

The Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Program
Labor Series
Foreign Assistance Series

BEN HASKELL

Interviewed by: Morris Weisz
Initial interview date: June 17, 1992
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background

| | |
|---|-----------|
| BA, City College of New York | 1925–1929 |
| MA in Colonial Labor History, Columbia University | 1929–1930 |
| New York State Labor Department—Division of Minimum Wage | 1929–1930 |
| Brooklyn College—part-time History Professor | 1930–1938 |
| Rand School of Social Science—Continuing Education Professor | 1930–1938 |
| National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)—Economic Research Division | 1939–1940 |
| Vocational Training Program | 1941–1942 |
| American Federation of Labor (AFL)—Trade Union Researcher | 1944–1952 |
| Defense Production Board, Labor Division—Researcher | 1952–1954 |

Entered the Foreign Service **1954**

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Washington, D.C.—USAID, Advisor Foreign Operations Administration in Western Europe | 1954–1957 |
| Paris, France—USAID, Advisor Organization for European Economic Co-operation) NATO portfolio Wrapping up the Marshall Plan | 1957–1960 |
| Washington, D.C.—USAID, Advisor Fostering AID Labor Programs, Near East and South Asia (NESA) Iran, Shah’s disinterest India programs, internal travel, Contribution of Organization for Rehabilitation and Training Visiting Indian Bureau of Labor Statistics in Shimla Restructuring of the NESA Labor Office Observations on Pakistan | 1960–1975 |

Observations on Turkey, internal travel
Observations on other U.S. bureaucracies
Competing with Communism in India
Observation on what development programs are appropriate

Retirement

July 1975

INTERVIEW

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

Q: Today is June 17, 1992, and I want to interview Ben Haskell, an old friend of mine who served for many years in the AID agencies, but we are going to begin by asking Ben to spend a little time on his educational and social background before going into his government work very briefly, and then specifically into his work with the AID agency. Ben, won't you start.

HASKELL: Well, I am in the peculiar position or fortunate position of being born into a family that you might call a labor family, because my father was an employee of the Jewish Daily Forward which was not merely a Yiddish, Jewish newspaper but a Jewish labor newspaper in the sense that it was very close to the trade union movement, especially the Jewish needle trades in New York.

At the same time, my sister, who was the eldest in a family of four kids, happened to get work with the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU). She also worked with the editor of the Jewish Forward at one point as secretary for some years and was present at the post WWI split of the Socialist movement which is very close to the Jewish needle trades. This is where the split between the Communists and the Social Democrats occurred. Her name is associated with many of the presidents and secretaries of the ILGWU, the names of which sometimes escape me, but people like Sigmund and Dubinsky and Schlesinger and people of that type as well as Abe Cohen, the editor of the Jewish Forward. She was even there when the Communists had taken in the mid 20's and they valued her and used her, although they knew her antithetical views of their social views on both unions and politics. So, that's interesting and relevant, because in later years, she became close friends of many of them who returned to the Socialist movement, ex-Communists, whether it was Lovestone or the former dressmakers union leader Charles Zimmerman, and many other people.

You see, my background through my family is varied. I might add parenthetically, that my oldest brother, who was second in line in the family, was a very active member of the old teachers union when they became the Teachers Guild because there was a Socialist-Communist split in the teachers union.

Q: This is Harry?

HASKELL: No, my brother Charlie. My Brother, Harry, who had been training as a lawyer, never really did practice law, though he used it, and he eventually turned up as the man who took care of the old age retirement program of the ILG (Labor Union) and was very close to the people in Local 10, the cutters local, who used him in a number of ways aside from his ILG functions. So you see, I didn't come full blown out of Zeus' head; I had a background in this area.

Q: Ben, on the basis of other interviews I have been conducting, I think it would be relevant, if you are willing at this point, to describe the ideological situation in the 20's at a point when you are mentioning your sister Hannah's position with the Communists even when they had control of the ILGWU (International Ladies Garment Workers Union). I'd like you to develop this for a few minutes so we would have it on the record. The typical relationship between the Communists and the Socialists in the ILG and other unions in the Socialist movement, the different relationship at that time as against later on when their enmities were much sharper especially in the international field. Am I wrong in saying that there was sort of a feeling that these guys in the same movement, we attacked them and they attacked us, but we accept the idea that they are part of a genuine radical movement whereas later on it was criticized.

HASKELL: Well, there were subtle differences between then and now, but they are not all in my opinion what you might think. My father, I might elucidate, was a very active and high official in the workmen's circle, in addition to working for the Jewish Forward, As far as I remember when I was a kid, he always was a member of the executive board, traveled around the country for them because of his Forward connections.

Q: The Workmen's Circle was a social organization.

HASKELL: It was a fraternal, social, and insurance organization of many people in the labor and collateral field. They too were affected by anything that happened in the labor movement just as the Jewish trade unions were affected by any political fights in the Socialist Party or the socialist general mutual aid movement. In the Workmen's Circle, this fraternal society, I recall that my father was not so friendly because he had to almost literally physically throw the Communists out of branches, cut them off because they were destroying the unity of the local affiliates of the Workmen's Circle in their attempt to take physical and ideological control of the whole national institution.

Q: Thank you. Let's continue, Ben.

HASKELL: Along the same line, my brother Charlie was in the teachers' union when the Communists had tried to and succeeded in taking hold of a group in the teachers union that had been active; people whose names might mean something to you like Abe Lefkowitz, Linville. They were those kinds of fine, progressive, usually pro-Socialist or progressive liberal people who could not bear the controls and especially the hidden operations of the Communists in the teachers' union and therefore split away as the teachers; guild. There was great bitterness there too, because...

Q: Were the teachers union members of the AFL (American Federation of Labor) at the time as well as the guild?

HASKELL: I believe, if my memory serves, I believe that they were, but eventually the teachers union was kicked out with a lot of Communist unions. Again, if my memory still holds valid.

Q: Later on I'll be trying to develop with you the relationship between this background of yours and what you did and believed in later in the Foreign Service.

HASKELL: Yes, but we'll hold that because I have more that I would like to say about the background which might explain my reactions which I'll mention later. That is that I have to describe my education as well as my family background and connections having got out of high school as a very young kid at the age of 15. I was in City College at a really remarkably early age in the 20's between '25 and '29, and there too, I had occasion because the kids, many of us, were politically oriented and sometimes it came up in discussions.

Q: Were you at City College itself, or Brooklyn College?

HASKELL: No, this was City College. I was in the first class that opened up Brooklyn College or what they called it then if I remember rightly, the Brooklyn Center of City College down on Lawrence Street near Court Street, downtown Brooklyn. It happened to be in my senior year I believe. I might add that when we were at City, the kids got into rows because of the Communist Socialist split. I'm hesitant to mention names, though these two people are dead. Two of them who were very nice intelligent people were vehement Communists, and it was the time of the 1927 strike of the Berlin tram workers. Of course, this was the place which some of you may remember, the time when the Communists and the Fascists were there, 1929, so it's just before Hitler took over or raised his head. They joined the right-wing Fascists because they were opposed to the Weimar government. We had bitter disputes about this. People like Harry Oberg and Rose Alford's brother David. Anyway, I personally started having experiences with Communist scrapping and defending of what I considered then and still do indefensible behavior on the part of their so-called comrades.

Q: Their willingness to join the right to defeat...

HASKELL: A decent liberal, they weren't all socialists. They were often people who wanted progress in Germany at that time. They did have postwar headaches and the Communists were acting like a bunch of great perfectionists and using untouchables to destroy good people.

Q: That was part of your education.

HASKELL: That was part of my background and education. Eventually, when I

graduated from school -- I was in the field of history -- I went to Columbia for a year. I got my masters between '29 and '30. I continued and took all my coursework for a doctorate. I never went to the doctorate, but I got my masters in a curious subject of colonial labor history, something called if I remember rightly and I don't even know the name or have a copy, something like Class Feeling and Class Consciousness in Colonial America. It was something that Alan Nevins and Professor Green at Columbia said they knew nothing about and they'd have to take my word for it. It was a new subject at that time. Of course, lots of work has been done since. Mine was probably a trivial and introductory subject, but they were impressed enough to give me a masters.

Q: Ben, I'd strongly recommend that if your daughter Ellen does have a copy that you lend it to the Meany or the Reuther Archives at least to make a copy of it because it is the sort of thing they really should have.

HASKELL: I don't know how much value it is anymore. I haven't re-read it in 50 years. Anyway, when I finished up at Columbia, no, during the period I was taking courses, I was working at the State Labor Department with people like Jack Barbash and the wife of, who is the professor of nationality history at Harvard? Her name was Berg.

Q: Was it Francis? I mean was he in the group?

HASKELL: No. Anyway, we were working there. It was in the division of women and minimum wage problems in the state labor department near City Hall in New York City. This happened while I had been asked to teach at Brooklyn College some courses in the evening in the field of general history. A lot of it was medieval and non-Europe and occasionally gave courses in American history which was my own field of you might call it expertise, but knowledge. I was given this job by my former professor, Jesse Clarkson, a very nice person, and I was there for eight years. This is purely by way of describing me, but it has relevance to what we have just been talking about because although we were in an evening session at Brooklyn College. It became Brooklyn College; it had been the Brooklyn Center as I mentioned. There was quite a bit of turmoil because the teachers had created a teachers' organization, and some of those people were Commies or fellow travelers. The brother of one of my brother's very good friends was a professor of English who was unfortunately, although a great professor of English, a dyed in the wool Commie who in my opinion was taking orders and trying to take control of the teachers group there. I think, if I recall right, they were some kind of affiliate of the teachers union, and I although not a member of either one, was obviously an informed person because of my background and my brother's activities in the teachers organization field. We had many arguments and fights. I was not an innocent. I had already discovered to my dismay that this not only affected other parts of the labor movement, but also the educational system in New York.

Subsequently, I found myself in the late 30's getting a phone call from Jack Barbash who was working for David Saposs (who Morrie Weisz has mentioned to you in another connection because he was with the National Labor Relations). Not from David Saposs but from Jack Barbash who was working for David Saposs in the NLRB (National Labor

Relations Board) economic research division because there was a job available, and Jack knew that I needed a job because teaching was just part time and not very remunerative. It was heartwarming, and that was about it.

Q: Did you actually take a Civil Service exam or...

HASKELL: I was on several Civil Service lists in the social sciences, and Jack and Dave said I would be very good or appropriate.

Q: You knew both of them.

HASKELL: Yes. I knew both of them quite well. Dave just casually, but Jack because he was in the division of minimum wage in the state labor department where I had worked. We had worked cheek by jowl there for people whose names escape me at the moment but I could dredge up. In any case, I went to work at the NLRB where we all first met. There I discovered to my dismay that the NLRB was afflicted with the same illnesses that I had discovered in my personal vocational life and in my family experience with the Communists and the left wing. I found that the board was afflicted. The top members of the NLRB, some of them were not exactly kosher, and in addition, unfortunately, after I was there for less than a year or about a year, I found that Dave was being attacked.

Q: This is Dave Saposs.

HASKELL: Right. Allegedly by right wingers in Congress, but actually we felt the finger pointing was from people like Pressman and others, one of the Smiths at the board and perhaps others whom I no longer recall.

Q: This was one of these things that could be sort of an alliance to see who was the most reactionary.

HASKELL: Absolutely. One of the heartwarming by-products of this, which I think is important to mention because it proves one of my and Morrie's later points in the later part where we discuss the AID attaché business with Labor, is that the person who went to bat for Dave and wouldn't let them crucify him was a Republican Congressman from Michigan named Engel who was a very honest though conservative person. When Dave went up and spoke to him, he became convinced that Dave was absolutely innocent of the alleged charges made against him. I remember having a long fight, not a fight, an argument with George Brooks who was the deputy to Dave, because George, whose background is so different from ours, couldn't believe all this, and he thought we saw crazy visions of Communists under every bed. He found it difficult to believe that the source of Dave and the labor division's problems was the same Communist infiltrations and eating away at the foundations, even those reputations and jobs of people whom they would like to remove as an obstacle. Eventually, George, I think, was convinced that he wasn't right.

Q: He probably accused you of having some conspiracy theory rather than a genuine

assessment.

HASKELL: Yes. I could understand that even because there are people who have obsessive manias. I don't think ours was an obsessive mania because I found it in my experience to happen all over the lot in different institutions so that this was not obsessive; it became a conviction. In any case, Engel did protect Dave. I had to leave because they attacked the division, and we had to reduce, and I moved over to the Social Security Administration for a while.

Q: So you came to Washington in '39.

HASKELL: '39, November.

Q: And you left?

HASKELL: I can't remember, but it was the following year, about 1940.

Q: They took the tack of abolishing David's division to get rid of him even though he was defended.

HASKELL: Right. In any case, Dave helped me get a job with an old acquaintance of his, a lady whose name I don't remember, who was head of the research division of Social Security Administration across the street at the Rochambeau Building. I was there for a short time. Meantime, Jack Barbash had gone to set up the vocational training program under the Defense Act. He asked me to come over there to work with him on that, and young Cy Rottenberg, if you remember him. We had a good time there and did very useful work. I learned an awful lot about the importance of vocational training which has stood me in good stead to this day and certainly in my AID activities, an appreciation of the overemphasis on academic education against the importance not merely with primitive people abroad, but uncivilized people right in our own country who could better benefit from vocational things rather than the academics which is too much for them. In any case, Cy and I, having watched in the interim, the shenanigans in the labor movement of the Communists. There had been a split between the AFL (American Federation of Labor) and the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations), and the penetration even under John Lewis and later Phil Murray of the CIO by Commie elements who as usual offered their services and unfortunately were accepted by people who should have known better.

Q: They were unwilling, these people like Murray and Lewis, to discriminate against Communists.

HASKELL: That's right. Plus the fact that they did prove useful. They were activists in a period of activism, and they underrated the importance of ideological commitment and guidance. They didn't really have a realistic idea of the nature of a Communist institution where it isn't individual judgment and error that is at stake; it's guidance from a center. Cy Rottenberg and I, on our own, decided to make a little offhand research study of the

degree of penetration of the various unions, Commie unions entering the CIO. We did this not merely by analyzing officials and their backgrounds.

Q: You and Cy Rottenberg did an informal study of the degree of penetration of Communists within the CIO unions.

HASKELL: Yes. We took each one. I can't give you the details anymore without having the document in front of me, but I think both of us were pretty shocked young people at that time with lots of experience regarding this, and we analyzed it in statistical terms so as to try to be objective. It was incredible to what extent the penetration had occurred in these unions, in these new affiliates of the CIO as well as in places like steelworkers, auto workers, locals etc. Wholesale, retail workers; I can't think of all the...

Q: Did you distinguish, and this becomes important in international affairs also, did you distinguish the degree to which that penetration was represented by conscious agents of Communist policy and innocents that they were able to surround themselves with by attacking opposition to them as being not liberal or just Fascist or something like that.

HASKELL: Yes. Well, at that time, if I recall rightly, the Soviet Union was not yet, let's see, when was that? It was about '41. It was before Hitler attacked the Soviet Union.

Q: It was after the pact that Stalin and Hitler signed.

HASKELL: Or Molotov and von Ribbentrop signed.

Q: But before the Stalinists became kosher because they had been attacked by Hitler.

HASKELL: Exactly. We weren't attempting to involve people who were ignorant rather than Communist. Just real guys who we knew through other associations, memberships and affiliations were obviously party characters. We also, as I recall it, analyzed the resolutions they passed, the fellow traveling organizations they worked with.

Q: The identical language they used in resolutions.

HASKELL: Exactly! This was not a terribly difficult thing, and once we got down to it, between the two of us since we had the backgrounds, we came up with a very interesting analysis of this. I forget what we did with it to make it available to people.

Q: There is no hope that we can get a copy of that? It would be very relevant to the Reuther Archives which have gone into great detail within the auto industry. You couldn't put your finger on it?

HASKELL: There is only one hope, and I have a feeling we threw everything out clearing out our lives and files. Cy may have a copy. I certainly had a copy. I can see if my daughter in California may have kept one. I have turned over a lot of junk of the past to her, but I wouldn't blame her if she may have thrown it out. It may not be meaningful

to her. Anyway, going from there it might be relevant to go on to my employment record to give you a background. When the War Production Board thing came up, George Brooks had become a worker for Sidney Hillman at the War Production Board Labor Division. Many of our friends were there working with George on war industry problems. He thought I might be useful there, and the vocational training thing, if I recall rightly, was having some budget problems. I recall accepting a job there, and I worked on such curious things as the container industry.

Q: I remember distinctly your work on a couple of aspects of the container industry. Was it a fact that you joined George when he was working for Hillman or had he gone over to the AFL side with Joe Keenan?

HASKELL: No. Well, you may be right. Was it Keenan and Hillman who were there?

Q: No. Hillman I think I covered in my interview. Hillman had been hired by Roosevelt for a specific job in war production. Then they established the War Production Board under a guy named Nelson. The AFL side and the CIO side, the AFL side was with Joe Keenan from the electrical workers, and Quentin Golden was the CIO guy. They got along well. The assistant was George.

HASKELL: OK. I stand corrected. I only remember that Hillman had a guy working from the amalgamated to try to stop my appointment, and Joe had to go to Hillman to get the guy off his back and let him hire me because this goes back to the ACWA, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, and the ILG because of my connections through my sister with the ILG.

Q: Let's go to something else since we are becoming slightly conspiratorial. Didn't Hillman have communists on his staff? He was also unwilling to discriminate against Communists, and he used them just like John L. Lewis did. I know nothing about this, but I'm ready to suspect that there is somebody...

HASKELL: I only know what members of my family told me in those years. It used to be part of the family talk about Hillman's attitudes and behavior. I didn't have direct contact, but this was common knowledge, let us say about what you are saying.

Q: But Ben, the reason I mention this, and this too has relevance to the international workers. To what degree was that side guilty of that sort of behavior as against the fact that he had no compunction of telling people not to hire other people because he felt on the basis that they were Communists. There was this type of refusal on accountants in the office side.

HASKELL: There was a completely different thing. Even Hillman would have his fights with Dubinski but he did not feel that was the reason not to hire me. He was not hostile at all. This came out through Brooks who informed me of this. There was no such attitude toward me. Of course, he at that time was letting Commies in but that didn't reflect on his attitude toward people like me. He didn't know me from a hole in the ground, except as

Hannah's brother. He knew my sister and Dubinski and all the ILG people and there was a different kind of feeling there. Disagreements, yes, but hostility, no. Anyway, it was one of his quasi-legal men who was guilty of this. His name I no longer recall. George Brooks would have. Going back, I stayed there through the war. About 1942

Q: Were you working on ports?

HASKELL: Oh yes, all sorts of things. Paper containers, all kinds of containers, cans, cardboard.

Q: The issues there were the question of how much of this stuff was necessary for war production. There had to be some for consumer needs because of the total economy.

HASKELL: Absolutely. And to what extent it might affect labor requirements, displace workers unduly. There were all kinds of labor by-products of wartime regulation in the attempt to save materials whether it was tin or paper or whatever. In any case, toward the end of that period, I was approached by Dubinski who came to town for something, saying that some young union was looking for a research man. He didn't know whether I was happy where I was or I was ready for a change and they wanted somebody for research and as an editor and all that and he could only think of me as a possibility. I was on the spot. I gave it thought and was attracted simply because I've always enjoyed the idea of writing and putting out a publication and doing the research I was accustomed to. So, I went to the AFL (American Federation of Labor) textile workers union which was the counterpart of the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations) union under Reeve with Barkin as my counterpart. Of course, I had known Barkin and my brother had known Barkin for years. There were no hostilities on a personal level.

Q: Was this before the end of the war?

HASKELL: If I recall rightly, I went to work for the AFL textile workers in 1944, just before the end of the war. I stayed with them acting as a trade union researcher and was active with other AFL (American Federation of Labor) researchers also in the organization, whose name escapes me, that put out newspapers and gave out awards for one thing or another, because I put out the union's newspaper.

Q: The International Labor Press Association?

HASKELL: I think it was. And stayed with them until '50 or '52 was it? Anyway what happened was that Joe Keenan had gone to work in the Korean War for the Defense Production Board. He was head of the labor division there, and he wanted somebody who was sort of a quasi-academic research type to help him and maybe staff. Actually, I was there pretty much as a one man show. He had other staff with labor people for other kinds of work. I stayed there until '54. Then I went to the Foreign Operations Administration which was the predecessor of ICA and AID.

Q: So you came there as late as '54. I would have thought you were there earlier.

HASKELL: No, '54 when John Mescanin was there. I think Mescanin was working under Cruikshank.

Q: Cruikshank was in Paris at the time. John Mescanin was a fascinating character.

HASKELL: He sure was.

Q: I'd like to have him characterized from your point of view.

HASKELL: He was a strictly labor guy out of the railway union, the railway clerks union if I remember rightly, with Harrison. So eventually I retired in '75 from AID. So that's my biography.

Q: This is an interview with Ben Haskell, and we are continuing from where we left off yesterday. Yesterday we went through the biographical or chronological background. Today most of our time will be spent in the actual Foreign Aid program you were participating in. Ben, go ahead. You said you had something to add to yesterday's introductory remarks.

HASKELL: I think there are several things in the course of our discussion which I hadn't dredged up out of my memory which occurred to me as being possibly pertinent. The first one is back in the 30's in addition to my college teaching at Brooklyn College, I also taught at the Rand School of Social Science which is a Socialist labor institution, or used to be on 15th Street in New York City. There I taught adults who were simply interested in continuing education as we say today. We didn't have that phrase in those days. I pretty much taught them the college history of Europe and America that I did at school except that it was watered down to the needs of people who work all day at all sorts of crafts, mostly, I believe, needle trades people but many others who came from all sorts of places. That for me was an interesting experience, but the Rand school was an interesting institution where labor and socialists had set up an educational arm of their, as they put it, movement. In addition to the school's being a school, the Rand School had offshoots. One of them was sort of a research section. Eventually I helped produce two types of publications under their auspices and under the leadership of different people. In the first place they produced an annual labor yearbook. In my time, I was a kid at the time, I was assisting Nathan Fine who was the formal director there in collecting and writing up material, because the yearbook covered everything in the field of trade union organization, labor legislation, international activities, social history, and socialist history etc.

Q: I'm trying to get names into these things. Wasn't Algernon Lee...

HASKELL: I'm coming to that. The second thing I did in connection with the library at the Rand School where there was a need of technical nature for students and scholars, I was asked to do on a monthly basis, what they called, I've forgotten the formal title, it was the summary or rather the précis of important articles in the field of labor education

and social political activity taken from the periodical literature of the time, not necessarily Socialist.

I remember I'd go to the Russell Sage Foundation library where they had every kind of important kind of periodical, because this was taking articles out of periodicals, lists of periodicals and listing them under categories so as to assist students and scholars interested in certain types of material. We produced this month after month. Now, in that connection I got to know the head of the Rand School who was a very important and interesting personality in my opinion and also a very fine human being. That was Algernon Lee who was an old time Socialist with a scholarly background. They called him a Marxist. Looking back now, I was a kid, but as an old man, he was what we would now properly call a Bernsteinian, a social democrat in the literal sense of the term. In my inevitable discussions with him about anything and everything, I now realize that for me he laid the groundwork of the importance of democracy, democratic procedure, of the democratic part of the social democratic title. Otherwise, although he didn't use the term, in my terms Socialism became a form of totalitarianism, of dictatorship, of rule from above by a self-appointed gang of people trying to create a society in the image of their vision.

Q: But he did call himself a Marxist.

HASKELL: Yes, he called himself a Marxist, but I would call him now looking back, and he probably would have agreed if I had called it to his attention, which I wasn't sophisticated enough to do at the time as a youngster, a real Bernsteinian. At that time even he was emotionally and intellectually aware of the importance of democratic procedure to save Socialism from that fate that I mentioned.

Q: Even Bernstein looked upon himself as using one part of Marx, the dictatorship of the proletariat, but the democratic part.

HASKELL: Yes. Of course, one can argue about Marx's awareness of the democratic part as it protected him abroad from his enemies at home.

Q: There is a whole lot to be said about that, and I hope that you will discuss it later on.

HASKELL: Well, the other activity, in which case we might discuss it, in the course of the '30s since I had a background both in terms of family, and a slight education in Yiddish speech and writing and reading, I at that time as sort of a young aspiring student, was reading not merely the New York World or the New York Times or the New York Herald Tribune, but also the *Jewish Daily Forward* because I could read it. We did not really speak it at home, but my father was a member of the *Forward*. I read every other newspaper from the *Communist Freiheit* to the *Zionist Day*. My father would bring all these home, and I was aware of what was going on. But, at that time, because it was in the 30's, and already people from the Russian intelligentsia who were living in New York, who still were not acquired to do American things but were still following things back home in Eastern Europe, were writing articles of a very extraordinary nature. People like

Raphael Abramovitch, Usherovich, and others whose names escape me at the moment. I sat down and translated a lot of these things for re-publication in the Socialist New Leader. There were quite a few articles of that nature which I did. I even sent some, not for personal glory but hoping it would get picked up by the *Toronto Star* or people like that, or the *Christian Science Monitor*, because I felt that these people had something to offer to the American public which was completely ignorant of the meaning of what was going on in the Soviet Union in the anti-Kulak raids and the destruction of the Ukraine and other parts of Russia, and also in the nature of Communist tyranny and dictatorship which they had already become aware. At that time, Kautsky's articles appeared in the *Forward* and I even translated those, though he was sort of a right wing Marxist opposing Trotsky and Lenin and all those people.

Q: But he also opposed Bernstein.

HASKELL: He hadn't absorbed the Bernsteinian type. Bernstein didn't know it; he was an American in his mentality, a democratic mentality. Anyway, this was a part of my background that I thought was pertinent to my development as a labor person who was equipped to do labor work.

Q: In other words, your relationships with Europe were one of understanding what was going on there which enabled you to enter the field you were so active in. You had a background that was helpful in understanding and affecting labor.

HASKELL: I thought this. There is one more thing before we leave the subject. During the same 30's because my teaching was at night, and I had plenty of time. Not only did I have a short time of work at the State Labor Department in the minimum wage field with lots of field studies and all that kind of fare all over the place, especially in Long Island. I worked for several, as I recall rightly two or three years at least, with Abraham Epstein, the father of social insurance in this country on his famous book called *Social Security* and wrote the basis of several of the chapters, and even had a chapter on the federal aid system in the United States which was a mechanism used for various things including social legislation. This gave me great insight into what we would call today labor administration or labor ministry activities, and I think this is relevant to my future activities in AID (Agency for International Development).

Q: I think that there is one interesting aspect of this that I have noted that I would like you to comment on, and that was that in many of these areas, Social Security being one, that is the man with the ideas got it earlier than the legislation supporting it, did not feel comfortable in the actual administration of it. He never got involved once the role was passed. He was disappointed that it wasn't the perfect one.

HASKELL: Well, this is normal. People with ideas and insights and vision are different from people who have the talent to write up legislation. People who have the talent to write up legislation are not necessarily, in my opinion, the perfect people to enforce and set up an organization to carry out the purpose of such laws.

Q: It has been my point of view the relevance of that fact, the difference between thinking the idea out, writing the law and administering the law becomes very important in places that I have visited and worked, especially in India where the people who originated something are totally out of place.

HASKELL: Completely, because it is a different skill, talent, and mentality. Abe Epstein, and I might say a few words about him because he was a remarkable, crazy, but capable person; a wonderful propagandist, not in the cheap sense, but in the sense that he was affected by this basic idea. He did prepare material, and most of it he did on his own, as we say out of his own head, and appeared before state legislative bodies to push what he called the worker's pension idea and similar things in the labor field. I remember particularly the one in Pennsylvania where he was very active. If I recall rightly, his book or at least the preface or foreword to his book indicates some of these things. He even had people help him and set up sort of an association, The American Association for Social Security which was just a mechanism to support Abe in the work because he couldn't travel otherwise, he couldn't do things, he couldn't even hire kids like me and older people like somebody whose name I still don't remember. Not Rashenbush, somebody that was not necessarily in the labor field or known in the labor movement, but a very good person.

Q: The other aspect that I would like to have you comment on is, by the way, you said out of his own head, but he actually had access to all this European experience which he studied.

HASKELL: Yes.

Q: The thing I would like you to comment on in this respect is the fact that these people that we have developed not only know the field and are good at developing the ideas but not good at translating them into legislation or certainly not into administration. The problem is that in translating it into legislation, compromises are made and sometimes you can't accept the compromises.

HASKELL: Inevitably. The originator or the seeming originator of ideas, that is an affliction on his little baby, but this is not the way political reality works. You do have to have compromise. If the compromise is too much, it is understandable that there be objections, but they are emotionally incapable of accepting limits.

Q: Well, that's very interesting... OK we are now at the point I guess where you have entered the Washington office of the AID program. You entered that at the invitation of I forgot who you said bid you to join the group headquarters in the Longfellow building. You were introduced there.

HASKELL: I came to the Foreign Aid Administration after having been at the Korean War production agency under Joe Keenan and his assistant. I came there because with my background and history and foreign relations, even though it was foreign labor relations, especially because it was foreign labor relations, I was interested in what was happening

abroad. This was toward the end of the Marshall Plan days, '54, and...

Q: You came there as late as '54? I thought it was earlier.

HASKELL: No. I don't think so. I think it was '54. Anyway, I'm relying on memory, and it may have been '53, somewhere in there. It couldn't be before '50; the Korean War was on. Joe Mintzes might remember more adequately or correctly than I do. John Meskanin was there, and I think Mr. Meany or somebody sent me over there.

Q: Was Bert Jewell there, or had he been succeeded by Meskanin?

HASKELL: No.

Q: That is probably when it was late '53 or '54.

HASKELL: Yeah, I'm pretty sure that is the correct area of time. In any case, John asked me to work under Joe Mintzes who had a unit there on Western European Marshall Plan country activities. It was really the end of the thing, although for the short period I was there we still worked on Western European Marshall Plan things. A lot of things we acquired were a revelation and some of it was a corroboration of what I had known through my knowledge of what the international activities and Dubinski's international activities were really like in England, France, Italy especially, and then of course, Germany. With some general background of the labor movements of those countries and the impact of the War on them, it was evident that a certain amount of assistance to resuscitate existing institutions, this was not to establish them but to help them and to resuscitate themselves as a force in a democratic Western Europe. Here again, the big problem had been that, just to use France as an illustration, Dan Horowitz would be your best source. The Communist movement was a big obstacle because of the postwar behavior of the Russian Soviet regime. Italy, and Danny there also, was another example. The division of the labor movements in France, the leading federation of labor, was a Communist controlled operation the CGT (General Confederation of Labour). In Italy, it was a real split. The Communists were dominant. I've forgotten the acronym, I think CGIL (Italian: Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro). The Christians had their chisel; the Socialists had the UIL, just as in France the equivalent was ouvriere.

Q: Oh, I don't think the force ouvriere...

HASKELL: Was that later?

Q: No the force ouvriere was at that time, but it definitely was not affiliated with the Socialist International like the wheel was. It was a really independent unit.

HASKELL: Right, technically independent, but the people there came from those who were not Christian or Communist. It's the everybody else category. In any case, going back to what I was saying, this was a fascinating study for me personally.

Q: Well, was it a study or were you, what did you do there? I think that's the question.

HASKELL: Well, actually, what I helped Joe to do was to analyze proposed programs or projects to assist not merely the union movements, although that was obviously a very important key activity of the labor division of a foreign aid. It's called Foreign Operations Administration. But also assist where necessary or make people or information available in the field of labor ministry activity. Obviously the British were just as sophisticated as we were. The trade union, what was the federation called? The Trade Union Congress. The Trade Union Congress needed money and equipment less than people, but ideas never hurt, and their approach inevitably and properly was different from ours. They were a little country on a big continent. But, when you got to places like Italy and France, it was a horse of a different color.

Q: Can you give us some specifics on how your background affected what you were recommending? For instance, as I gather, you provided sort of a political facet for Joe's work. He was an economist, and you introduced political factors into this is or is not applicable because of the politics of this thing. Could you give us some examples of that?

HASKELL: I'm not sure I can, but I'll try. Joe, despite being an economist, was pretty sophisticated. Of course, he had been trained in Germany during the occupation so even if he hadn't gotten it at school in Pennsylvania, he got inoculations in that connection. Very often what I told him was a corroboration of what he had heard or known or something, so I'm not taking credit for any of that. But, we obviously discussed these things.

Q: What I want on the record is one or two examples if you can think of them now in which a political analysis with your type of background led to a different interpretation of what should be done.

HASKELL: Actually, we were saved from having to do a lot of that kind of thing because of the general sophistication, not merely of the American labor movement around Greene and Meany, Dubinski, even Hillman and the international people like Irving Brown and Jay Lovestone, Harry Goldberg and others whose names I can't dredge up at the moment. Very often we, not necessarily in any formal manner, were aware through both their talking to us and writing of what the general thinking was, and we had thoughts of our own too, obviously. Plus the fact that we were dealing with not very sophisticated European movements, even though they were in turmoil, but also because the people both in our government and certain of the governments in Western Europe were not exactly stupid heads, and were not exactly know-nothings in this field whether it was labor administration or labor politics. Especially in Europe where politics and economics were so highly interwoven; this was inevitable, so that I would say this was a joint venture. The people in the Labor Department of the United States were smart people. The people in our information service were smart people, some of them very closely connected with the AFL I might add, just as we were. I can't think of everybody's name, but we knew these people and they knew us. It was a sort of family, even though most of our contacts were over the phone. We did discuss either projects proposed by the Europeans or suggestions proposed to them by the Americans. Now remember, I came in at the tail

end. Most of the basic work of the resuscitation occurred before I came.

Q: In the late 40's and early 50's.

HASKELL: Yes. For me it was a great learning experience. I don't know how much I contributed to them, but I certainly learned a lot. This was to stand me in good stead when the Marshall Plan period was over, and we were going into Southeastern Europe, in other words Turkey. Greece was almost over. Certainly Iran, India, Pakistan, Ceylon etc.

Q: Before we get to the work you did in that area, you then went abroad in '57.

HASKELL: Yeah. The time came when we got word that our people in OECD, NATO, labor people were going to be coming back, and we needed new people. Questions of who shall go, and Phil Delaney was there by that time.

Q: You mean he was over at the State Department.

HASKELL: No.

Q: He wasn't in Europe. He was our representative.

HASKELL: Yeah, but in '57, no, let's see. I'm wrong. He's not there. You're right. It was Mescanin who said look, there's this. Do you want to go? I said I'd love to go, but I think you need more than a person there from what I notice. You need a team. It can't be a single individual. He said, "Who do you suggest?" I mentioned two names. One was Peak Henley and one was Joe Mintzes. I said, "We work together very well. I think I could work with them very well and vice versa. He is very competent, and you can make up your mind about me. I would love it if it is feasible and available and so on." That is the starting point of the story. Of course, they did clear it I'm sure without knowing, with Meany and all the powers that be in the labor movement to be sure we were acceptable.

Q: In Paris, we were asked to clear you also.

HASKELL: Of course. This is the normal route of such things

Q: The idea that you referred to was a good and sensible idea. It seems to me that since you and Joe came to replace Taylor and me that there was a different division of work between you and Mintzes than Barney and I.

HASKELL: Yeah. The idea is that although I had an academic background, what was even more important than that was my non-academic background, the labor political stuff. Joe is a very competent labor economist and economist in general, and he had foreign experience which I didn't have at all.

Q: He had been in the Paris office before me.

HASKELL: Yes, and he had been in Germany and so on under Dave.

Q: I don't think he worked under Dave. You said he had been inoculated by Dave, and I said to myself Ben doesn't realize that he had been inoculated because he had lived in Dave Saposs' house for a time.

HASKELL: Yes. I think you are right. My memory may dis-service me. Now perhaps...

Q: He had served before with Saposs in Paris, not in Germany.

HASKELL: OK I stand corrected on that one. My memory may be treacherous.

Q: But the point is that you and Joe came over to replace Barney and me. What did you do there during the period you were there? It was toward the close of the Marshall Plan, and a whole lot of things got tied up.

HASKELL: We did two things. We represented the United States as part of the special embassy, which was an embassy sort of to the international institutions of Europe, NATO, mostly to OEEC (Organization for European Economic Co-operation) as it was called in those days, today OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development). There we had access to all their activity in the field of labor administration, migration, scientific manpower, on which we had other people like Ralph Strom and some other people, scientific and technical personnel which was very important. We didn't really specialize in that. Joe more than I, and he sort of supervised the people who had direct scientific experience and worked with the science people of the OEEC bureaucracy. They were good people whom I got to know.

Q: Did you concentrate on the trade union aspects or were you...

HASKELL: Not necessarily. Joe and I didn't necessarily have sharp divisions. If he was busy, I would cover. If I had something else to do or had to do something else, he would cover whatever it was. We tended to cover for the most part not only OEEC, but NATO.

Q: Yes, there was a NATO manpower committee.

HASKELL: Oh yes, which he tended to take over on that one. On occasion, I would take over or go with him. I sat in for the most part on OEEC manpower activities.

Q: Let's continue Ben.

HASKELL: I was at the point when we stopped saying that since the Marshall Plan was easing out, we were going into East Asia, India, Pakistan, Ceylon etc. The problem was quite a different one from the one we faced in Western Europe, obviously. I found this an education too for my personal reasons.

Q: Were you back in Washington?

HASKELL: Yes.

Q: Finish up in Paris first.

HASKELL: True. In Paris I was very active in the OEEC, later OECD labor manpower committee. It was a fascinating experience of exchanging experience and ideas with our counterparts from all over Europe including Scandinavia and others, and to see what the serious problems of international relationships of migration, immigration, skills training, how they can assist each other, how they had diverse interests and differences, and what the role of the OEEC as well as the United States in this European institution should be. It was a really terrific thing. I think that Mintzes and I both had useful things to say, and we were used to giving American support for this interchange of experience, ideas, and recommendations to the Organization of European Economic Cooperation. That was terrific, and Joe's counterpart certainly did similar things except in a NATO setting where they had manpower problems with the scientific and technical program which was interlocking with that. I think Joe and our science people really did a very fine job there. That takes care as far as I am concerned, unless you want to elicit something.

Q: No. I asked you to look at the transcribed interview with me that the Marshall Plan people did. You were there at a different time. If you had any other views, I would like to get them on the record.

HASKELL: I really don't, because I think you did a good job on that as far as I am capable of judging since I came in at the very end. Although I came in with a new and fresh mind at it, I thought it was all very laudable morally speaking and in terms of U.S. and western interests. I thought it was essential, and in a short 30 years the United States was capable of resuscitating Western Europe in a way that I wish were possible for Eastern Europe.

Q: Well you went back. How long did you stay, by the way?

HASKELL: We were in from '57 to '60. We didn't want to go back. We had to go back, and I went back to Washington Headquarters. I was trying to think of which version of AID it was, but I can't dredge that up anymore. I don't know anymore. It doesn't matter; it is a continuing program.

Q: Excuse me. Before you leave Paris, you were there for the transition from the OEEC to the OECD or the beginning of it.

HASKELL: I don't remember. I really don't remember at what point the OECD came in. This is a little question mark in my own mind.

Q: Because of labor, you weren't there at the actual time of transfer because of the different function of the AID Program where we were in effect kibitzing OEEC and getting them to do things, as distinguished from when we became a member of OECD, I'd

like to get into, but you don't recall.

HASKELL: I don't think I'm a good source on that. So I came back. The work changed fairly radically as far as the territories were concerned. The country problems that were involved, especially the country labor programs or labor possibilities for help were involved. The countries were of an entirely different kind. A place like Turkey for example, had a labor movement, but it was not a potent institution. It obviously needed help; it seemed to welcome guidance in the sense of suggestions, ideas, and openness to Western experience. As I was saying, this area was a very different area with places like India, Turkey, Pakistan.

Q: You speak as though you were assigned to a particular geographic area.

HASKELL: Yes, we were. We were divided, and our area was what was called South and East Asia or something of that kind. NEA! What did the N stand for. Near East and South Asia.

Q: Were you the only person assigned to NEA?

HASKELL: Pretty much. Again Joe Mintzes was in charge of the general thing there.

Q: Was he in charge of a larger geographic area or just NEA?

HASKELL: Yes, but I was working on just Near East South Asia. That included almost everything that was in the program including Greece, Turkey, and India, Pakistan, Ceylon, with Iran in between. There were other countries where there were AID programs but not AID labor programs. We kept informed and read their country books as they used to be called and kept aware of what was going on in the general region.

Even in countries where we had to withdraw, such as let's say Iran, where there was an incipient labor program, we had sent word through our AID man whose name was Macy, the AID Director to the Shah and the Shah's government that we think it would be wise to train their trade union people so that they are not open to all kinds of madness like Communists as well as the Mossad crazies. The word came back that he wasn't ready yet for anything as revolutionary as that. We recommended to Macy that perhaps it was not worthwhile having a labor program under those circumstances.

In any case there were different problems. These were different countries, and we not merely limited ourselves to assistance for incipient trade unions or trade unions struggling as in Turkey, where there was a hopeful situation in the trade union movement, but also in labor ministry work, vocational education, skills training, labor statistics, labor legislation where they had interest. This was certainly true in Turkey, and in India.

Of course, in certain fields we were working closely with the Bureau of Labor Statistics who had skilled people, and with the vocational training people in the United States. I can't think of the names of some of the bureaus, but the Bureau of Apprenticeship

Training really had very fine people who knew the skills training business though they didn't know the international business. But they became very sophisticated as we utilized them in different places so that our whole frame of reference was slightly different, and essentially we had to start almost from the ground up except there was a Bureau of Labor Statistics. Fortunately, the British had not done nothing on the country. I personally was very impressed with how much there was, and how India could have been a nothing without the British. I even had a grudging admiration for some of their so-called imperialism because I felt, this is my personal conclusion, there would have been nothing with all the parochialism and inter provincial fighting and hostility within India and linguistic differences and all the rest of it that I don't have to talk about at this time. It was a fascinating area.

Pakistan, which is very much like India and has a similar background, was slightly different because there was a heck of a lot less populist and democratic quality to the Pakistani society. Partly because in my opinion, and this you can discount if you like, it was Islamic, and I think there is a difference. In both countries, India and Pakistan, we did, I think, excellent work giving assistance to vocational educational schools and training. We certainly didn't discriminate between them. The same was true in terms of their labor organizations.

The Indian situation was much more hopeful. They didn't have a monopolistic trade union movement; there were varieties and even qualitative differences in sophisticated areas like Bombay as compared to other areas. They had some states as they called them and we do too, like in Bengal where you had really a relatively advanced, intelligent population that needed opportunity and material blessings. We also found ourselves involved in the so called green revolution which was basically an agricultural thing, but in terms of planning of development from which could come if the thing showed success, the development of application technology and scientific method to agricultural production and also peasant proprietorship and also the byproducts, the effects on a city urban dwellers and urban activities like industry or the subsidiary agricultural industries. It was a very interesting, complicated problem into which we got because there were peripheral labor impacts. So I worked very closely with our agriculture people and had wonderful relationships because they welcomed thoughts and suggestions. It was basically their baby, but even at higher levels at AID. I forgot the young man who was such a brilliant person from I believe Harvard. It might have been Harvard or Yale. Anyway who is now in the World Bank, or was, who would from time to time call me and ask my opinion about my reaction to some of the green revolution thing because he was aware that we had an interest not just in a parochial sense but because it would help development in general.

Q: How did you acquire your information about these areas you were responsible for? How much of it was reading; how much was actually going out in the field?

HASKELL: It was mostly reading. We did go out in the field on occasion. I visited India several times for a variety of reasons. I think mostly to familiarize myself through travel in India with our local people, to see the institutions we had sponsored like in vocational

training or meet as we did, and that was a wonderful experience, the active trade union people in exceptional places like Jamshedpur and Bombay. They were excellent, wonderful people working in different political segments of the trade union field there.

Q: You keep talking about vocational education, but when we spoke yesterday, you mentioned some knowledge of the trade union education program that we financed also.

HASKELL: Yes, that is true. There I think all they needed was a little assistance, some technical assistance but mostly financial resource, whereas in vocational training, you really had to finance their school system. I did visit two of the major skill training fields. That's one of the things that has left a definite imprint on me personally in my thinking about our own uncivilized population in the United States, the so-called underdeveloped, I forget what term is popular in the stupid press in the United States. These city dwellers who never get involved in the open economy. There I saw things that in my opinion were very important. You could take people even off the farms appearing in the urban areas and open them to the beginnings of the industrial revolution, the skilled trades needed, and train them through trainers who were skilled, not me, and through our people in the technical assistance training areas, vocational education areas.

That is one of the reasons I've always been a contributor of ORT which I think is a wonderful institution and whose activities I used to visit in Paris because they have done a wonderful job. ORT is the Organization for Rehabilitation and Training, which really grew up as a by-product of Jewish, American, and European interests in taking Jewish immigrants and refugees and training them. Very often Dan Horowitz, Joe Mintzes and I went to see some of these institutions around Paris because the French government was smart enough to utilize ORT facilities and even finance them in some ways, if I recall rightly, training people in the arts of production.

Q: When you were saying they were training people, although Jewish sponsored it wasn't as strict...

HASKELL: It was not necessarily Jewish people. Very often they were Arabs. In France very often they were French people. Whoever!

Q: North Africa was the one that impressed me. The fact their relations with training of North Africans irrespective. Very few of them were Jewish. I used to get into that. I can see that both of us did the same thing. Was this interest that you had and I had in visiting with Horowitz and Mintzes and frankly the admiration we had for their work, was that as a result of our being Jewish all four of us?

HASKELL: Partly I would imagine, but mainly in my own case, I can't speak for the others, it is because all of my life I had heard about ORT through my father and through the *Forward* and Workmen's Circle institutions and been aware of their facilities for training immigrants and refugees.

I was saying that for my part it was not merely because I was Jewish although probably

both my learning and my prejudice are in that direction, but also because there was a tradition among Jews of self-help, mutual aid and education. This was a product of that self-help thing. If the blacks of the United States had the good sense to think of not merely self-help but entrepreneurial skill, not as something to spit at but something to think of, of craft skills, of making yourself stand on your own feet, which the Jewish immigrant and the Jewish refugee did with the help of all sorts of Jewish institutions, which, by the way, like ORT went beyond Jews. This would be a wonderful thing for the United States and for the black population.

Q: I wanted to get this in because in my case, ORT was a revelation. I had never heard of it or had anything to do about it. It was only incidentally that I found that it was created by Jewish institutions. When I was looking into the training programs in France, it hit me and I never realized. So I came from a different perspective. The view was the same, that ORT was considerably... And as you know, the ILO had been working with them for years. By the way, one of the things that I want you to develop in this segment of your interview is your relations. So far you have talked about government programs, your relations with the trade union programs on the one hand, and your relations with the ILO to the degree you had any in these developing countries.

HASKELL: Frankly, I had practically no relations with the ILO which was conducting its own things, fine. But with the trade union areas we did give as we did with the technical vocational education, technical skills training institutions, we did have assistance. In my travels, to go back to my travels in India, as well as Pakistan, I had arranged for contacts with the trade union people and met them. I met lots of them in Bombay, some of them in New Delhi, and in Jamshedpur, some of them were our hosts as well as a wonderful institution, the Jesuit run industrial relations training group under Father McGrath, and had a wonderful time meeting with McGrath, Collins and company. They were very dedicated, intelligent people who needed stimulation and input from their friends in the United States, and we did help them. Not because they were Catholic or religious, but because they were doing a wonderful job in trying to assist India in the vocational education field.

Q: They were not only doing the work of the Lord, they were doing the work of the practical needs too.

HASKELL: Well, in this case, they were both identical. They were really dedicated to their God, and they thought it was their duty and still do because I've heard from them since. These are fine people, and I wish we had more of them.

Q: In addition to your relations with the trade unions, I also wanted you to include your relations with and how you worked with your counterpart in the AFL-CIO who was Harry Goldberg all the time?

HASKELL: Yes. In that period it was. We had excellent relationships. I had excellent relationships because I had known the AFL people for a good part of my mature life. Since I was in Washington, I had met them. Through my sister, I knew Jay Lovestone,

and occasionally when he was in Washington we'd go to lunch or chat. Goldberg was one of my hosts in the Marshall Plan days when I went to visit Italy and did a job for AID for a week or two with Barney Taylor out of the Paris office. I considered him a friend as he considered me. We had more than just labor things in common. We had a great deal of common feelings regarding music. He was a wonderful pianist. He got to know my family and the kids. We enjoyed each other and gossiped. When I got to Italy, Harry opened all kinds of doors and introduced me to all sorts of people. It wasn't only work; it was a pleasure, and I got personally a feeling for what the Italian trade unionists were all about. But, in India, I had the same experience with the help of other friends like Morrie Weisz and others who had been there at the same time. I think in this connection, I should not ignore the fact that I had the privilege and pleasure of going up to Shimla to see their Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Q: Was it you who arranged for a BLS (Bureau of Labor Statistics) guy to be assigned there, Morgenstern wasn't it?

HASKELL: No it was not me. This preceded me. It was possibly Joe Mintzes. I would think so. This was a very intelligent thing for him to do, if it was Joe Mintzes. We met the people there. Why it was located in Shimla I only guessed. It was a lovely, clean, dry, and healthy area that forced me to traverse nearly all of northern India to get up into the lower hills of the Himalayas.

Q: The reason was it was the summer capital for the British, the Raj.

HASKELL: I saw the remnants of it there in the church in the cemetery and everything and even in the Tibetan refugees who were running rickshaws. Of course, you couldn't drive over Shimla hills. It was a great experience plus the fact of seeing how they operate their Bureau of Labor Statistics and their serious problems.

Q: One of their serious problems that I was concerned with, and I'll read this out of my own interview when I come to it was the fact that it was a delightful place, Shimla was, but it was so far removed from Delhi that it gave the bureaucrats in Delhi an opportunity to disregard the important issue of the utilization of statistical work in the administration of the labor ministry. I was always distressed by that, and I used to tell them that when there was an effort made to transfer the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Labor Department proper to an outlying area in Washington DC less than a mile from the labor Department, we objected to it, the BLS where I was at the time, because we would be so far away from the Secretary of Labor that we couldn't influence him in appropriate ways. Whereas there they were so far away their influence was lost.

HASKELL: Our trip to Shimla was instructive in that regard. I wondered how in hell it ever happened they ever got there and how as you say they could possibly interact with the rest of the Ministry of Labor which is so important to Ministries in the United States, Britain, France, wherever you go. It was inevitable in the bureaucratic structure which it inevitably is, but they had other things. At least it was a humane and civilized existence for the poor devils. They had devoted people, but what they didn't have were basic

creature comforts. For example, the toilet never worked. This became very evident. These poor guys, they didn't have a computer system. This was before the days of computers. They didn't have a more rational system. Like everything else in India, everything had to be written out. Everything was hand done. It didn't bother them because they were used to maximizing labor.

Q: A very good point. There was resistance when they tried to introduce it.

HASKELL: Always resistance, because the thing in their mind was how do you employ people when there were so many people footloose and fancy-free. But, our capacity to help them at least in their technical problems of sending people in the United States who were skilled in the arts of labor statistics, of bureaucratic infighting and infrastructure and getting proper use of things, also labor inspection. Statistics depend on enforcement no less. How do you get that encouraged? Well, you can only do it by persuasion, suggestion, recommendation by skilled people whom other skilled people accept and recognize and appreciate and will take into serious consideration what is reported.

Q: Comment if you will, on this issue you just mentioned, labor inspection. You had experience in the New York State Department of Labor. Do you have any conclusions about inspections in India?

HASKELL: No because my trip was a short one, never very long, I could never go out and see what the inspection thing was. I'm not sure I was equipped, even though I personally lived in the State of New York, all around the New York area, especially in Long Island which happened to be the one I was assigned to. We were doing minimum wage studies in fields like hotels, restaurants, candy factories, I forget what else, but where we both interviewed hotel managers, looked at their minimum wage records, and interviewed workers in their homes all over Long Island and Brooklyn and so on, so at least I knew something about what the hell it is supposed to be and how you check up on things. I didn't consider myself an expert in these things, but I had sufficient knowledge to be able to sense when somebody says we have problems.

Q: But essentially they prepared a proposed program.

HASKELL: They prepared proposals, and we in our unit, not just I but Joe and whoever else thought he had an interest, would review it, and very often, if it was a technical field, we would call up people in the Labor Department. There was one lady Jo, and I was a very good friend of hers in the Bureau of Labor Statistics. A wonderful person; I can't think of her name, who on labor statistical matters was very smart, and we'd get her opinion or others. Certainly in the field of vocational training, I would call over to friends, I can't remember them either, the BAT, the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training. They were very helpful, and when we needed people there was no question we would get good people out of them for specific purposes.

Q: Well, in the Bureau of Labor Statistics field there were two particular people, Morgenstern was one of them. The other was a fellow named Laughlin or something like

that.

HASKELL: No. In my day, it was someone else. It is not either of those, but I can't think of the names anymore. Isn't it terrible?

Q: Ed McCoy? Did you know him?

HASKELL: Well, Ed, he was one of our people, but some guys right in the apprentice business.

Q: The point here being was that your function was to review their proposals, comment on them, and be the sort of funnel.

HASKELL: Funnel and liaison and seeing that the damn thing moves and gets reported back and pushed and gets included in a country program book structure so that everybody can take a look at it, just as we looked at agriculture and other things, which as a total AID approach is very proper. They should be looking at labor proposals.

Q: Well, we talked of India and Pakistan. Pakistan more than India because I served there also. Did you actually visit Iran before you made this decision that it wasn't worthwhile to go on?

HASKELL: No I did not. We had people previously in Iran and they had barriers, and it was obvious we were having troubles. I never got to Iran although I wanted to go to Tehran, but before I had even an opportunity to do it, the question came up. We had meetings with John Macy, a very fine person. He was very warm and open. He said that we will present it, but I'm not going to give you any sense that this is going to be accepted as feasible. You are dealing with a government that has extraordinary problems. I had to say yes I know. I read the country books. I read your communications back and forth. I'd be surprised, but we have the obligation of truthfully saying this is what you really need. This is what we think from a labor angle you should be doing, but if you are not going to do it, make up your mind now. Don't let us send people over there and say no you can't do this or that. It is ridiculous. It is a waste of thought, time, energy, and emotions.

Q: What was Macy's function? Was he a labor officer?

HASKELL: No. He was the AID Director. A very nice person and a very clever, interested, and intelligent person.

Q: What about Sri Lanka? Did you get there?

HASKELL: No, and didn't do too much on Ceylon. I forget why, but I think it was because there wasn't much opportunity. I can't any longer recall whether it was Madam Bandaranaike or her predecessor, her husband, who were not exactly friendly.

Q: There were three international programs... Strong was...

HASKELL: Colombo. There was a Colombo plan. Yeah. Years later Alan and I tried to work together on lots of just thoughts and ideas. He is a wonderful person. I used to meet him at concerts because he and I would go to the Library of Congress concerts and meet there with his wife and so on.

Q: Joe was his son-in-law.

HASKELL: Oh yes. The Congressman. In any case, Turkey was the other active party. Obviously, Israel didn't need our technical assistance; they needed our money, not technical assistance. I did want to go, but by that time the Labor Office was no longer in effect in Washington, and I was working in the Near East South Asia (NESA) bureau. They could be no less interested although some of the people were nice. Jim Bloom was the head of ours. He was an agriculture guy, and he really knew nothing about labor and sort of looked puzzled when I talked to him. He wouldn't let me go to either Lebanon or Israel.

Q: You are now saying something that I would really like to get on the record. You served from '57. You were in Paris from '57 to '60. You came back and started working in the NESA AID. Now you just said something that the Labor Office no longer existed.

HASKELL: In Near East South Asia, a geographic area. They had reorganized things.

Q: All right, let's get the timing here.

HASKELL: I don't know. I don't remember.

Q: You should have had this project earlier.

HASKELL: Yes.

Q: Now '60, you don't know when it was, but it was before you retired. You retired when?

HASKELL: Yes. I retired in '75.

Q: Oh, so from '60 to '75 you were either in AID labor office or in the geographic area. I didn't realize you stayed that long.

HASKELL: Oh yes.

Q: Were there any differences? You started talking about the differences.

HASKELL: Oh yes! Eventually we reverted. There was a labor office, and the labor people finally, and I was personally happy about it. I wasn't really happy about working with people who were personally uninterested in labor and thought we were injecting

ourselves in their business.

Q: I hope you were.

HASKELL: I tried, but as I told you, even though I had wonderful relations with the other agriculture people, the top guys who happened to come out of agriculture, they could have come out of public administration or one of the other things, couldn't be less interested and thought we were interlopers.

Q: Why was the labor office dissolved and why was it reconstituted? What were the circumstances? Nobody has given us any information about that so far.

HASKELL: Well, I would think that Dan Horowitz would be the guy, and who was the chap that took over also from AFL-CIO? Again, names. He used to be a little suspicious of me. Maybe he thought I wanted his job, which I didn't, to run the re-constituted labor division. Not Dylan, not McGonagall, they didn't run anything. But there in my ...

Q: Not Delaney.

HASKELL: Delaney was before. I'm sure Joe Mintzes, well maybe not Joe; he was away already. Horowitz would. Actually SIL took over this thing, but the guy who ran it for him on the AID side. There was somebody who even knew my brother-in-law, Charley Prangler. I can't think of his name frankly. However, it was a sad situation.

Q: Why was it abolished? Do you know?

HASKELL: I think there were pressures in the AID generally to slim down, and they felt we were peripheral. There was no need for such a centralized structure. It was a political deal between the AFL-CIO and the government, and we were inflicted on them. Then they scattered us. I can remember that period at the moment vividly.

Q: Einar Edwards. Was he the...

HASKELL: No. Einar was there at one point. He came out of Austria, right? You have to realize that when we got re-organized, not merely labor but public administration and others were reorganized on a literally geographic basis. I had my counterparts, and I was their counterpart. That's where I got to know a lot of agricultural people because we were counterparts and theoretically supposed to work together. I tried to make sure we did, certainly on the Green Revolution business which was very important in my opinion.

Q: But what were the influences brought to bear to create the labor office?

HASKELL: I think it got slimmed down to the point where there was a lot of unhappiness among a lot of labor people.

Q: When you say labor people, you mean trade union people or..

HASKELL: Both. The government people working on labor programs a lot of them had at one time been in the trade union movement or had been with the government with the blessing of the trade union movement like me. Then they tried to overcome what they considered an overlap between SIL and AID and put Danny in charge. He was and is a fine person, very nice, very good. I might say my relations with him were very friendly.

Q: Well he did have somebody on his staff who either worked for if not administratively under him, functionally under him who had the AID function, right?

HASKELL: Well there were always some people he used as an assistant, maybe with or without the blessing of the labor movement, I don't know. I never inject myself.

Q: Did your job change when it was re-constituted?

HASKELL: Oh yes. It did change because we had less acceptance and access to the divisions. We did go to meetings to stay au courant with either country problems or sectoral, as we called them, problems. You know, it was community development, labor, public administration or whatever the hell it is in a country.

Q: Well, let me ask you to comment on this aspect.

HASKELL: I might say that in that connection when I was working for Dan in this re-constituted program, he used to use me since my functions on the other projects had sort of disintegrated because of these re-organizations. That's when I wrote something that I can't find any more, and I'll have to ask my daughter when I'm in California. I wrote a history of the labor program with a thought to where in the hell do we go from here. It wasn't an enormous study, but I thought it was a useful basis for an enormous study.

Q: Ben, I wish you would try to locate that. It would be so important.

HASKELL: Well, maybe Dan has a copy. I had it for a long time, and when we started cleaning out our files here, I don't know whether I gave it to Ellen or what.

This pretty much brings us up to date in the labor function of AID and my connection with it, right? Up to my retirement in '75 which was stimulated by both a weariness and a little sense of disillusionment, plus the fact that it was time to give way, and I had put in many years in the government and quite a few I discovered in the foreign aid assistance field, so I decided to quit as of July of '75 I believe it was.

Q: Well If you've finished, I've got a couple of things.

HASKELL: No, I'm not finished. I did ignore Turkey didn't I? I think it should be added. I did visit Turkey in the same way that I visited India and Pakistan. In the case of Pakistan, I actually did go to visit these vocational training schools I mentioned. I introduced and got in contact with the trade union people. I got to see the new capital in

Islamabad. I actually stayed with the labor attaché whose name escapes me, a very nice person, in his own house because his family was gone. I visited what was the alternative capital at that time, not Karachi, but another town. I can't remember. Anyway, it's where there has been a lot of trouble since because it deals with the northwest frontier and all that trouble.

Q: A beautiful city called Lahore.

HASKELL: Lahore. That's exactly where it was, and it was great, beautiful. They had a wonderful bazaar, and we met all sorts of people both Pakistani and American. It was for me an education. This is in more than once. But, going back to Turkey, I had made a few visits there both in Istanbul and Ankara. They had an interesting program, and they have an interesting country. They certainly had an incipient and interesting labor movement with very serious what I would call left wing political groups. Even the Labor Minister, Echivik, I remember his name, I don't know why, was a curious guy. John McGonagall had been there, and he was intrigued with Echivik and his personality. But, they eventually developed what I would call a strictly Socialist political and trade union movement. If I remember correctly, their acronym was SEK. Maybe I'm confusing them with the Commies now. My memory of acronyms is gone. It was a fascinating piece of activity in which you had parties on which you had based not Ataturk versus non-Ataturk, but there were variations of Ataturk thinking. They were statist in their thinking, top down. This is really in many respects if you know the history of Turkey, not that I'm an expert on it, it was almost Ottoman in its qualities. Though Ataturk had broken many of the Turk, Ottoman, Islamic predilections and secularized in many respects, that society. Frankly, from my personal point of view, this is one of the healthiest things that could have happened, but it also had a price.

Q: Talk about the feasibility of building a democratic trade union movement under circumstances like that as against the products it could ...

HASKELL: Well, as far as I could see, they were given an opportunity, a freedom to develop trade unions they could not possibly have had under the previous regimes in Turkey. They split, but this is a sickness in the labor movement all over Europe not peculiar to Turkey, but they had their peculiar manifestations. There were left wing unionists who were I should call social democratic, and I believe that they were, if I recall correctly, tied in with the Socialist International and the ICFT (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions). Then there were other elements and factions who were attached to, now it would be called the Motherland Party I notice in the press, but it was part of this party that had its strength in Eastern Turkey and rural Turkey under I believe his name was Demirel He was a character, because to get anywhere in Turkey, I believe you have to be a personality and a character. Then of course they're what today we would call right wing nationalist groups who were preserving the holy light of Ataturk and trying to maintain state controlled industry and state controlled this and that. The others were more westward looking, hoping to become European, and some of them hoping to become sort of quasi-Russian in a sense, not Russian but Communist, left Socialists. So it was a curious society.

I had occasion to travel around Europe. We had a young chap, I think he originally came out of Pennsylvania, who was in the mission at that time and had come himself; maybe he was there a year when I arrived for a trip. He said how would you like to take a trip with me around Turkey. You'll visit some of the trade union people in the center of Turkey and around the periphery. You know most of it was in the periphery, around the borders on the waters. The border waters. I said that sounds wonderful to give me an opportunity to know something about what this country is like, and we did arrange it just as Tom O'Connor did in India when you were there I think it was. So this chap whose name I no longer remember, very nice, very ample, not highly intellectual person, nice wife and all of that. He and I went out of Ankara and went south. We went to Aksehir.

Q: Was Bruce Bullen there at the time? He was there in connection with the equivalent of NATO for that area. He wasn't in the embassy in labor functions.

HASKELL: Maybe. I don't remember. If he was there, I'm sure we met up. We went to some of the towns in the center of Turkey and met trade union people. We were feted; we were greeted; we were welcomed, very friendly, and very wanting of outside interest and friends and encouragement. That was nice, very heartwarming. Then we went south to the shore and the round. We went to Bursa, which was a lovely town; almost like a vacation spot it was so beautiful. People used to go there, I gather, for the waters, but we stayed for just about a day to meet people, a little sightseeing, and then we moved on. That was very interesting. I got to actually see the countryside and meet people. The women were working in the fields with the men with their pantaloons pants. Then seeing the towns where the almost Russian mixture of Mujiks and Bourgeois. It is a strange thing. I say Russian; I have never been to Russia. I've seen pictures and stuff. That's what it looked like. It looked like a backward area that was coming out of it. You could sense it, and it was hopeful.

Q: I would like to finish this off with a few questions. Could you hold on until later?

HASKELL: Sure.

Q: What I'd like to get from you is a couple of comments on your feeling, analysis, conclusions about it a few subjects, and then to give if you are willing to, as long as you want if necessary, I would suggest you tape that also, your comments on the relevance if any of your experience to what we are going to have to get into in Eastern Europe. Now, that's beyond the purpose of this project, but I...

HASKELL: No, I agree with you that it is very important. Maybe I'm not the right person.

Q: Oh yes. You are the right person because we ask everybody the same question and then the idea is maybe someday we will have all the views. Your views will be very different from others. Let me just go over these key things we want everybody to cover. We've covered your background etc. You've made a few comments on McCarthyism and

the general inadequacy of an understanding of Communism on the one hand as a genuine danger and on the other hand of the innocent approach of some people who think it is no danger. I didn't get the feeling that you put in a statement that there were any such problems or that there were no such problems which is more likely to be the case between your work and the work of the trade unions in those specific areas. For instance, you remember what I said in my interview about the need at one juncture for me to look at the trade union programs conducted by the trade unions themselves with some of it with government money and the fact that we as a government were financing some of it we had to concern ourselves with the mix of those.

HASKELL: I didn't have that problem. I did attend meetings of the AFLID I think it was called.

Q: You mean the AFLD in Latin America. I thought I'd have to open up a new interview with you in Latin America.

HASKELL: No. But people there whom I knew and very often we would talk to each other as to you know their programs -- our programs. Should they do it, shouldn't they do it, thoughts, ideas, but they never interfered. I never interfered with them. On the contrary, if we could help them, we would always be happy to. I didn't have any sense of dualism or conflict. On the contrary, I think the more the merrier. There was so much that could be done, and if other people wanted to get into the field, not merely labor people but anybody, I think it was a good thing.

Q: What about the USIA (United States Information Agency)?

HASKELL: The USIA and I personally had this relationship. What was the name of the red-headed guy there, a labor guy in USIA.

Q: Oh I know who you mean. I'll think of his name, Bernie Weismann.

HASKELL: Bernie Weismann. We knew each other fairly well on a business basis. I liked him. I think he was a very genuine, decent person. When we needed something in that field, I'd always speak to Bernie. Of course, I found him easily accessible and very willing and vice versa. If he had anything that I ought to know, he would call me.

Q: That reminds me, I had better get him on tape.

HASKELL: I think he'd be very good unless he's too old.

Q: What about the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency)? Any relations with the CIA?

HASKELL: Not in an official capacity. I had unofficial contact on perhaps two occasions, but that had nothing to do with AID. Doris had a student who was in the CIA.

Q: The reference is to Doris Haskell, Mrs. Haskell who is an artist.

HASKELL: I thought there were things that they should be looking into which I was suspicious about. I called this guy. In fact, at one time they thought I had something; they sent some guys over to see me. I said, look I have no special knowledge. I have only my nose and my brain and there are some things I think guys like you should be doing if you are not doing it. If you are, I don't want to know about it, just keep going. They appreciated that. That was my only contact with them.

Q: I'm afraid I might forget to put into my coverage of India this interesting aspect about the CIA. I knew the people, and I worked with them occasionally. In 1968, I went to the CIA in India, and a friend of mine who was the station chief. I said, look, next year is the centenary of two. One is Gandhi, and one is Lenin. The Communists are going to come out with vast amounts of information showing how they supported Gandhi. I could just imagine that, and of course it is all lies because Gandhi of course was far from being a Communist, and Lenin probably looked down on Gandhi as a non-revolutionary type.

HASKELL: Not only that, but as a reactionary who was looking back to agrarian life.

Q: It is obvious. I had no knowledge of anything, but now is the time. You people have got money. Get somebody to look into the quotations of Lenin on Gandhi and Gandhi on Lenin and all that, so that when they start that business, you will have a good publication. I regret to tell you, one of my great failures, and these people were great friends of mine, I couldn't convince them that it should be done. Next year, sure enough, all of these hands clasped Gandhi, Lenin.

HASKELL: Did they come back and ask you how did you know?

Q: No they didn't say that.

HASKELL: I've had that experience. How did you know? I didn't know; I had a smeller. I must at this point put in one thing that is slightly tangential but not entirely. While I was at AID, Jay got in touch with me.

Q: When you say Jay, you mean Jay Lovestone.

HASKELL: Yes. And said you know there are questions about our aid to India and this business of the Russian foreign assistance program and how do we get a handle on this. To what extent do we underestimate or fail to rate or overestimate or do we, that side of the coin. I said that is a very good subject. He said, could you do something about it? I said, on my time I will and I'll take advantage of AID information because it's public, and I'll ask my people in State who put out publications along these lines. I did a series for him which was reprinted for the Trade Union News.

Q: You, of course, have no copies of that.

HASKELL: I had. Everything.

Q: Ben, I could kill you.

HASKELL: So I sat down.

Q: You prepared some unattributed articles for it.

HASKELL: I think my name was on them. I don't think they were unattributed. I'm not sure. I did it as a favor to Jay, and I was interested myself. I think they were very good because I dug up stuff about non-civilian assistance, the non-party assistance and other things like their smokestack assistance and stuff and started adding all this up and the alleged investments. It was staggering.

Q: That's how they financed a whole lot of the Communist party activity in India. It's really amazing how...

HASKELL: Well, in Italy. I'm sure Dan must be an expert in that, or your friend from Cornell, Don Winmore. Well, anyway I thought for the record, that's an interesting thing. It just occurred to me. Jesus, it was all down in the file. Now you wanted general comments didn't you.

Q: Yes, anything to do with Congress, Congressional visits, things like that.

HASKELL: No. That was not my bailiwick.

Q: The impact of US domestic issues on the work. I'm sure you'll say, I hope you'll mention the fact that the reason for our great interest grabbing hold, we'd gotten into that before, grabbing hold in '57 when you arrived in Paris in technical manpower was because of the Sputnik thing.

HASKELL: Oh yes. Well, this preceded me. I think this is an appropriate time to take up your suggestion about what does this all add up to.

Q: One more question. Any comment on the validity or invalidity or usefulness or lack of usefulness of the interests of the trade union organizations in the United States, AFL-CIO on the resignation or appointment of trade union people to government jobs for attachés, AID etc. Good, bad, mixed?

HASKELL: My own feeling obviously is affected by my personal experience. I admit that I, in a sense, benefited from it because I could apply not only my formal education and teaching background history expertise in this, but even more so my informal education by family, friends, and the daily press.

Q: Your usefulness which I think is established very well in this interview, the usefulness of your background to the work you did, I'm talking about the influence of the trade unions. There are two extremes. One says you have to be a trade unionist to be a labor

attaché; the other extreme says they have no business telling the government whom to hire. Where do you stand in this?

HASKELL: Well, my feeling as a result of being part of all of this is that there is nothing bad, wrong, or devious about calling upon American institutions and their people to help out the U.S. Government.

Q: Labor, business, everything.

HASKELL: The medical profession, whoever's skills are needed. That is my conclusion. On the other hand, one has to recognize that there are people from all over, not just labor, who have skills that are really useful. I mentioned my admiration for the agriculture people, many of them. They really knew their stuff cold. It was part of them as my labor background is a part of me. We could talk and argue about the green revolution. They understood me and I understood them. They learned why labor has sort of an ultimate interest in the byproducts of that.

On the other hand, I do think we have to recognize that there is a role for academic people in government. But, then these academic people have to learn that they are not in a classroom setting or exclusively non-operational research setting, that their research has to have consequences, has to be applied, has to have significance for the problems that a government or a ministry or whoever faces. Therefore, these are not antithetical things. I happen to in my own person represent a combination of these things, and I think I was more useful for having both. On the other hand, I think there is such a thing as a government interest and a specific interest such as labor or a professional medical society or a company, and I had that experience during the war in my War Production Board experience. Perfectly legitimate; it isn't necessarily devious. The industries felt that they needed more tin and this and that; I just didn't say you are being a selfish guy. They weren't; they were supposed to do that, just as I was supposed to say you have to be careful; you are disemploying people, you are upsetting normal relations. Can we do it and not upset the economy, because we do have to look forward to the end of the war.

Q: A practical aspect to a theoretical solution.

HASKELL: Exactly, or a pie in the sky solution. Some things have to be a trade off, a compromise. If you don't have that mentality, you don't belong there.

Q: OK, let's get into your general comments.

HASKELL: Now, does all this have an application for the future. It has an application for the present, not merely abroad but at home as I've already intimated when I talked about how we tackle our so-called center city urban problems. I think as far as Eastern Europe goes, the further east you go, the more we are dealing with a situation like Turkey, like Pakistan.

If these countries, or states or republics or whatever they will be, sovereignties are

interested, and that's the basic thing. If they are not interested, I don't think we should inflict ourselves on them. To hell with them, or let them work it out by themselves. That's perfectly OK, although I think they would do themselves harm. We are not the only source of technical intelligence or advice. The British are pretty damn good about these things. The French are good sometimes. The Germans tend to overdo things, but they are all people with skills and intelligence. Some of these countries like the Hungarians and the Czechs obviously, have skills of their own. What they need is encouragement and some degree of loans and money. But, others say if you go further into Romania, you have to re-do that society. It has been a spoiled, rotten, corrupted society. Bulgaria, I suspect, has a lot of that, though they were the beneficiaries of Russian technical assistance, partly unintended and partly to keep them quiet. They were Russia's little brother. When you get to Poland, they were exploited. They were a population; that was always Western looking, and you have to treat them with kid gloves. They need more technical assistance than they know. There, I think, you have to start at the top with banking and exchange. They need people like Sam Krause. They need people from the Treasury; they need people from Commerce; they need people even from Agriculture, and they also need people to retrain the thinking of workers who have lived in an exploitative society and can think only of their self-interest. In other words, they are afraid now, and who could blame them, of any national something because this has been a hostile power. All of Eastern Europe is psychotic because they are anti-control, and yet they are afraid of anarchy.

Q: Well, develop your thinking. When you said if they're not interested, to hell with them it is their problem or something like that. To what degree is it in our interest to develop their interest?

HASKELL: I think that when you impose yourself, you are unwelcome. When they want and ask and beg, you are in a better position to give what will be appreciated. In any case, there is always the danger, and this is another conclusion, that you always hate the people who help you. They have to work out there. It's like children; they enjoy their parents, but if you overdo it, if you go beyond your right function and they're becoming grownups and you are still treating them like children, they are bound to resent it, and you shouldn't do it. Now, I think our biggest function should be not just handing out money. I think we should be offering all forms, and it is expensive, but not as expensive as loans that get pissed away, and they usually do, but in the form of technical assistance, skills training. When I say skills training, I don't just mean trades training or industry training, but training in how to run a bank, training in how to run currency exchange, training in how to think about an economy, training in how to run a real labor department to go back to the labor program. This is my thought about it, and I admit I'm biased by my experience.

Q: Well, thanks very much Ben, I've enjoyed this. Aside from any addition to the literature in the field, I've enjoyed it personally.

End of interview