What's your schedule like?". I said, "Why? What's on your mind?" He said, David Dubinsky would like to talk to you." I said, "You've got to ask me!? Do I have time for David Dubinsky? Just tell me when, whenever it's convenient, and I'll be there." I met with him the next day. That was the very first time. I'd been working with him in the same building for two years, and I don't think it was as much as a 'hello' or something. At any event, David said, "Well Martin, I've heard all these great things from Gus Tyler. We can't afford to lose you. I mean after all you know as well as I know we don't have so many blacks, minorities here. I don't know what Peter Ottley's paying you there."

Kienzle: You must have attended acting school!

FORRESTER: "We can't afford the high salaries, but we don't want to lose you. We'll make you an offer, why don't you get back with Gus." I felt ashamed. Here I was in the building for about two years and no special recognition. I wasn't looking for any recognition, but I kind of felt almost like a prostitute or some damn thing. The highest bidder or what? In any event, I called Gus the next day and said "thanks, but no thanks." That was more of a principal than anything else. Chances are had I gone back with ILGUW, I know I would have been a vice president, had a great and glorious career. But I just didn't like the way it was handled. So there it was.

In any event, getting back to the Foreign Service and the ILGUW. Right after the election, Kennedy was in, and his advance people came around, and talked to Gus and to Dubinsky and said thanks a lot. They told Gus "we're starting this Alliance for Progress program in the western hemisphere, and we want some labor people. We're starting these trade union training centers, and if you've got some good people, preferably who speak Spanish." Gus right away turned to me. I think Lester Speilman was another one of the guys; Les went down to the Dominican Republic, heading the Peace Corps. He was head of our engineers. He's around in this area. So they threw my name in the hopper, and I filled out the applications and promptly forgot it. As I said I went off with the SCIU, and maybe a year later I got an invitation down to Washington from AID for an interview. I went down for the interview, and I didn't know what was going to happen. It was kind of rough because during my Garment Workers' days, Dubinsky and everyone else were in the Socialist Party. The leadership was split between Socialists and Communists. The

Communists actually took over and ruined the union back in the 1920's, and that's when Dubinsky had this really passionate hatred for at least the kind of Communists that he was dealing with. They ruled the g------n union. But Gus Tyler was always the head of the IMSLs up in New York. So all of us, we young Turks going through, were all either Socialists or pro-Socialists or involved. I even went to Socialist Worker Party meetings. These are all on the Attorney General's list. "What are you guys up to?" you know.

Then, when it became time for the background investigation, all this stuff was popping up. And they were telling me that I had been to a meeting, that I'd been to retreats up in Peekskill, and was on the mailing list. I was terrified. I said, Jesus, this is a police state. They knew where my mail was coming from, my movements. I almost didn't get it. I registered, because I was at this Quaker school up in Poughkeepsie, as a 'conscientious objector.' So that's on the record too, and all of these meetings that I had attended. Somehow or other I got through the security clearances, and that was kind of interesting, too because as part of that process, their investigators had to call on my supervisors and bosses, which included Gus Tyler. One guy comes in and he flips open his badge and his photo. Gus says, "Let me look at that." Then he says, "It says here you have a scar on your right forearm. Let me have a look at that; I want to make sure....."

Shea: Typical of Gus Tyler.

FORRESTER:. You have to keep in mind that 99% of the then-membership of Local 62 was female, the lady garment workers. In '62 it was sort of the lower end, panties and bras, that sort of thing, basic work; a lot of the workers were Latin. A heck of a lot of them were very, very beautiful, very young. So one of the investigators is in there, and he's talking to my boss, a guy name Julio Ramirez, and he says, "Gee, you've got a lot of beautiful women around here. Does Martin seem to mess around with all these women? Seems to have lots of opportunities." The guy says, "Not especially, but you're a man, I'm a man, Martin's a man. I mean, you can appreciate the beauty; you're commenting on it. Of course, we all appreciate beautiful women, but he's a good worker." It sort of put the guy down really. I mean, what do you expect? He's not going to look at them! Just because he represents them. So that's the background investigation part of it. I was finally cleared and went off on my first assignment, to Quito, Ecuador. That was in November, about three days after Kennedy was assassinated.

Kienzle: In '63"

FORRESTER: I was in Colombia for two days, seeing AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations) people. I was in USIA (United States Information Agency) cafeteria when this waitress comes up to me. She says, "Hey, are you going to have a civil war in your country?" I said what are you talking about. She says, "They just killed your president." I said "What are you talking about?" She said, "Yeah, right up here on the television." I saw the knot of people there by the television set, so I went running over and there it was. That was the Colombian mind set: OK, you assassinated a president so now you have a civil war. The next stop was the airport in Quito. There was Jim Shea and all the little Sheas with a van or something for my brood.

I had three children at the time.

Shea: That was a very dramatic weekend when he came. When he arrived there. I remember Maurice Bernbaum was the ambassador and I think Don Doughters was the AID Mission Director. And Earl Binsky was the Political Counselor. We worked together for about two years. At that time you were a Reserve Officer. I think I recommended you for permanent—

FORRESTER: That happened in 1968 when I was in Peru, the lateral entry. Then I had to fly up to Caracas for the Oral.

Shea: Remember the guys you were working with there, Marty? ...Savallos,--

FORRESTER: Luis Delar,

Shea: And then Cesar Noriega--

FORRESTER: Vicente. What was his name? The director of the school. Very arrogant guy. He was a doctor.

Shea: Hugo Valencia.

FORRESTER: Hugo Valencia. He had a French wife.

Kienzle: Marty. Do you want to describe your duties in Ecuador, and what your impressions were?

FORRESTER: We had two labor schools, labor centers, that had been set up originally by Arthur Beauregard Nixon III out of the communications workers in Texas. They were good, solid physical plants. Both the school and the structure in Quito, as well as that in Guayaquil, were solid, with a staff of about 36 total. That included instructors, secretaries, drivers, and some other technical support people. We had a standard curriculum: preparing leaflets, and drafting, and how to use audio-video equipment, and reaching out organizing. I don't know if I mentioned collective bargaining, labor law and the rest of it. Those seminars ranged from weekends to one-two week seminars. We even may have had a month-long seminar. We were training, between the two, about 100 labor leaders per month, if not more than that, in the various seminars.

Kienzle: Was this in conjunction with AFL, or under the AID --

FORRESTER: No, we were phasing out AID. AID started the labor education programs and then contracted out with AFL, and had just signed the AFL contract about the time that I arrived. You had new AFL people and you had me, basically transferring it out, but I still had administrative responsibility for the program. AFL at that time was primarily focused on what they called 'social projects': Co-ops and houses and credit unions.

Kienzle: This was really labor assistance training then?

FORRESTER: Labor leadership training.

Shea: You might recall Bill Saveline..

FORRESTER: How could I forget Bill Saveline? I'll never forget Bill.

Kienzle: Could we identify 'Bill?'

Shea: Bill Saveline was a co-op expert and he was out of northern Michigan. He was of Finnish extraction, and he worked with the AFL-CIO there and he was assigned to Quito for social projects. He dealt with such things as housing projects, I think.

FORRESTER: He dealt with housing and all sorts of co-ops. It was a part of the Minnesota experience and the Wisconsin experience, which drew on the Scandinavian. He's drawing on his own Scandinavian roots. He's Finnish. But it was also almost a Calvinist approach. At one of these graduations, not only did he not drink, but he was opposed to drinking and all sorts of things that we don't take quite so seriously. He got plastered once.

Kienzle: How do you assess the effectiveness of the training center there? Did it achieve its major goals?

FORRESTER: I think so. This is all evolutionary. Trade unionism was not new. Jim can comment far more accurately or incisively on that because he was dealing with established trade union leaders as political players. For example, at that time probably the best organized union, which had a fairly long history, was the chauffeurs, the drivers, the teamsters, which was Communist-led and extremely well organized. Another group that was very well organized was the stevedores, the longshoremen, down in Guayaquil. Also the plantation, the banana workers, were very well organized.

Most of those, if not all of them, had a political ideology which is basically alien to the U.S. kind of experience. I think we operated well on the margins. We just didn't, as you can imagine, deal --our instructions were not to even talk to the Communists. That really was our purpose, to develop democratic unions as a viable alternative to...

Shea: At that time, Ecuador --believe it or not, as a little country -- was the only affiliate of the World Federation of Trade Unions. They had a guy by the name of Victor Zunica.

FORRESTER: Yes, the chauffeurs.

Kienzle: The only affiliate in Latin America?

Shea: I believe the only affiliate in Latin America.

FORRESTER: Well, Cuba certainly was.... There may have been other pockets around. I'd have to do some thinking.

Shea: That of course was one of the reasons we had such a big effort there, too. Before Marty came on the scene, Art Nixon was there, and Irwin Rubenstein in Guayaquil.

FORRESTER: We trained a lot of people, over the years, into the thousands I would suspect. Also at that time, the Democratic Federation was probably the weakest. The strongest were the affiliates of the World Federation trade unions. The Christians, which was called the SEDOC, was the confederation of Christian organizations and was run our friend Emilio Masparo and was also strong. They were extremely dedicated, hard-working people. They'd actually go off into the mountains and live with the Indians. You just didn't have the AFL people, or anyone else, doing that! But now I believe the Democratic Labor Movement is probably the majority, or certainly up there. At the last seminar, you had some of the Communist leadership at the AFS Seminar. I was shocked. I said, "Whoa, we have come a long way. The cold war certainly is really over!"

Shea: He had a woman who headed up the SEDOC. Her name was Isabela Robellino. She was a very devout Catholic, and she didn't really cotton up to the U.S. She was a really dedicated woman. She had her differences too with Masparo.

FORRESTER: I remember when Emilio Masparo came through : the ambassador said, "Ah — I've been reading a lot about this guy. I'd like to meet him. Let's arrange a lunch, Martin." I think you were on home leave. Just a few of us were there. The first thing that Masparo said at lunch was, "You guys must have me blacklisted, because I was trying to get into the United States just a few months ago and your people went through their screens and what-not." I don't recall if he got in or not, but he had a very, very difficult time. Regardless, he said, "Look, I want you to know, Mr. Ambassador, I'm not running drugs; I'm not running guns; I'm a labor leader. So if we happen to disagree that's certainly no reason in your great big country, to fear me and my going into it."The ambassador said, "Well, we'll look into it."

Kienzle: Which group did he represent?

FORRESTER: He was the head of the CLASK, the Christians.

Shea: He was an Argentine. He was from Mendoza, and he didn't have much status in Argentina, but he was certainly a very capable guy.

FORRESTER: Probably brilliant guy. He built these structures around— In most cases, they were in the minority, but fairly strong in Venezuela, for example Caldera. They were very close to the Christians; they were very strong. They had their inter-American headquarters in Caracas. They're fairly strong in the Caribbean islands. I know where else they might be strong. They have something in Brazil.

Shea: Oh yes, they had a big affiliate in Brazil. But they broke with the Brazilians. In

fact, they had a Jesuit there, Padre DeLloza, and he had a falling out with Marsco. They got a great deal of support from the Germans, the German unions.

FORRESTER: Adenauer.

Shea: Yes. But Masparo was considered even too radical even by the Germans. And he was always on the outs with the Germans.

FORRESTER: His problem was he had just an absolutely obsessive hatred for the United States, for his perception of our values. The capitalist system he viewed as a rather corrupt labor movement that was really dominated by, or at least utilized by, the capitalist system. He allowed it to be an instrument in the Cold War when that really, from his view, was not the role of legitimate trade unions. Rather it was the welfare of the membership. He just hated the United States, no doubt about it.

Shea: He was a strong advocate of the Catholic Church philosophy: 'neither Communism nor capitalism'. I got to know him quite well. But he had no love for either system; and he always resented anybody telling him really what to do.

FORRESTER: He was also an elitist. All the "Christian" leaders around the hemisphere seemed to have the same kind of elitist, almost arrogant, projections. They were all bright, all dedicated, but none of them came out of the labor movement. They were not workers as such; they were intellectuals, out of academia by and large..

Kienzle: After Ecuador, then where did you ....?

FORRESTER: I went down to Peru. AFL was solidly established now, both in Ecuador— well, around the hemisphere.

Kienzle: This would have been around 1968 or so?

FORRESTER: Well, let's see: four years in Ecuador, that's 67 - and off to Peru for another four years. There my title was Labor Education Advisor, my responsibility was to monitor the AFL activities and to give them some guidance, political as it was, in terms of embassy priorities. I was their link; I was the liaison between the AID Mission, the embassy, and the AFL program there, which was more or less the same. It was training labor leaders, from shop stewards up to national.

Kienzle: So you were actually part of the AID staff?

FORRESTER: Right. I was reporting on the activities of AFL, and at the same time, I was like I was the last year Jim was there, the Assistant Labor Attaché with a dual function. Specifically monitoring the AFL contract and assisting, on an ad hoc basis the Labor Attaché, who was Irwin Rubenstein at that time.

Kienzle: What sort of division of labor did you have with Irwin?

FORRESTER: Sometimes it became blurred; you have a blurry situation like that, with two fairly strong personalities. There were times when I had to close my door, and I'd say, "If you want me, just knock, let me know", because he would intervene, and I thought it was unnecessary and unwarranted. However, I thought we were a good team at times there. I liked Irwin, and I certainly respected him. I think I learned a lot from Irwin in terms of being a Labor Attaché down the road, which I was in my long assignment in Caracas.

Kienzle: Would you want to comment on the Peruvian labor movement and the issues you encountered during your tour there?

FORRESTER: Well, at that time the APRISTA (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance) Party, which was the Social Democratic Party, was really the dominant party and controlled pretty much the labor movement. Julio Cruzado was the Secretary General, who was just pretty much a tool of the party, a la the PRI and the CTM, in that regard. You had the same thing with --who was the guy who was head of the ARETE, living up in Mexico at that time?

Shea: That was Howdigee..

FORRESTER: Yes. Curro Howdigee. Again, being way off in Mexico, and the ARETE Secretary General for the hemisphere, he was still an APRISTA Party tool. It's not that good a mix, especially when you look down the road 30 years later; the APRISTA Party is gone, and so is basically the democratic labor movement. The Communists were always strong and have remained so until this day in Peru. I think the APRISTAs are pretty much finished as a viable party.

Shea: They exist partly in name only.

FORRESTER: Yes, but back in those days they were strong; they were solid. Their base was the sugarcane workers up in the north around Trujillo. The miners were with the Communists back in those days. Again, the teamsters, and the chauffeurs, were Communists. The Christians had something, not very much; a lot of the manufacturing unions were APRISTA, with solid, good leadership.

But the country has gone to hell. I think there are lessons here for us. The world economy has changed; there are so many forces, economic forces on industry and therefore on unions. It's rather difficult. We are encountering the same kinds of problems here, I think. The government has been, for many years, under Fujimori and earlier governments to control and to dominate. One governmental policy I think is going to hurt is that the public employees have been very solidly organized now under the APRISTAs, and they're now contracting out. They're contracting out Social Security, just like they want to do in Mexico, and so this fractures the unions. Incredible downsizing is going on in the public sector. There's a really high employment level, and I suspect the labor movement is under serious strains right now.

But again, back then we were turning out the numbers, and the quality of training was extremely good. I think they got additional motivations and some additional tools. Although he was confronted with rather serious political problems, i.e. the rise of Fujimori and the apparent lack of real democracy, nonetheless he was elected. It was kind of hard for unions to be viable. At least we have a democratic system here more or less, and our unions are under enormous strain. All the predictions are that we going to go down to ten million by the turn of the century. And most of those will be in the public sector; so you can imagine.

Peru had a fairly strong economy, skewed between copper and fish meal. It was sort of third-world.

Kienzle: Did you encounter any problems with the Shining Path?

FORRESTER: They were basically non-existent back then. We are talking about the 1960s. Lima was a very happy place to live. The streets were safe. There was virtually no drug problem at all. Well, there were some upscale nightclubs where the aristocracy went to sniff their cocaine with their concubines on their arms. It was not a problem. There was none of this "sniffing" that goes on. Whatever the garbage sets --what do they call it in Spanish?

Shea: Basura.

FORRESTER: I think they even call it that. Whatever is left over from the process of making cocaine, the kids on the street sniff this kind of stuff. It's a real problem.

Shea: Who was your ambassador then, Marty?

FORRESTER: You'll have to forgive me, Jim. I totally draw a blank.

Shea: What about, was Belmondo Teddy there?

FORRESTER: Belmondo Teddy. Of course I was there when the 'golpe' came along, and I think they guy's name was Belmudes. General Belmudes. They were there for the remainder of my tour. It was something of a troika.

Kienzle: This was the leadership in the Peruvian government?

FORRESTER: There was a coup wherever I went. There was a coup in Ecuador when I was there.

Shea: Julio Arroz Semena.

FORRESTER: Arroz Semena. Then we had the coup in Peru when I went there. The generals led by this guy Belmudes. Fortunately, there were no coups in Venezuela. There

were some rather tough elections; the ADECOS (the Accion Democratica people) were defeated by Caldera.

Kienzle: This is in Venezuela.

FORRESTER: Yes, in Venezuela.

Kienzle: Do you want to move to Venezuela, or do you have any further observations you'd like to make about Peru?

Shea: The ambassador was ...

FORRESTER: A big, tall, tough guy, burly.

Shea: What kind of reception did you get at the embassy there, Marty?

FORRESTER: It was great. The Labor Attaché, Irwin Rubenstein, was very warm, very helpful, very gracious.

Shea: Didn't you have John Dougherty, too, for awhile?

FORRESTER: Yes. John. He was just absolutely great. I had just met his brother Bill briefly, and he was on the other side of the moon. John's such a low-key, humble kind of a guy-- all the things that Bill wasn't. He told a great story about when the Dougherty's were kids. He said that Bill had always been the big bully. They'd have wrestling matches and other kinds of things and he'd give the winner chestnuts or something. Then if you would lose a subsequent match, he was very quick to take these chestnuts back from you.

I have one of my favorite stories, something that has nothing to do with the labor movement. But maybe it's of cultural value. One of my closest friends there was Jose, the head of the plantation workers up north. We became very close friends; he'd come around to my house in Lima, and I was up there in Arequipa and meet with him. I met his family in town; his wife was a school teacher. They had a very nice apartment, and two children in beautiful little school uniforms. They were about six and ten years old. I was twice at his house there in town. Then on another occasion, he said we're going out to the "plantation," farm. He said, "I want you to meet my family." I said, "Fine. We'll meet your family out there, but I met your family in town."I assumed that when the wife is teaching she's in town and on holidays or on weekends she's out on the plantation. So I go into this hut with a dirt floor with about ten children, dresses all ill-fitting and homemade and all in their bare feet. This wife is a farm woman. So we sat there and had some coffee. And I see that this guy has two wives, two sets of children, and two homes. So finally we're driving back to town. And I say, "Jose, I 'm really not getting into your business; I really don't care. Please, no moral judgment, but just as a practical matter. Let's say, if you get sick or you have an accident on the road. Or, conversely, one of your children gets sick and needs you. I mean, if it's a child or a wife, how do you make the distinction? If it's the wife in town or on the farm?" He said, "Oh, my people all know."

That was an interesting approach to me. I don't know if we have such a situation in the United States.

Kienzle: I haven't heard of it.

Kienzle: Let's turn to your integration into the Foreign Service.

FORRESTER: 1968. I was at the embassy.

Kienzle: Then you were assigned to Caracas. Describe your assignment there. And the labor movement.

FORRESTER: Well, there I felt there was the most sophisticated of the three that I knew: Ecuador and Peru. Peru was well organized, as I said, basically under the APRISTA party. They had a leadership structure and so on. But here you had, in Venezuela, basically three competing political parties, all be it in one confederation of Venezuelan workers, the CTV. You the Christians there, and the Accion Democratico, the ADECOS, there. The Accion Democratica party had split after the elections in '68. Let's say the ADECO was center left, and then it split off into two other factions: left, which was the MPISTA party, left from the Accion Democratica party, and then there was something called MIR, which was revolutionary. These guys were shooting, shooting the cops. They had promised to kill a cop every day, and they managed to do that for a long period of time. They were all represented under this big umbrella. That, to me, is a great degree of sophistication. To get along, they actively organized. They had a dues structure and all the rest of it.

Again, part of the problem I thought was the possibly over-politization of the labor movement, because at the same time the leaders of the federation movement, from the president of the federation on down, were all elected officials. They were senators or congressmen. They had the dual function of labor leader and the political role. Again, obviously, their first loyalty is to the party. Sometimes that does conflict with the interests of workers, but they managed to overcome that because their constituency were members of the same party by and large. They divided it up. The ADECO person had the presidency because they had the plurality, and the Christians would have, maybe, the Secretary General. Then they would divide up between the other parties, the MPISTAs, the Secretary of Education, Secretary of International Affairs and so on. I thought that was a great degree of sophistication on their part.

Some of the best trade unionists I'd come across, and good friends, probably the best friends were in Venezuela. I was always in their homes, and they were always in my home. When I got a new car, I'd call up a couple of my friends, like labor leaders who were also senators. They'd say, "Well, come on over!" This was like ten or eleven o'clock at night. I'd drive over. They'd be in their pajamas. I felt very much at home. I wanted to buy an apartment there or a house to retire there. I loved the people; I loved the country.

Shea: You had Bill Rohrs there as Political Counselor.

FORRESTER: Right. Right.

Shea: At that time, I was the ARA Labor Advisor.

FORRESTER: Bill and I became very, very good friends. He's now, I think, up at the Metropolitan Museum, in New York.

Shea: He went on as an ambassador, and then he came back.

FORRESTER: To Czechoslovakia. He went to Czechoslovakia. He came back to Venezuela. He'd always wanted to be ambassador to Russia; he was always studying Russian, every day in Venezuela. He never went to Russia, but he did get to Czechoslovakia.

Shea: At that time I recall, Marty, Andy McCullum was the Inter-American representative.

FORRESTER: Oh yes. I had problems, coming out of New York with my own background. We talked to the devil as organizers. We organized workers, right? My own inclination you know, was the Socialist Party. I developed some close relationships with the Christian people; I was close to everybody up there. They were all friends. My closest were the Accion Democratic people, there's no question about it. There was just chemistry. I talked with everyone, and I think everyone respected and had confidence in me. My confidence and my objectivity, I think bothered a lot of people, because they thought, "Which side are you on? You can't be independent or neutral. You have to be pro-something. Otherwise, you're not a person of substance."

Kienzle: Were the Christians antagonistic there?

FORRESTER: No, not at all. They occasionally threw out their barbs, and say what they had to do. But we had good relationships. This is where I had a problem with Andy. I nominated a number of Christians on these leadership exchanges. I got this blistering thing in from Andy, and I thought, "You're not my boss." Apparently he called the State Department and said, "Who are these guys Marty's sending up? Don't you realize they are anti-American? They are giving us a difficult time." I got a letter back from the then Assistant Secretary saying we are getting all this flack, and the AFL-CIO, but we're right behind you. I didn't like that choice of words --"we're right behind you." I wanted them right up front! I think that was Charley Meyers?

Shea: Charlie Meyers, that's right?

FORRESTER: Big, tall guys. 'Right behind me' — no, no, no, no. You get right up front. I don't think he ever forgave me. But as I say, now you have all these Christians attending these seminars. You have at least people from Communist-run unions. I'm not

saying I was out of my time, but that's the way I saw it..

Kienzle: Did AFL deal with any of these forces, other than the equivalent?

FORRESTER: I can't say yes or no. I'm inclined to say, probably not. Their instructions probably came from Washington as a general rule. But I would guess, that on a case by case basis, it takes someone-- this goes back to Peru-- like Tom Miller who was a very independent operator. I'm sure Tom came across someone from, say a CLASK affiliate, who he thought could at least become involved in a dialogue and not one of the deaf, he probably would have risked it or made the recommendation. So it really depends on the Country Director I think and how he saw it, but I think as a matter of policy; I think, that's the message I got, we don't deal with those people. We don't deal with the Christians; we don't deal with the Communists.

Shea: Who was the AFL Representative?

FORRESTER: In Venezuela? There was a Colombian. I think his name was Milanes. It was sort of a holding operation because they were phasing out. They did not have an American there when I was there. It was this guy Jose Milanes, a Colombian guy. He was a bit of an operator, I thought. They eventually closed it out, as you know, but now they may have reopened, using it as a regional office to service the Caribbean. You had a strong labor movement, really. It was very hard to justify worker education and trade union leadership. Those guys were good.

Kienzle: They were already at a high technical level.

FORRESTER: But all this has to go to the context of the Cold War. We never would have had a labor program. the Alliance for Progress — that's what it was all about. I didn't realize it at the time. Maybe I was what the Latin Americans called "tonto util." What is it? The stupid, useful character. Running dog of Wall Street. Imperialistic lackey.

Shea: (foreign expression).

FORRESTER: Same thing. What is that, in Portuguese? Yes. I never considered myself a Cold Warrior. I was just a dedicated trade unionist that... Hey, if there's money for this, it's good. We need it wherever, but you have to look at all that entire program within the Cold War context. I think you can understand when the policy directives coming down from Washington and from AFL-CIO concerning "do not deal with Communists, do not deal with the Christians." I had the feeling that they viewed the Christians as far greater enemies than the Communists.

Kienzle: Is that right?

FORRESTER: Yes. Masparo was all over the place shooting off his mouth, so I think the Communists were just quietly doing a little work, you know..

Kienzle: So was your function there more reporting and contact work?

FORRESTER: In Venezuela? Yes. I was Labor Attaché. A tiny little AFL program and that was primarily exchanges and the rest of it. I think they were doing quite a bit of work with the Housing Bank which was managed by one of the vice-presidents, Executive Board members of the CVD. Yes, it was straight reporting, representation, and so on.

Kienzle: What were the major issues you were following there?

FORRESTER: The major issues, there were something like about 200-300 of the Fortune 500 companies, were right there: Exxon, and Mobil, all the big petroleum interests, and steel and aluminum. You had huge U.S. investment there. Then geopolitically speaking, Cuba was just across the bay, not all that far away. You had very active Communist terrorists there, killing police and threatening the political structure. In terms of its foreign policy interests, the United States had a much greater interest in developments within Venezuela than in Ecuador or Peru.

Kienzle: Was the political system at that point democratic?

FORRESTER: Yes, you had this change of governments from the Accion Democratica people to the Christians. Caldera won in 1968, and it was with great bitterness -- it was almost impossible for the ADECOs to give up. It reminds me a little of Lech Walesa, who was cursing the Democratic Party. He lost. That's what democracy is all about; you win some and you lose some.

Shea: Who was the Ambassador?

FORRESTER: McClintock. He had a brother who was the head of United Fruit in Central America.

Shea: He had come from Argentina. His wife was a Chilean.

FORRESTER: Yes, she was Chilean. She was the daughter of a Foreign Finance Minister of Chile, or something like that.

Shea: How was he to work with?

FORRESTER: Most people couldn’t stand him, and for some strange reason he liked me. He really did, and I don’t know if that’s a compliment or not. He was a very arrogant kind of a guy, sort of the old school in dress and white gloves and all the rest of it. But he liked me.

Shea: I recall that very well. I went down there to see him once, and he spoke highly of you.

FORRESTER: He sent me on from Venezuela to become the Venezuelan Desk Officer

because he felt I knew more people in Venezuela, labor leaders and political leaders, than anyone else. He had some receptions and farewells, the usual thing with a couple of hundred people. Back then, I could remember a couple of hundred names. So-and-so from this union or that, and these were all key players.

You talk about the head of the stevedores, who happens to be a senator; the head of the oil workers, who was one of the most wonderful human beings I've ever met anywhere—Luis DeRar, may he rest in peace. These are all revolutionaries to overthrow the military guy, Jimenes. These guys had been in jail; they'd long paid their dues. They built their unions up from nothing, and the process built up the ADECO party, or built up the Christian, or the COPEI, party.

Shea: They had gotten all kinds of assistance at the time of the dictatorship overthrow from the AFL-CIO.

FORRESTER: Andy had a lot of friends down there.

Shea: Sarafino

FORRESTER: The poor man who never got his ambassadorship. Remember when he came to Ecuador? "Well, Lyndon Johnson is going to send me." Remember how he was sitting up there like a peacock? Sarafino.

Shea: Yes, I remember that very well.

FORRESTER: And the ambassador is in Bernbaum's office. Bernbaum always treated him like a colleague; he just knew he was Mr. Ambassador. He shot that one out of the water.

Shea: He never got over that.

FORRESTER: That's where big mouth certainly didn't pay off, because apparently Lyndon Johnson liked to play everything very, very close. And the word got back that this guy was telling what he was going to do for him.

Kienzle: That was the end of it. Oh man!

Shea: One of the ironic things is that --we were talking about a meeting with Masparo later and he switched 180 degrees. The Assistant Secretary for ARA received Masparo.

FORRESTER: You start talking about the leadership of the AFL-CIO and even Meany, a lot was just backward-looking in terms of foreign policy. This rapid anti-Communism. I'm thinking of the March on Washington which Philip Randolph asked me to support. He wanted official endorsement. And Meany said, "We just don't do things like that. We don't believe in it." And the AFL-CIO did not endorse it. A lot of unions. The ILGW was there, the Service Employees, the UAW, Steelworkers.

Kienzle: What was their reservation about it, about March on Washington?

FORRESTER: Jim, you worked there. I just don't know.

Shea: My feeling was it was opposition, particularly from the Building Trades. And in the Building Trades Unions you had many racists.

FORRESTER: So the racist overtones, in effect? Lane Kirkland once spoke to an SCIU group five or six years ago --I forget where— and he said some unfortunate thing. I wasn't there at this particular meeting, but one of our black vice-presidents came up to me and said, just a couple of years ago, "This guy Lane Kirkland is a racist." I said, "What do you mean by that? How can that be?" I forget what he said, but she went up to confront him after his talk, and he said, (proudly, said she --I mean this is second-hand) "Hey, I'm a red-neck. I'm a South Carolina red-neck. That's the way we are." Now, I didn't hear it, but it's interesting.

Jesse Jackson, for example, when he was campaigning for the presidency, spoke to an executive board or a council meeting. When the members of the council asked him, "What do you think you're going to accomplish? You know you can't win." Jesse said, "Look, it's easier for me to be elected president of the United States than to be elected president of the AFL-CIO."

Kienzle: Well, it wasn't a union, for one thing.

FORRESTER: Well, no, but the point is, we could look at Colin Powell for example, whatever would have happened. There was an acceptance there; seemingly an acceptance of "we could vote for this guy." When I say 'we,' I mean white America. Well, maybe today I could imagine a black person being elected president of the AFL-CIO, after Sweeney. What I'm saying is again it would be easier for Colin Powell to be elected President of the United States than some black president of the AFL-CIO! I'm not talking about today; I'm talking about 30 years ago, that same kind of myopia.

Shea: My strong feeling is Meany came from the .. trades.

Kienzle: Plumbers?

Shea: I can tell you. I worked there for five years. They're very racist organizations. Now they have changed over the years.

FORRESTER: But that was a great feeling, going back if I could, just to Ecuador. This was after, Jim, maybe a couple of years when I was there. One of the chauffeurs came up very quietly and said, "We are all very proud to see you here." I said, "What do you mean by that?" He says, "You're the first black American here in the embassy, ever." We had the black guy there with AID, remember? The architect, the tall fellow, very nice, with the very vivacious wife. You had guys there, I presume, with the AID Mission, but then I

moved over under Jim's recommendation from AID. One, AFL was phasing out, and on the other hand, I became Jim's assistant. So I moved from AID, closed down my office there and moved over to the embassy. It was a year or two thereafter that this chauffeur came up.

Kienzle: Was he an Ecuadoran?

FORRESTER: Yes, they were all indios, Indian types, but they could all relate with me, the non-white.

Shea: In fact they were all beside the pale, too. Many even spoke Quechuan, too.

FORRESTER: It was kind of solidarity. They felt good for me, for what I represented. Not for what I represented, really, but for what my government represented, to have assigned me. That was quite good. Again, it's kind of like in South Africa. Before I went, I had been on the phone many times talking to a couple of trade unionists --

Kienzle: This was later.

FORRESTER: Oh yes, this was last year or a couple of years ago. When I got there, they said, "Whoa, we thought you were white, because every International Affairs Director that we have ever met was white. We just couldn't conceive ...." And they were thrilled, because this showed the progress the United States was making; because we are the measure of their failure or success.

Kienzle: Any other observations you'd like to make about Venezuela before we --

Shea: Did you know Carlos Andres Perez?

FORRESTER: Yes he was the Minister of Interior and therefore very, very close with the Station Chief, who was Puerto Rican and just out of New York, who actually retired there. He divorced his American wife, who was very attractive, and married a very tall, very horsey-looking woman, who apparently had some money, but he was very close to Carlos Andres Perez because of the nature of his work. Carlos at the time was called 'the top cop' of Venezuela.

I just knew it was a country with a future. All of my friends, the labor leaders, they drank Buchanan's Scotch, which is like Johnnie Walker Black Label, but they drank it with Pepsi Cola. Why did they drink it with Pepsi Cola? Because the guy, the Pepsi Cola P.R. guy had sort of come out of the ranks of labor and was very, very close to these guys, all these labor leaders, and kept pushing free cases of Pepsi Cola. Because of his very active, very successful efforts, Venezuela, at least back then, was the only country in the world where Pepsi Cola outsold Coca Cola.

Kienzle Is that right?

FORRESTER: It's a fact, and we'd sit around playing dominos all night long, right by the CTV just outside the headquarters, drinking this great Buchanan Scotch and Pepsi Cola; they all had the latest cars. When I was last in Venezuela, a couple of years ago, it had gone downhill. I never saw something go back in time. The economy went bad. There's been enormous mismanagement, and over-extended credits, and the population explosion — which has doubled in these 30 years or so. Again, it is one of the youngest populations; and you know what young people do.

Kienzle: Radical.

FORRESTER: So the population just goes on and on and on, and it's very difficult for that country to cope with it.

Shea: I met Perez over the years a few times. And I've got to say I really was disappointed with him. He was slick.

FORRESTER: Slimy slick. He just looks slimy slick.

Shea: Yes.

FORRESTER: He just looks slimy slick.

Shea. But smooth.

FORRESTER: It's a pity. He's got a lot of achievements behind him. He's been very, very active on a number of fronts.

Kienzle: He was who? The 8th Minister of Interior?

FORRESTER: He was President. Well, I mean...

Kienzle: Later President.

FORRESTER: Yes. And now he's under house arrest.

Shea: He stole untold millions they say.

FORRESTER: He's got that apartment up in New York that cost a quarter of a million dollars a month, for his bastard children. It's an incredible amount of money! Months. He's renting. It's $100,000 — I mean, it's enormous.

Shea: Something like in Mexico, too, talking about corruption there running into the billions.

Kienzle: Anyhow, after Venezuela you went on to --

FORRESTER: I went on to Desk Officer for Venezuela. That was very challenging --I really enjoyed that— because you're dealing with everybody. Agencies you'd never heard of. You know people are clearing things, getting information about the country from you.

One of the most exciting experiences I had there was when Secretary Rogers made a swing through the northern tier of South America: Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico. We were having problems with the Rio and desalination and the rest of it. There was Colombia, that was sort of troublesome, and it was near Panama and the canals; so there were some real problems. With his good will to Venezuela, there weren't any major problems necessarily, but from the pr aspect. He called me in, and it's exciting for the Secretary to call you in. "Well, Martin, tell me about Venezuela." So I'm running down, I'm feeling good. I was just so full of Venezuela, and he was bored. The history, the geography, the investments, the political structures. He says, "Do they play baseball?" I said, "Yes, they do." Oh, then he got interested! Then I ticked off -- who were the brothers, at that time?

Shea: The great one was Luis Aparicio.

FORRESTER: Aparicio. Well, they were brothers. They had about six, and they were all super-stars. Then he calls over his aide, Walter Bremer. Remember Bremer, the hustler? He ended up as ambassador to Norway. So anyway, he says to Bremer, "Take some notes. Call Buey Cuen. I want to pick up some autographed baseballs from these guys who are all around the country playing the game. You call our what-ever-it-is in the basement of the State Department. They make plaques and things, and put these things together." So, he did it in two to three days. All these baseballs were flying in, autographed, and he put them onto plaques. I said, "Yeah, Caldera (who was President at the time) is really a super fan." And great, man. That really made his day. Thank you very, very much. He didn't give a s--t about the other. He made brownie points when he presented that plaque. I had a photo of it, the presentation of it. That was fun.

At the Desk, every kind of problem. In America today, what is the problem? I was always being 'courted,' taken to lunch by the big oil people, because they were all down in Venezuela, and it was the number one supplier of home heating oil in the United States, the crude oil. So these guys were taking me out to lunch, to expensive restaurants. They're good, they're politicians, and very personable guys. One day I said, "Why are you wasting your time with me? You're taking me out to a nice lunch --($20, to me that was maybe a week's salary!) — why don't you take out the Assistant Secretary or the Secretary?" They'd say, "No, Martin, you don't seem to understand. You make policy." "I make policy?" He said, "Yeah. Who drafts the position papers on any given question, and sends them up to ..? You do." I'd never quite looked at it like that.

Kienzle: It was true though.

FORRESTER: I'd also do the recommendations on a program, you know. Kissinger would say, "Give me three options and the pros and the cons for each, and then a final

recommendation." It is true. It is true. I don't know why I was so dense. It just never occurred to me until I asked the question. You really get involved in every aspect of the life of the country.

For example, when Nixon gave a major speech, part of which dealt with energy and this was during the energy crunch in 1971 or...

Kienzle: 1972 or '73.

FORRESTER: In his first draft he sort of castigated all, 'all of you oil-producing countries,' and I said, "Wait a minute." I had to fight with him within the bureaucracy that Venezuela is an exception. They are not going along with this boycott. I think the President should make that point; and I'll give you language." What is it? Fuels and Energy on the third floor in the Department? Anyway, with some office that monitored fuel and energy, and they got it over to the White House. When Nixon made his speech that night, my words came out of his mouth!

Kienzle: Is that right?!

FORRESTER: Yeah. "However, I want to make an exception that Venezuela is not participating in the boycott." Hey, so you feel good about little things like that.

Kienzle: What years were you on the Desk then?

FORRESTER: I guess 1972-74. Then I went to OECD (Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development), 1974-78.

Kienzle: You were the Labor Advisor there?

FORRESTER: Yes, Labor Advisor. State is great for these titles. I think the title was International Economist. I said, "Sounds nice. You've never called me that before."

Kienzle: Do you want to describe what an International Economist did at the OECD?

FORRESTER: The OECD meets. Basically, that's their job. You've got, at least then, 24 permanent committees, and then a number of ad hoc working parties. I had about seven or eight committees, and these were you might call the 'schlock,' the things the State Department had absolutely no interest in. I had the Ship Building Committee; I had the Working Party on Aluminum; I had, of course, Manpower and Social Affairs Committee. Labor Department backstops that. That's what Maury Rice was working on. I had something called Surrogate Committee on Educational Research and Innovation; I had the Committee on Education, Maritime Transport, Working Party on the Role of Women in the Economy and an Industry Committee, which was again backstopped by Commerce. Everything was backstopped by Commerce or the Treasury. The most important committee was the Finance Committee and the Secretary of the treasury would come in. Then the Foreign Ministers would meet, and Kissinger covered that once a year.

Again, it was just educational. There were numerous problems confronting a whole range of industries, and in many cases, there was no great interest in Washington so they didn't send anyone. They would just send over instructions.

We wanted to have a very close look at aluminum recycling recovery because aluminum is very energy-intensive and this is during the energy crisis. How can we collect, and recycle, this stuff and encourage Western Europe, most of the big OECD members, to do it. They were not at all interested. The French said, "Well, we don't drink our wine out of aluminum cans." It went around and around. There was just no interest. It became almost obscene: "I've got my instructions." So you say, "Well, the position of my government is, whatever." Fine, fine. They finally agreed because it was largely a consensus. They said, "Fine, it's ok. But if your government wants it, then you will have to do it. You, Martin Forrester!"

Which was ok with me. I wrote my own ticket, and I went around to a number of European capitals and talked to those industries that were involved in recycling. There were obviously some, mostly steel, but very little. Europeans don't use aluminum to the extent, at least then, that we do. Glass bottles are used for even beer in Germany and the rest of it. The kinds of generic policies may be applicable to us immediately, in terms of aluminum, and maybe down the road to the Europeans, as they start using more. These are certainly non-traditional foreign policy concerns, but I had a nice trip around Europe, a stop-off in Vienna. We produced a pretty good paper as a matter of fact.

Kienzle: Were there any labor overtones to your work there?

FORRESTER: The labor overtones I left out. There was a Trade Union Advisory Committee, 'TUAC..' And an Industry Advisory Committee. You know we left, we walked out of the ILO. At the same time we walked out of the TUAC.

Kienzle: About 1977 or so?

FORRESTER: Yes, and then Irving Brown brought us back into TUAC. He thought we were missing a bet there. He was the delegate to the Trade Union Advisory Committee; he saw a useful role in that, and so that's where the labor involvement was, and also in a broader sense, Manpower and Social Affairs. They were looking at manpower and training policies, and the Labor Secretary would come over for those meetings. Once we had an historic meeting involving Volpe, Secretaries of Labor or Ministers – European -- and Education. Again this was the 1970's, double-digit unemployment, and was it the Dellum's Act, and unemployment kicks in here. We do this extra training and extend benefits and so on, and we try to make, as a matter of national policies, closer coordination between your educational training programs and the labor market responding to-... I personally feel terrified of the United States of America five or ten years down the road when I look at all these inner-city blacks and Hispanics and what-not, who are just going to be totally unemployable vis-a-vis the computer world, the information world and all the rest of it. They don't have computers, they don't have access to computers, they don't have fathers, and all the other social education. It's really

going to be sad. Why I think about that is just because I'm thinking somehow the closer involvement and coordination between educational offerings and labor market demands, currently projected.

Kienzle: Ray Marshall was--

FORRESTER: He was there. In fact he chaired the session, and every time he spoke, the Scandinavians and the blacks thought, "Spoken like a true Social Democrat."

Kienzle: They loved him in Copenhagen.

FORRESTER: Absolutely; in fact, his son was dying of cancer, in the arm or leg. About 16 years old..

I remember when he came over he said, "Ah this 'jet lag.' Bah humbug, no such thing." He got off the plane there in Paris at whatever, ten o'clock in the morning. He just went right on through for three whole days non-stop. Finally, on the third day, right in the midst of a meeting, klunk!

Shea: Well, Marty, what were your impressions of the French labor leaders?

FORRESTER: In that job I had no contact with French labor leaders, except at the TUAC meetings, which may have been every couple of months or so. However, they didn't play a lead role; they had a senator who represented European labor, and so he was a spokesperson. What they finally got through was the first agreement on a role of conduct for multi-national, what they called 'enterprises,' corporations, to try to get a little more transparency into what they were doing. And to establish some kind of labor codes and ethical codes governing their operations. It was the U.S. which took the lead in trying to just throw that thing out the window altogether. Even Europeans just gave it at least lip service, but the real opposition to having a code in the first place came from the U.S. side.

Kienzle: From the Business side primarily?

FORRESTER: Yes. Business and happily, State Department went along with it-State and Commerce.

Kienzle: You were located in Brussels at that time?

FORRESTER: No. Paris. I was OECD at The Chateau de la Muette. That was the big labor push, a code of conduct.

Kienzle: Shall we continue with the interview? After the OECD tour.

FORRESTER: Then I went off to the embassy in Paris. Well, no as a matter of fact. I went to the Senior Seminar. Let me back up. After the OECD, I went over to the embassy

and Hartman was there, and we met with Hartman. We, a group of us from the OECD from the U.S. delegation, told him what the Europeans were thinking about this. Remember he used to be Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, so he wanted to keep his hand in. We met with him every month, just to brief him and get his interests. Then when my tour was up, he asked if I would be interested in going off to the embassy. I said, "Fine, that's something to think about." But after that tour, I went to the Senior Seminar.

After the Senior Seminar, I went to work with Marion Barry as his International Affairs Advisor. Then Hartman lost his Deputy Chief of the Political Section and asked me again if I wanted to join him. I said yes, I'd be delighted. Then I went off to Paris as Deputy Chief of the Political Section. That was a lot of fun. As I said earlier on, my dossier was east-west, so I had about four guys (all of whom went on to become ambassadors). I had the French dossier.

Shea: Was Ed Martin ambassador there?

FORRESTER: No.

Kienzle: Can we ask you about your time with Marion Barry? Did he do any international traveling at the time?

FORRESTER: Well, he was elected, and I think one of the first things he did was to go off to Africa to an All African Unity Conference. He was very interested in that. And became friends with a couple of Africans. At that time I had finished the Senior Seminar, and he was really very seized with international affairs and interviewed me and, "Fine, I want you to try to work with African student groups." I said, "That's easy, but I think you should reach out to all student groups and universities." I came up with a program.

Probably the most lasting thing as a result of all my efforts: that huge construction going on beside City Hall, right now? That's going to be an international trade and cultural center. That was Martin Forrester's idea...

Kienzle: Is that right?

FORRESTER: that I had pushed. He had said, "Fine. Good idea." And I talked to a lot of the banks around town and a lot of the big builders around town and a lot of people. When I left, he assigned a guy full-time just to work on that project. Now it's being built.

When I was with Sweeney, we were having a problem with the janitors working in the city, and so Sweeney called on the Man. I told Sweeney, "I used to work for the guy. Why don't I go along with you." He said, "Fine. Come along." And this is in 1988, right? They were just digging the foundation. Halfway through the conversation Sweeney's having, or maybe at the end, I said, "Oh by the way, Mr. Mayor, I see that big hole out there. My idea and my work a few years back is coming to fruition. As I understand it, that's going to be the international trade and cultural center. May I suggest that you call it

'The Forrester.'

Kienzle: Did he remember you?

FORRESTER: He looked at me, and thought, "You old f--t. That mother-f----r." Whoa, you should have seen that look. Yeah, he remembered me.

Kienzle: Have you kept up the contact with him?

FORRESTER: I used to get Christmas cards from him. Then I saw him a couple of times during the campaign.

Oh I enjoyed that very much. As I say, there's going to be concrete result, but it's interesting, too, to learn what makes this city run: how it runs, and who the players are. It's certainly not the electorate, I can tell you that. Well, maybe it never is.

Shea: Marty, I am very well acquainted with Bill Simons. We are volunteer teachers of labor history on the George Meany... , and I get some insights on how the city is run from him.

Kienzle: He's from the Teachers' Union.

Shea: He headed up the Teachers' Union for 25 years.

FORRESTER: Yeah.

Shea: In fact, I sent him on an exchange to visit Brazil years ago.

Kienzle: Anyhow we have you back in Paris, with the Political Section. Was there a labor component to your work there?

FORRESTER: No. No. We had the Labor Attaché. The fellow went off to Tokyo.

Shea: John Warnock.

FORRESTER: Yeah. John Warnock. I always found him kind of a dour sort of guy. I don't know if it was turf or what, because he knew I was a labor ..., right? I don't know; I guess he's just that way.

Kienzle: We're trying to persuade John to give an interview, but he's a little reluctant at this stage.

FORRESTER: Funny guy.

Kienzle: And after Paris. Did you go back to the Department?

FORRESTER: Yes. I went back just for Swedish language training and area studies. Then I went up as Consul General to Gothenburg, which was my last assignment. I was in the process of getting divorced and had a good friend there and I decided to retire and stay in Sweden doing something or other, which I did.

Kienzle: This would be what year?

FORRESTER: 1987. '86 or '87. My mother became rather ill, so I decided to come back and spend maybe a month or so with her and have been here ever since.

Kienzle: Do you still own a home in Sweden?

FORRESTER: No. We were just renting. I married a Swedish lady, and then got divorced from the Swedish lady.

Shea: Marty, what about the Swedish labor union movement?

FORRESTER: No, you know as much about it as I do. I wish we had a Swedish labor movement here. What is the organization, about 70 percent if not more?

Shea: 70 or 80 percent.

FORRESTER: Yes, it's up there, but they also control the funds, the retirement money, the pension fund. So it's something of an incentive to join a union. Plus, they have a different tradition or what not, and there is a notion, as you find throughout Europe, of 'social partners,' with a couple of exceptions maybe England. The trade union has its history, but in terms of employer cooperativeness you have it to a much lesser extent than a very a hostile government. But even the conservative government in Scandinavia are not hostile to the notions of trade unions. So you have a different history.

Kienzle: They accept the legitimacy of one another?

FORRESTER: Oh, absolutely.

Shea: That's quite true in Spain and Italy, too. Where you have the history of the anarchists and the socialists. You think it's going to be permanent class welfare, and it's far from that. One thing there, in my opinion, is that unions are accepted in Europe. Here they're not.

FORRESTER: Oh yes. No, they're not.

Kienzle: After you came back, you started working again with the -

FORRESTER: I needed a job, and I guess I bumped into Jay Mazur, just bumped into him. I used to work with Jay, in fact, in the Garment days. I said, "Jay, hey I'm looking

for a job. You have anything?" He said, "Sure, I could always use you, Marty. But you'd have to move to New York City. Are you living here?" I said yes, I'm living here. And he said, "It's the Garment Workers; and it doesn't pay anything at all. But I'll call John Sweeney. You must know John Sweeney." I said, "No, I don't know him at all." " Well, you and he were both working at the ILGWU at the same time at the International Headquarters." John was in the Research Department, which I think was on the second floor, and I was in the Political Education Department with Gus Tyler, which was up on the fourth floor. So, here we were these two young guys passing each other. That's the way it is. He said because his international person was leaving, he was going back to New York. I called a couple of old friends in SCIU, rather than go directly to Sweeney. I had some interviews, and finally they said, "Well, you should talk to John Sweeney." I did.

Kienzle: So the chemistry was good?

FORRESTER: Yes.

Kienzle: Are you still employed with SIU?

FORRESTER: I retired in July.

Kienzle: Just about the time John Sweeney was elected.

FORRESTER: He was elected just in October. No, I don't know. I do know, like both of you, we've worked 40-some years of our lives. My health is fair, but I figure in these last few years or whatever they are going to be, just to do whatever I want to do. I do some consulting for the union and I'm available. In the foreign service I never punched a clock, and you're still working for somebody else, all be it's your cause, it's what you believe in. I was running out of energy, and I know I was rather hurt by this last divorce. Then it just took a whack out of my spirits. So, I've got time like everyone else for, you know, grandchildren and children, pursuing interests.

Kienzle: Are you working on any special projects at this point for your own edification?

FORRESTER: Well, I'm trying to promote marvelous art forms coming out of South Africa.

Shea: Oh really?

FORRESTER: Castings from South Africa's number one sculptor, Casper Darare. They're so incredibly beautiful; what appeals to me is that this is something that I want every black American, and certainly every white and non-white, every American, to see because this is comparable to whatever you'll see in any museum. Of course when a black head goes to the Metropolitan Museum of Art History, he's seeing European figures. This is classical, really fine art. It is by a black African, of the tribes of Southern Africa. That's the series that he's doing, for a certain sense of pride. My God, we're

capable of doing that; then I can do that. I just know that all blacks of whatever economic strata...(TAPE ENDS)

End of interview