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Labor Series

LOUIS A. WIESNER

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INTERVIEW

Q: This is an interview with Mr. Louis Wiesner for the Labor Diplomacy Oral History Project. We are in Tamworth, New Hampshire, at his home and the date is September 30, 1992. We will start by asking Mr. Wiesner to give us some background on his interest in foreign affairs and the labor specialty.

WIESNER: I became interested in foreign affairs really in graduate school at Harvard from 1937 to 1942, when I got a master's and went on to do part of the work for a Ph.D. in European history. Then came World War II and I didn't finish my dissertation but went down and got a job at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York in the post-war planning unit, which was a splendid collection of both scholars working there on the staff

and a series of committees on economics, strategic matters, political matters, all dealing with planning for the post-war period and with very distinguished members such as then Professor Grayson Kirk, who later became President of Columbia, Isaiah Bowman, who was then President of Johns Hopkins, Alvin Hansen of Harvard, an economist and so forth. My particular field of specialization that I carved out there was labor movements in exile and in the underground and Social Democratic parties.

Q: Did you come from a family with a labor background?

WIESNER: Not at all.

Q: How did you happen to choose labor?

WIESNER: It really started back at Michigan State College, where I got my Bachelor of Science in 1937. I was one of the student radicals at Michigan State and actually in 1936 for a while I became a member of the Communist Party. I started out as a member of the Socialist Party and then joined the Young Communist League and the Communist Party in 1936, which was later to give me trouble during the McCarthy period, but that was very brief and I was disillusioned by the purge trials in Moscow.

Along with my student friends, I really helped in a very modest way in the organization of the United Auto Workers. There was an Oldsmobile and a Fisher Body plant in Lansing and some of us students went down and passed out leaflets in front of these factories for the United Auto Workers, at a time when any worker who had done that would have been automatically fired. Then there was a strike in those plants in 1937, and again we helped with passing out leaflets and visiting the factories and so forth. So it goes back to that period in my studies.

At Harvard I was working on a doctoral dissertation on the French Socialist movement in the latter quarter of the 19th Century, which I never finished, but that [interest in labor] carried right on . . . -- By that time I had of course long since become disillusioned with the Communists. -- . . . that carried right on into the Council on Foreign Relations, the OSS and the State Department.

Q: Do you want to tell us how you became a Labor Attaché?

WIESNER: Yes, I was taken into the Foreign Service in September of 1944 and that was the Foreign Service Auxiliary because all examinations for the regular Foreign Service had been scrubbed during the war, since so may potential candidates were in the Armed Forces. I was 4-F because my right eye is blind and the vision in my left eye is not good enough. When I was given the physical examination for induction at Grand Central Station in 1943, they classified me as 4-F, but I wanted to get into the war effort, and so I had pretty well determined that I would like to be part of the Mission to Germany that was then headed by Ambassador Robert Murphy as Advisor to General Eisenhower. Well during the course of our very brief training -- and it was a training class in the basement

of what is now the Old Executive Office Building -- Otis Mulliken, who was then head of the Division of International Labor, Social and Health Affairs, came and talked to us about this program, which was brand new.

Q: This was 1943?

WIESNER: 1944. Actually, oh I have forgotten his name now. The man, who went to Chile was one of the first Labor Attachés.

Q: Horowitz?

WIESNER: Yes, Dan Horowitz had already been appointed, and Sam Berger was serving while still in uniform in London. So this attracted me in view of my previous interests, and I applied for the Labor Attaché Program and was accepted in it. So I was assigned to Ambassador Murphy's Mission as the Assistant Labor Attaché, since I was a very junior officer. They expected to get a more senior Labor Attaché, but they never did, so eventually I became the Labor Attaché in that Mission.

Q: Who were some of the other people who were accepted at that time into the Labor Attaché Program?

WIESNER: I have mentioned Dan Horowitz, who was already in it, and Sam Berger, who was a Captain in the Army, and Richard Eldridge, who came from the Chamber of Commerce, was named the Labor Attaché in Paris at that time. I think he was there already as soon as Paris was liberated, for the Chamber of Commerce. He came from the business side. I'm trying to remember who else. Herb Weiner came in at about that same time as the assistant to Sam Berger. That's all I can remember at the moment.

Q: Could you tell us how you got to Berlin and what the stages were?

WIESNER: Yes. The stages were that the Mission was part of SHAEF, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces Europe, which were in Bushy Park, England, on the grounds of the Hampton Court Palace in a whole series of temporary buildings. The part that we were in was called the United States Control Group Council for Germany, U.S.Group C.C. I flew over there under wartime blackout conditions in a plush C-54 in December 1944. We arrived at Prestwick, Scotland, and were marooned there for a week by fog. They have a lot of fog there. Finally, a special train, one of the King's trains, was sent up to get us and carry us . . . -- There was a whole bunch of people then destined for one or another agency in London. -- . . . and carry us down to London. So I arrived just before Christmas of 1944.

We stayed there right during the V-2 period and that really was a serious thing. One V-2 over a weekend landed in a gasworks right across the street from the WAC barracks and blew the walls out of the barracks. Fortunately the women were bunked in double-decker, heavy wooden bunks, so the roof trusses came right down on top of their bunks and didn't

hurt them. It scared them to death and scattered secret documents all over that end of Great Britain. I was living in a small residential hotel in London itself, and we were taken, as were most of the people in the various hotels, back and forth by bus under blackout conditions and again in heavy fog.

We stayed there until March 27, 1945, the day the last V-2 fell on London, and then went over to Versailles, France, where we were billeted by arrangement with the French Government, only in houses that had been occupied by the Nazis. I was billeted in the servants quarters of Elsie de Wolfe's Lady Mendell house in Versailles, a lovely place, but the servants' quarters had not been heated during the entire war, and they had walls of stone two feet thick. I had never been so cold in my life. We had to go into the main house, where the senior officers were billeted and which had heat, in order to take showers, but then after a couple of weeks the weather became very mild and it was really lovely. The offices were in the Hotel des Reservoirs in Versailles, our offices, U.S. Group C.C. ,while the rest of SHAEF were in the Grandes Ecuries of the Palace of Versailles, so we could walk around in that lovely area. Lady Mendell's House was backed up against a Petite Trianon, and we could just go right into those grounds. Then as General Patton's Third Army swept across Germany much faster than anyone had expected, the military ran out of Military Government Officers including labor officers, and therefore they came to U.S. Group C.C. and asked if they could borrow some of us. Paul Porter was borrowed and went to Frankfurt. I was borrowed for what became the northern half of the French Zone but was occupied by the U.S. at that time, the Saar, Palatinate, South Hesse, Trier, Koblenz area and with our regional military government headquarters in Neustadt an der Weinstrasse, the Street of Wine, or Neustadt an der Hardt. The river was the Hardt. Paul and I went together; we flew from a little airfield outside of Paris to Verdun, where the 12th Army Group was headquartered and Captain Henry Rutz, who was the labor officer for the 12th Army Group, briefed us and put us up for a couple of nights until the entire 12th Army Group Headquarters moved on one day from Verdun to Wiesbaden, some 397 vehicles on the road, tank-carriers, everything. On the way, it got lost in Metz and wound around through its own tail. The leader of the convoy eventually found the right road and got out it of town. I understand he was demoted for that.

Q: Do you have an approximate date when this took place?
WIESNER: This was about mid-April 1945, before the war was over.

Q: Two or three weeks before the end of the war?

WIESNER: Yes. So I became the Assistant Military Government Labor Officer in that regional detachment in "E Detachment" it was called. We worked on among other things restoring the Arbeitsaemter, the labor offices, which were employment offices, the Sozialversicherungsaemter [social insurance offices], all of which is described in this report [Organized Labor in Postwar Germany by Louis A. Wiesner, Washington, D.C., 1950]. After working in the headquarters to develop guidelines to do this,... Well, I want to back up a little bit. One of my first jobs outside of Neustadt was to go and kidnap a wine coordinator from Speyer, which was then occupied by the French. This report

describes how, as the Nazi regime collapsed and the Allies took over, the whole of German society dissolved, and it became what I call the "atomized society." I mean the whole Nazi structure was immediately eliminated by the Allies. This was something that people, whether they liked it or not, had come to rely on as the structure around their lives. It not only included governmental structures but economic organizations, the Deutsche Arbeitsfront, the German Labor Front, which organized labor and took over all the property of the trade unions, etc., and really mobilized their lives, and women's organizations, and youth organizations, etc., including, of course, the governmental and semi-governmental structures which organized economic and employment matters. So with all of this destroyed, the people were left in a state of "psychological anomie," you might say. They had nothing to cling to except their own families and their little villages if those were intact, and they were in this region, but they needed, or felt they needed, something to reorganize their economic and social life, so that they could carry on, and one of the things they needed was a wine coordinator. This was a wine producing area, and there were wineries and so forth. There were quotas that were traditional for the various vineyards as to how much they could produce in the way of grapes and where they were to deliver them, and there was marketing to be done of the wines, the quality control, labeling, etc. The commander of the 23rd Corps, I think it was a lieutenant general, called on us to find him a wine coordinator, and I was tapped to do it. Are you interested in hearing all this?

Q: Yes.

WIESNER: We civilians had to go in of course in uniform, in full officers' uniform without rank or insignia. That was primarily to keep our own soldiers from shooting us, because the war was still going on. I was assigned the owner of a local winery there to help me, and we went in his car and went down to Speyer right through the French lines and up to this guy's winery because he knew him. It was a big structure with factories and an administration building about six floors high. We climbed those stairs and went up and knocked on the door to the owner's apartment, and he came to the door. I said in my best college German, which was pretty rusty at that time, "You have been appointed wine coordinator of the Saar-Palatinate-South Hesse, Trier and Koblenz area. You have one hour to get packed and come with us."

Q: This is how you kidnapped the wine coordinator?

WIESNER: Yes. This was in the days of non-fraternization. You were forbidden to be friends with Germans, which was a stupid policy but anyway! He was of course both shocked and delighted and at the same time did not want to leave his home. He asked if could take his family with him. I said, "No, unfortunately not." So he invited us in. He went and changed clothes and did some packing. As we sat rather stiffly in his living room . . . -- It was a nice living room. -- . . . a young boy came in, one of his sons, who could not have been more than ten or eleven, maybe twelve, and then an older boy, who could not have been more than 17 or 18, with a deep scar down one side of his face. I asked how he got that scar and he said that he had been a Luftwaffe pilot and had been

shot down. This kid! Well, the hour went by and his wife came in and tried to shake our hands, and of course I wouldn't shake hands with her, but the winery owner did. We talked a bit and the hour went by and he wasn't ready. Finally I said to the sons, "Well, we'll go out and I want to do some sight-seeing in the town. We'll be back in an hour."

We had come into this winery through the front gate and passed French soldiers. The first thing they wanted to know was, did we come to buy wine, because they were not about to let us carry wine away. We assured them we weren't and didn't say anything more, but I wondered how we were going to get this owner out through those soldiers and into the car to carry him away, because they probably would not have allowed that either. So the young boy offered to accompany us and show us the sights. We said, "Fine." He took us to the great cathedral at Speyer, which had been pretty well destroyed in the bombing. We talked with some priests there, and they weren't at all bitter. Then after about an hour, we came back, and the boy directed us to the back gate of the winery compound. There weren't any soldiers there. We went up, and he [the winery owner] was ready. He came down with us and his whole family and all of his top winery officials and so forth were gathered in the street outside. They were tearful and laughing at the same time and bidding him goodbye. We got in the car and drove away and went back to Neustadt. So we got the wine coordinator.

Well, after we had done our preparatory work about restoring the Arbeitsaemter and the Sozialversicherungsaemter, it was time for me to go around to the various towns to get these things started, or if they were started, to see if they were functioning properly and were denazified. I had a jeep and a sergeant as a driver. On May 8th we came to Worms. In each case, we checked in with the local "I" detachment, the local detachment which was three officers and three enlisted men. When we came to Worms to the "I" detachment, I had a long questionnaire. They said, "Hell, man, don't you know that the war is over. We'll get your goddamned questionnaire filled out, then we are going to go out and celebrate. If you would like to stay with us, you are welcome to do it."

Q: Who said that?

WIESNER: These were the Americans in "I" detachment. So, we did that. Well, I could go on, but that's enough on that. Then in another couple of weeks, or even less perhaps, they got their permanent [people] . . . -- They already had a captain as a labor officer. -- . . . and I was free to go back to U.S. Group CC, which by then had moved into the I.G. Farben Building at Hoechst. We continued our planning working with the British and the French. On August 2nd the Russians let us into Berlin. They had come into Berlin at the end of the war in early May. In fact their coming into Berlin and the suicide of Hitler ended the war. During that period before they let the Western Allies in, they had thoroughly communized East Germany and Berlin. We can go into that, but it is all described in here [in my report]. They had thoroughly looted Berlin too, taken out whole factories, power plants, everything. Their soldiers had raped and looted and all of that. It was a terrible thing. When we came into Berlin, . . . -- It was the 2nd Armored Division that led the way, a very disciplined group of soldiers. -- . . . Berlin was utterly destroyed. I

had seen a lot of destruction in West Germany, mainly from the bombing. The bombing hit city centers and factories and things like that. Mostly it was targeted bombing by the Americans. The British did pattern mass bombing. But the outskirts of cities in the west and the villages were untouched, like Neustadt an der Weinstrasse, which was a medieval town. Only here and there were there houses missing. Berlin was destroyed all the way out to the outskirts, because the Russians had to fight their way in through this bitter Nazi resistance. So everything was gone. The first house in which I was billeted had a third of the roof shot off, and it was raining. It was the rainy season, and it was pretty miserable. There were bodies floating in the canals, and the Germans, of course, were much more miserable. So there again the first job had to
be . . . -- and the Russians hadn't done a damned thing to provide food or anything else for them. -- . . . was to restore the economy and get things going and get the people fed.

Q: What were your duties as Labor Advisor?

WIESNER: I was the Labor Attaché, and my job then was to help in restoration of . . . Well, the decommunization to the extent we could do it. . . . of local government on the labor side, although we couldn't. The agreements for the Control Council for Germany and the agreements on the zones of Germany, which put Berlin deep inside the Soviet Zone, all provided that decisions of the Allied Control Council and the Berlin Kommandatura had to be unanimous, so there was no way we could throw out this government that the Russians had installed. What we could do and what I immediately set about doing with some of my friends in the Manpower Division was to find anti-Communist trade unionists, Social Democrats, Christian Democrats, etc.; establish contact with them, which we did despite non-fraternization rules: and encourage them to organize against this massive apparatus that the Russians had installed. They had brought in a complete government headed by Wilhelm Pieck as President and Walter Ulbricht as the Head of the Communist Party and the . . . -- I forget his title, but he was the real boss. -- . . . and with people all the way down the line, who had been exiles in Russia during the war, in the Soviet Union. They brought them all in and installed them in positions including the trade unions, the Freie Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund as they called it, the FDGB. Do we want to go into all of that or do we want to rely on the book?

Q: I think a little bit would be helpful. How did you go about contacting the Social Democrats and were there ones who stuck out in your mind as particularly helpful in the process?

WIESNER: Yes, actually during those years that I was with OSS and working on the Social Democrats and the trade unionists, I had compiled quite a sizable biographic file of people that we knew to be alive in the underground and exiles including Willy Brandt, who was then in Sweden; Ernst Reuter, who was in Turkey; and others. They came in . . . -- Reuter just a year later . . . -- Willy Brandt and others came in at the same time the Allies were permitted in. Willy Brandt was in the uniform of a Norwegian Army major, and he was their press officer. There had been a debate within our own offices as to whether the Western Allies should encourage and facilitate the return of democratic

exiles in their own countries. By and large we were pretty cautious about that on the assumption that if we did that the Russian would bring in the Free Germany Committee and everything. That was kind of naive on our part.

Q: They had already done it.

WIESNER: They had already done it and we delayed in bringing in some of the democratic people from the West, although OSS had contact with them all, including Hans Jahn, for example, who was in Britain and who had been head of the Railway Workers Union and came back to head it. I knew a number of these people while we were working in Britain. I'd gotten acquainted with them in part through the Social Democratic leaders there and in part through the International Federation of Trade Unions, the IFTU, which was preserved in Great Britain with its headquarters there. But in Berlin, it was really a matter of their finding us, the people who were the opposition leaders.

Even in the West, in Neustadt, for example, I was approached almost as soon as I got there by a middle aged man -- whose name I have in this book, but I have forgotten it at the moment -- who was badly crippled, and he explained that that had happened during his stay in a concentration camp. He said he wanted to set up a trade union organization. Our instructions, which I had helped to write, were to permit local trade unions, and so we did. And the same thing we found elsewhere in that region, that there were democrats who had come forward, trade unionists, mostly Social Democrats but some Christian Democrats too, who spontaneously set up trade unions, usually on the basis of one big union encompassing all the crafts and all the industries. Then they would spread out. There was none of this building from crafts and industries to a top. They did it from the top down, and that's the way the Russians established the FDGB too. It was a unified thing and they spread it throughout all of Berlin and all of the Soviet Zone.

We got into a prolonged battle within the U.S. Military Government between those of us who were the anti-Communists and wanted to permit this restoration of trade unions as rapidly as the people were capable of doing it and a group of pro-Communists. They were scattered all through U.S. Military Government. This was the period when it was U.S. policy to get along with the Russians. So Communists and "fellow travelers" were taken into Military Government. This was a struggle which lasted a number of years, roughly until 1947. These people insisted on the formation of trade unions "from the bottom up" as they put it. First, shop committees, then organizations which were inter-shop and inter-factory on a local basis by industries, and then the creation of local federations and so on up through the Laender, the states. In the course of that, they did everything they could to see that German Communists and "fellow travelers" got these positions of leadership, particularly in shops where shop stewards had from the time of the 1918 Revolution always been the centers of radical activity in factories. Well, eventually we won and the book here tells how we did it.

Q: Did you screen the labor volunteers for the denazification process?

WIESNER: Yes, everybody was screened for that.

Q: Were there very many who were former Nazis who tried to present themselves as democratic labor leaders?
WIESNER: No, not in the trade union field, not in the political party field and the reason for that is that the real anti-Nazis had already identified them and excluded them. They knew who their people were. Many of them had held together during the entire Nazi period in little cells and so forth, which had been repeatedly betrayed and destroyed by either Nazi infiltrators or by Communists. So those who survived knew who their enemies were, and they did the denazification really on their own. In the Manpower Division, for example, there was a young lieutenant by the name of George Silver, who had come from the Jewish Labor Committee in Philadelphia originally. He had come through Army Intelligence, and he was a Socialist. He knew enough German that he was really a pioneer in finding the right people, whom he always began to call "Du", the familiar "Du", rather than "Sie" from the very beginning. He was one of the really authentic heroes of the reestablishment of the labor movement, and he, like so many of us, took up with a German lady whose name Hanna Bornowski. She was half Jewish and a Social Democrat, who had been hidden by non-Jewish friends all during the Nazi period. Between those two, he got CARE packages sent to him and anything else that his friends back in the States could send through the mails, and she set up a kitchen, so to speak. They founded the Wilhelm Leuschner Institute. Wilhelm Leuschner had been the leading trade unionist in the July 20th 1944 conspiracy that almost assassinated Hitler and had been found and killed. Then later as the Freie Universität was established, and that was fairly soon, she set another kitchen there. Between those two, they literally preserved the lives of many of these democratic leaders.

Q: Did they also screen for Social Democratic bona fides?

WIESNER: Yes, indeed, and he knew how to do it. I was more on the political side dealing with leaders who emerged in the Social Democratic Party. Don't forget that my mandate was national, so I had not only Berlin but also all of West Germany, the three zones of West Germany. So I quickly got acquainted with, for example, Kurt Schumacher, again a concentration camp survivor, who became the leader of the Social Democrats, even though political parties were not legal at that time, but they organized anyhow, and he was the recognized leader. Then a whole bunch of them were in Berlin. Jacob Kaiser was the leader of the Christian Democrats. I forget the names of others. Ernst Lemmer was the leader of the Liberal Democrats. All of these became my friends, and I entertained them at dinners and other parties in my home.

We were billeted again in Berlin in whatever housing we could find that was suitable. I quickly moved out of that place with a third of the roof shot off and was moved in with three others into the smallest of the town houses of the von Siemens family, the big electrical manufacturers, and we stayed in that house, which was magnificent, a lovely place with lots of servants and all of that, until the blockade of 1948 started, at which point coal was cut off and power plants were curtailed and we as Allies got six hours of

electricity in every 24. The Germans got four hours. The Air Lift, by the way, brought in a whole power plant in pieces. Well, this was an all electric house, and so we had to move out of that into another place.

Q: Was the fraternizing relaxed by that time?

WIESNER: Officially it wasn't relaxed until about 1946, but one of the things about the American Foreign Service is that it's traditional that you make friends with the people who are your contacts and you entertain them. Now they could not entertain us because they had nothing, but they willingly came to our parties and of course during that time various delegations of the AFL and the CIO and Congressmen and this, that, and the other thing were coming into Berlin and we would include them in some of these parties and receptions as well. But basically what I was doing and my colleagues in the Political Division -- because I was part of the Political Division of US POLAD, which in turn was part of OMGUS, as U.S. Group CC became OMGUS, Office of Military Government U.S., -- we all did this and were led in doing so by everybody up to Ambassador Murphy himself, who, because he was so close to General Eisenhower and then General Clay, was not permitted to violate the non-fraternization policy, but he thoroughly approved of what we were doing and his deputy, Donald Heath, for example, the DCM. . . . -- He wasn't called DCM, but he was his deputy. -- . . . then Jimmy Riddleberger and a whole series of political counselors, wonderful people, approved of what we were doing. We also worked very closely with the British Political Division, which had a more liberal policy and a lot more resources than we did. And then we worked, to the extent that we were permitted to, with the U.S. Information Service Division, which rationed newsprint and things like that to publications. That was crucial for publicity, and we kept pressing them to allot more to the democratic elements because the Russians overwhelmed their puppets with all these goodies, all these resources, and they were winning the battle to stay in power and to maintain their organizations. Well, I don't need to go into all the details as to how gradually within the Freie Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund in Berlin these democratic elements began to assert themselves and to clamor for democratic elections which were never held.

The Russians forced through a merger of the Social Democratic Party in Berlin and in the Soviet Zone with the Communist Party and that was called Die Sozialistische Einheitspartei [The Socialist Unity Party], the SED with the "D" standing for Deutschland (Germany). The Social Democrats forced a referendum on that issue in Berlin, and in the Soviet Sector the merger went through of course. In the Western Sectors it was overwhelmingly defeated. Some of us political officers in the Military Government including myself in full uniform without the rank insignia went into the Soviet Sector to observe the referendum there to be sure that it was, to the extent to which we could see, carried through fairly. I was arrested then by the Russians and held for about four hours. I was arrested again later during some other elections. What I did was to storm at them and say, "You can't do this to a fellow Military Government Officer" and so forth, and I eventually got released. It was a very, very tense and difficult situation, which eventually resulted in splitting the city and splitting the country.

Q: And splitting the labor movement as well?

WIESNER: And splitting the labor movement as well. Then gradually after we had, with the help of Joe Keenan by the way, who . . . Does that mean anything?

Q: Could you just say a few words about him?

WIESNER: Joe Keenan was the Secretary-Treasurer of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. He had been in the War Production Board as a Deputy to . . . I forget who was head of it. He was selected by General Clay to come over and be his Labor Advisor. When he came the first time, these Communists within the Manpower Division got a hold of him and convinced him that the "bottoms up" approach was the right way to go. Of course his was a very, very powerful voice, and Sidney Hillman backed him up.

Q: Could you tell us who Sidney Hillman was?

WIESNER: Sidney Hillman was the President of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, I believe, and had been a very powerful CIO leader. He had also served in the War Production Board or some such place in the administration, and he was one of the founders of the World Federation of Trade Unions. Sidney Hillman came on delegations, and he backed these people up, and Joe Keenan did too. He was taken in by them. Well, then the AFL . . . -- In the meantime all of us had been in touch with the AFL, Irving Brown and Zimmerman of International Ladies Garment Workers Union and others like that. -- . . . and they called Joe Keenan back to Washington for consultation. He stayed there, I think, a couple of months, and they really lit into him for what he was doing. So when he came back again in 1946, he . . . -- I'm not sure of my dates but they are all in here. -- . . . he was a completely reformed man, and then he led the fight to get trade unions organized throughout the Western Zones, the U.S. Zone and federated with those in the British and French Zones and in Berlin. He was a tower of strength in that fight, which eventually split the Freie Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund in Berlin with a non-Communist offshoot call UGO, Unabhaengige Gewerkschaftsorganization [Independent Trade Union Organization]. We all helped in that. Just how we did it is all described in this book.

Q: Is that the point at which the decision was made to have 17 or 18 large industrial unions in the Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund?

WIESNER: Yes, it was really done in the British Zone through the organization there headed by Hans Boeckler, who became the first President of . . . -- I forget which union he came from. -- first President of the DGB, die Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund [The German Trade Union Federation]. But in the U.S. Zone as well, one thing . . . I have to go back a bit. In pre-Nazi Germany in the Weimar Republic, you had union organization by party and by religious confession. You had the ADGB, die Algemeine Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund [the German General Trade Union Federation], which was largely

Social Democrat; you had a Christian trade union organization; you had a separate white collar organization, which was rather right wing. One of the things that was decided, and curiously enough almost unanimously in both the underground and among the exile groups, was that that would not be perpetuated in the new Germany. There would be one non-partisan, non-confessional trade union organization, and that in fact is the way they were set up. As I mentioned earlier, in West Germany the tendency at the beginning was to set up just one organization and then divide it by industries, and that of course was killed by the "bottoms up" approach. They were required to organize first in the shops and then by industries. In the British Zone, none of that took place. They didn't have a bunch of Communists there, and so they organized again from the top down and with these 16 industrial groups and that was the pattern that eventually prevailed in the West. Again, even with the industrial groups, it was highly centralized. The DGB was much more centralized than either the CIO or the AFL in the U.S., but gradually in later years of course the industrial unions have come to the fore as very, very powerful, like die Metalarbeiter [The Metal Workers' Union], for example, and the Public Service Workers and all of that. They do their own bargaining, and they do their own striking, if necessary. I can go into all of that too because one thing that emerged during those years was a movement toward what was called Mitbestimmungsrecht, co-determination in the factories, the worker representation on the boards of directors of companies.

Q: Did that occur in the period from 1945 to 1949?

WIESNER: Yes, it did, even though General Clay opposed it, and Ludwig Erhard who was the Economics Minister, first of the Bizone and then of the German Federal Republic, opposed it, but it went through and exists today. It's a very strong element in "industrial governments" so to speak in Germany.

Q: Could you say a few words perhaps about Irving Brown's role during the period?

WIESNER: Irving Brown's role was minimal. I got acquainted with Irving Brown through the periodic Labor Attaché conferences that were held mainly in Geneva and became very close friends of Irving. Irving paid little attention to Germany. His primary interests were France, where he was the leading force behind the creation of the Force Ouvriere and Italy, where he and Tom Lane were the leaders in the organization of CISL [Confederazione Italiana Sindacate Lavoratori], the democratic trade union federation there. He came into Germany now and then, but he played little role in these events that I'm describing. For some reason, he is not mentioned at all in the book, whereas Zimmerman and of course Joe Keenan and many others were.

Q: But Irving Brown did support the "top down approach" of the Social Democratic forces?

WIESNER: Oh, yes, certainly, but as I say, he had no real role because he was fully occupied with France and Italy and north Africa. He was very active in supporting the

independence movements in north Africa. A wonderful person, as I say, but he wasn't much involved in this.

Q: Did he know most of the personalities in the Social Democratic ranks in Germany?

WIESNER: I guess he did. I doubt if he knew them very well. For one thing, he didn't speak German.

Q: He didn't?

WIESNER: Oh, no. He spoke French and some Italian and so forth, but he didn't speak German. These others did. Not Joe. Joe never learned any other foreign language. Neither did Sidney Hillman. Victor Reuther was very helpful to us.

Q: Could you describe his role?

WIESNER: Well, Victor at that time was, I guess, the International Affairs Chief of the UAW, the United Auto Workers, and he was one of the very few CIO people who were anti-Communist and supportive of democratic trade unions and the Social Democratic Party.

Q: Would you like to comment on the effect of the Cold War and McCarthyism?

WIESNER: Yes, obviously we were part of the Cold War. The interesting thing is that we won the Cold War in Germany including West Berlin by purely political action, not by military action, not by the threat of military action, except of course during the blockade the Allied and U.S. military were used through the Air Lift to bring things into Berlin, but the fight that I have been describing and is described in this book was political. It was a "people's war" so to speak without weapons. We on the advisory side did not have weapons, and more particularly the German democrats didn't have weapons, whereas the Soviets did have weapons, and they arrested many of my friends and took them off and some of them just disappeared for ever. I am trying now, and one of the things I'll do on this forthcoming trip of mine [to Berlin], is to find out what has happened to some of them. They went into concentration camps, or they were killed. The Soviets had the power, the military might and they used it. The Western Allies didn't use their military might. They didn't have to defend their own zones, because the Russians never tried to invade them, but they did have to in the sense of the Air Lift into Berlin. It was the German democratic people, the forces of their leaders and of their followers, who won this war in Germany.

Q: Were the exiles who returned as effective as the those who had stayed?

WIESNER: Yes, they were. I had been afraid that they would not be well received, because they had not gone through all of the sacrifices of those who stayed and endured the concentration camps, but in fact there was none of that. They were received joyfully.

Willy Brandt I have mentioned. Ernst Reuter, who became the Oberbuergermeister [Governing Mayor] of Berlin; Max Brauer, whom I had known in New York, who became the mayor of Hamburg; the whole group from England, Hans Jahn on the trade union side, Eric Ollenhauer, who became the Secretary-General of the Social Democratic Party and others from other parts. They were received and integrated very quickly.

By the way, I have used that as an argument for trying to entice the Afghans in the United States to go back to Afghanistan now, because I am on the Board of the International Rescue Committee, and we have had programs among the Afghans both in Pakistan and in Afghanistan for years. They are very hesitant to do so, and our people in the field in Pakistan and Afghanistan say they would not be well received, but that was not the case in Germany. They were welcomed. They climbed as their abilities enabled them to to positions of leadership and particularly in the political parties and to a lesser degree in the trade union movement.

Q: Did the Weimar experience have enough roots to provide the structure later on for a viable trade union movement?

WIESNER: Well, as I say, the Weimar experience was politically divided and confessionally divided trade unions. That they abandoned. That they decided they would not repeat. It would be a unified trade union movement bringing in everybody and not affiliated with any political party. By and large that has been preserved to this day. That was a fundamental difference. The book describes some of the planning that was done by the exile groups and by some of the underground groups.

Q: They learned from their past experience?

WIESNER: The learned from their experience. Their divisions within the trade union movement had been a primary cause of its failure in the face of Hitler, also lack of militancy and that was particularly true of the Social Democrats and the trade unionists, both of which had large bureaucratic and property interests that they were determined to uphold by one concession after another to the Nazis. They became bureaucratized and hidebound and above all wealthy, and that again is described [in the book]. They didn't have the militancy, so the people who developed the new trade union movement were determined A) to be unified and B) to be militant in defense of their interests and of their beliefs, and they sacrificed an awful lot for that.

Q: Would you care to turn to McCarthyism and its impact on your career as a Labor Attaché?

WIESNER: Well, it didn't have any impact while I was in Germany, but when I came back in 1950, that brief flirtation with the Communists came to haunt me when I was assigned for a year to the CIA. Prior to taking the [required] lie detector test, I had to confess that I had been a member of the Communist Party and so forth. So I was suspended. I was sent back to the State Department and that process worked very, very

slowly. It was almost two years later that I was put through the loyalty-security process, both the written statement and the oral hearing, and eventually got cleared. The reason for it was that I had not searched my own memory and put down everything that had occurred in questionnaires. But I had a wonderful family friend, a distinguished corporation lawyer in New York named Goldthwaite Dorr, who had served under Tracy Voorhies and was a friend of General Clay and so forth. He had gone over to Germany repeatedly. He was an old man. He brought Robert Murphy; he brought General Clay; he brought various other men as witnesses for me . . . -- It was just wonderful! -- . . . including the man who had been our security officer in Berlin and who was a friend of mine. I had been so immersed in the fight against the Communists that it didn't occur to me when confronted with a questionnaire that that little flirtation that I had had with the Communists was significant, and that was a mistake. And it's one thing that I would advise. . . I would like to put on the record. -- . . . anybody who is coming into the Foreign Service or any other position where he is required to fill out a questionnaire about his past should fill it out completely and honestly and recall everything that the questionnaire asks for. It will save a lot of trouble by doing that, because you never know what will happen in future years or when something like that will rise to haunt you. This was a terrible experience for me and for my family. At that time I had a wife and two children, who were very, very loyal through the whole thing, but they suffered. I ended up by selling Boy Scout equipment at Hecht's in Parkington [in Arlington, Virginia], and just before Thanksgiving of 1954, I was cleared. They wanted me to head that department as a matter of fact...

Q: Which department?

WIESNER: The Boy Scout Department at Hecht's. I had done well, but you can't live on something like that. We borrowed money and all of that. We were supported by family and friends.

Q: Do you feel that you were given a fair hearing?

WIESNER: Yes, I do, thanks to Goldthwaite Dorr and the people he brought in, and it was thorough. We went into everything. I went right through this Communist experience and the experience after that. Nothing was hidden and when Robert Murphy was on the stand, one of the three members of the hearing board whispered to another, "Is that the Mr. Secretary who is going to make the decision in this case?" He was Under Secretary for Political Affairs at the time in the Department.

Q: Did he have the final decision?

WIESNER: No, he didn't. Oh, no. It was on the administrative side. He didn't have any role in that at all. Otherwise it would have been a conflict of interest, and he couldn't have testified. No, it was done through the security and the administrative side of the Department. Anyhow, it came out well and we were quickly assigned to Ankara, Turkey, where I became an Economic-Commercial Officer.

Q: Did you have any labor responsibilities in Ankara?

WIESNER: No, none whatever, and as I recall it, Ankara didn't even have a Labor Attaché. This was 1955 to 1959. I had an interest in it on my own. but I don't think we had a Labor Attaché. Turk-is was the trade union federation .

Q: There was a Labor Attaché in Ankara later on.

WIESNER: There was one later on, but I think in those years we didn't have one.

Q: And after Turkey you went where?

WIESNER: After Turkey, I wanted to get out of the labor field. I was quite pleased with my work as an Economic and Commercial Officer, and I applied to go to Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, as it was called then, Zimbabwe today, as a Commercial Attaché. I don't know who did this, but I was assigned to the Department as the Labor Advisor of EUR.

Q: Were you Dan Goott's predecessor?

WIESNER: No, Dan Goott was in E. He was the overall man. I succeeded Dan Horowitz, as I recall, and stayed there for a year and a half. One thing that we found was that coming back to Washington was economically a shock. We lost all of our allowances. The cost of living was very high. We had by that time four children, one of whom was born in Turkey. We lived out in Fairfax, Virginia, in a house, and the kids went to the local school, but living costs were so expensive. It was very hard on us.

Q: What were the major responsibilities of the Labor Advisor in EUR at that time?

WIESNER: That was a wonderful job. That was really great. The Labor Advisor of EUR . . . Well, in all the bureaus it's the same. My counterpart [in the Department of Labor] was Saul Moskowitz, also a Foreign Service Officer, and between us we were really the Washington supervisors and backstops for all the Labor Attachés all over Europe. We had the responsibility of advising our Assistant Secretaries on labor and labor-political policies. That meant writing papers and attending the staff meetings and so forth and advising them personally and also the offices in the EUR Bureau on all labor matters. Between the two of us we selected the Labor Attachés.

Then in 1960, Secretary of Labor Mitchell was supposed to go Scandinavia including Finland during what were called "the America Days" on a tour. There was some strike that broke out in the U.S. and he couldn't go, so Saul Moskowitz and I went and represented him in Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland. Since a speech was required, we got George Cabot Lodge to come up from the ILO meeting in Geneva, and we went together to Tampere on the west coast, and he delivered the speech.

Saul and I met all the top government people in the labor field and trade unionists in these four countries, and it was wonderful. In Finland, for example, there was a very tense struggle going on between the Communists and non-Communists in the trade union movement, and of course being right next to the Soviet Union, it was a very delicate situation. Arnie Geijer was Secretary General of the ICFTU. He was also Secretary General of the Swedish Trade Union Federation, and he had been sending in material aid to the non-Communists. I think a lot of it probably came from the CIA, although we were not informed of that. We met with him and plotted strategy, which we then carried over into Finland, and talked with the non-Communists there. That again was a struggle that turned out to be successful. Arnie Geijer certainly played a major role in that, no question about it. In Norway, I had met Haakon Lie when he was an exile in the United States during the war. He was Secretary General of the Labor Party of Norway, and then we met him again in his own country. It was just a wonderful experience, and I got to travel on other trips all around Europe. We had Labor Attaché meetings. We had a really fine bunch of Labor Attachés. Tom Lane was still in Rome. I think Dan Horowitz went to Paris, as I recall. I have forgotten who was in England.

Q: At that point, how were the Labor Attachés being selected for entry into the program? Were they coming out of the labor movement?

WIESNER: Some of them, like Vic Ulriksson in Sweden was, but others were Foreign Service officers. Still others were sent from the Labor Department. It was a mixed group. And some, of course, were the veterans like Dan Horowitz. Tom Lane himself came from the Bricklayers Union. In Finland we had a Foreign Service Officer as the Labor Attaché. I have forgotten his name at this point. We tried to get the best people we could from wherever they might come.

Q: There was no single formula at that time?

WIESNER: No single formula. Is there now?

Q: Most of the Labor Attachés are recruited from within the Foreign Service at this point. There aren't very many coming from the labor movement.

WIESNER: There were a fair number from the labor movement at that time, and they were good. We were also very, very careful in their indoctrination. We kept them in Washington until they learned what this program was all about, and what their job was. We sat them down in our offices and made them read files and all that to get pretty thoroughly briefed on their countries [of assignment].

Q: Was there a formal training program at that point at the Foreign Service Institute?

WIESNER: No

Q: Just consultation and discussion?

WIESNER: There was consultation. I don't think there was formal training at all. I am not sure just when that began. I remember that it did begin, but I don't think it was during those years.

Q: After EUR where did you go?

WIESNER: Now, we had to fill the job of Labor Attaché in Ottawa, Canada, one of the most important jobs. We agreed that Saul would go, but his wife objected and said that the children are in school, etc. Whatever it was, he couldn't go. I came home and talked to my wife about this and said we just haven't been able to find anybody for Ottawa. She said, "Why don't we go?" And we did. Saul and I assigned me. That was the longest Labor Attaché assignment in my career. I went there in February 1961 and left in July 1967, because I had volunteered to go to Vietnam.

It was one of my most interesting [assignments]. Everybody says Canada is a dull place. Nothing ever happens in Canada. It's just an offshoot of the United States. It wasn't true at all. During that period the longest and bitterest international labor dispute between the United States and Canada occurred on the Great Lakes, the Great Lakes Shipping Labor Dispute. There's a book about it that I helped [with by providing information] written by William Kaplan, who was a lawyer at the University of Toronto. [Everything that Floats. Pat Sullivan, Hal Banks and the Seamen's Unions of Canada.] This was a dispute that arose out of . . . Well, the Seafarers International Union of Canada was as corrupt and violent an organization as you can find anywhere. It was headed by one Hal Banks, who was a crook and a bully and who just terrorized his own men. The union was anything but democratic. He had sweetheart contracts with the largest Canadian shipping company, and eventually this got to the point in 1961 when some of the men, with the encouragement of another shipping company, Upper Lakes, formed a separate union, the Canadian Maritime Union. This organized that one company, as I say with the help of the ship owner. The SIU then, and Paul Hall was of course very much involved in this, boycotted the ships of that company and went to the extent of beating up the members and leaders of the CMU, I think that was its name.

Q: That was the independent union?

WIESNER: The independent union. The Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers, the CBRT, supported the independent union. First the CBRT won the representation with this company and then formed the independent union.

Q: How were you involved as the Labor Attaché in the process?

WIESNER: My job was of course primarily to report on what was happening, and I did. I went and interviewed Hal Banks, sitting on his throne, literally a kind of a throne-like thing in his office in Montreal. I got well acquainted with . . . I had already known the people in the CLC, Claude Jodein, the President and so forth, and the Canadian

Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers, which was a big, powerful union. The CBRT had William Smith as its president. I got acquainted with the CMU people, the independent union when that was formed, and I reported on what was happening. I followed what was happening in the United States. These ships of the Upper Lakes were bombed in Chicago and other places, and shaped charges were place against them and blew in part of their hulls. I was pretty scathing in my reports to the effect that the SIU was acting not only illegally in the sense of perpetrating all this violence, but the SIU of North America was defying Canadian sovereignty, because first the CBRT and then the independent union were certified by the Canada Labor Relations Board as the bargaining agent for that company and those ships. This is something I said should be respected. Well, it got to the point where the Canadian Government appointed a commission of inquiry, with the Commissioner being Mr. Justice Thomas Norris from British Columbia. He held almost a year of hearings from 1962 to 1963 and called witnesses. It was a very thorough [investigation] like a Royal Commission. I attended as many of those meetings as I could, virtually all of them in Ottawa. When they moved to Montreal, I didn't move with them, because I had other things to be doing too. In the middle of that, Paul Hall came to Ottawa and among others he wanted to see me. So I had him out to the house. He had one man with him, and I had our Economic Counselor with me as a witness. We had drinks and dinner. I explained that if he didn't get Hal Banks out of there and didn't respect Canadian sovereignty, the SIU of Canada was in danger of being destroyed. Mr. Justice Norris had told me confidentially, and I had reported this to Washington, that if they got Hal Banks out, that his report would not be nearly so tough as it would be if he remained.

Q: Plea Bargaining?

WIESNER: Yes. Well, I passed that on. Paul Hall was absolutely adamant that as far as he was concerned this was strictly a trade union matter. The Government of Canada had nothing to do with it, and the CLC was nothing but an enemy and a tool of the employers, etc., etc., etc. It turned out that he had recorded our meeting. There was [recorder in] a briefcase that his assistant had. So he went back to Washington and he demanded that I be fired. Instead, I was promoted. The top labor advisor in the Department of State at that time was Phil Delaney, a trade unionist. He listened to the tape and was given a transcript of it, and others listened too. They said there was nothing improper in my behavior. But in retrospect, what I should have done, and what I would do if I had this to do over again, was I should have offered to Paul Hall to mediate, then done a proper mediation. As it turned out, two Presidents of the United States, Kennedy and Johnson, and two Prime Ministers of Canada were involved eventually and of course the Labor Minister of Canada Mr. MacEachen and Willard Wirtz on the side of the U.S. and I think there was another one; they were all involved in this. Well, the report came out in May of 1963; and it recommended that this union be put under trusteeship; and the government did that. It also recommended that Hal Banks be prosecuted, and he was prosecuted for inciting to grievous assault, and he was convicted. He appealed, but before his appeal could be heard, he fled to the United States. In this book, there is a lot about the fight to extradite him. I didn't know about that. I wasn't involved in it. Eventually the Secretary of State

decided not to agree to extradite him, and the Canadians were absolutely furious about that. The union remained under trusteeship for about two years. It was a very gentle trusteeship, and it held democratic elections in a manner of speaking, then was freed from the trusteeship and rejoined the CLC. That was a very tense, bitter dispute that I as Labor Attaché couldn't help but be involved in.

Q: Center of things?

WIESNER: Well, not at the center really, because once the Secretaries [of Labor] became involved and the Presidents, the Labor Attaché was nothing, particularly with Paul Hall being so determined to get me out of there.

Q: How would you describe your relationships within the Embassy as Labor Attaché?

WIESNER: They were wonderful. They were absolutely wonderful. Of course, that dispute was only one of the many things that I did. I was in the Political Section. I had the ear of the Ambassador. There were two ambassadors while I was there, one was Livingston Merchant, and he was followed by W. Walton Butterworth, who was a diplomat of the old school. He dressed conservatively. He kept wide lapel suits long after they had gone out of style, and he used to say, "Protocol oozes from my skin." But he was good. I went everywhere in Canada, visited all the Consulates. It's a huge country, physically speaking a lot bigger than the U.S. I guess not now that Alaska is part of the U.S., at least certainly bigger than the lower 48. And we had ten Consulates...

I followed the employment situation there and the economic situation very, very closely and did a lot of economic reporting, which I hadn't done in Germany. That wasn't really relevant to what I was doing in Germany. I was not an action officer except involuntarily in this labor dispute, but Canada being the largest market for U.S. goods in the world at that time and the largest supplier of goods to the U.S., the largest trading partner in other words, was of interest not only politically but primarily economically to the United States, so I became very, very enmeshed in the Canadian economic and labor-economic situation and did a lot of what I think was damned good reporting on it. They had an excellent statistical institute, which was really the counterpart of the Bureau of the Census in the United States headed by my very good friend Sylvia Ostrey, who is still my very good friend and was down in the U.S. and gave a lecture in Cambridge just a few months ago. I became well acquainted with the then newly formed Economic Council of Canada under the leadership of Professor John Deutsch of Queens University. As I visited the provinces I met of some of the Prime Ministers, all of the Labor Ministers of course, and one of the things that I discovered and reported on very fully was labor-management cooperation, which was more highly developed in Canada and particularly in province of Nova Scotia than in the United States. For example the firm of Bowaters-Marsey, a big paper company, which was British, had labor-management councils that really went into things like production methods, productivity, and marketing. It wasn't Mitbestimmungsrecht [German co-determination]. They didn't have the legal power to participate in management, but this was done voluntarily and it worked. The reports showed that, where

it worked, it did improve productivity and profitability of companies, and I reported on this quite extensively. At the same I was pulling back from the U.S., principally the Labor Department, information about our economy, our labor conditions, and labor-economics, and such labor-management cooperation as existed here and giving it back to these people. So it was a two way street. It was very interesting and very rewarding.

At the same time we had a number of military bases in Canada at Argentia, Newfoundland; Goose Bay, Labrador; and I forget what the others were. They had their problems with the workers on the bases, who formed unions or joined unions, so I advised our military on labor-relations on the bases, and we had a labor-management committee of the military and myself. We would go visit these various places and a fellow came up from Westover Field in Massachusetts. He belonged to the Air Force, and he was their labor-management expert. I forget his name now. There was never a strike during the period I was there on any of those bases. It would have been illegal, but unions sometimes do things that are illegal. Anyhow, it didn't happen. The relations were good, and new contracts were developed.

In October of 1962, the Military Attaché in Ottawa . . . Well, he had a plane, a C-54 plane equipped for arctic navigation with a huge crew and all sorts of instruments, because you get up there, and the magnetic pole doesn't mean anything. Every few months he would take distinguished members of the Canadian military on flights up to the DEW Line, which was the distant, early-warning system, which ran roughly along the 70th parallel, and BMEWS, which was the Ballistic Early Warning Systems, which was located in Thule, Greenland. I got to go one of those trips in October of 1962 to the high arctic. It was really fun. It was a wonderful thing.

Well, there were of course labor union problems. There were Communist unions in Canada, particularly on the West Coast, and I reported on that too and you had in Canada, a Canadian Labor Congress and the Christian trade unions, principally based in Quebec, so I got acquainted with them too, under somebody by the name of Marchand. I forget his first name. Their negotiations were of interest. I don't remember details at this point, and I reported on that. I got acquainted with the trade union people across the country and with management people. This was the first time in my career as Labor Attaché that I had gone out of my way to become acquainted with people on the management side, and they appreciated it, and it helped the reporting, and as I say the labor-management cooperation experiments were really very impressive.

Q: Did you find that the Canadian managers were more supportive of a structured labor-management relationship than say U.S. managers might be?

WIESNER: It varied by industry and by company. Some of them were, and some of them had the same adversarial relationship as is the norm in the United States. In automobiles the companies were the same, General Motors, Ford and Chrysler and so forth. During that period the U.S.-Canadian Free Trade Agreement in Automobiles was negotiated and signed. The Canadian auto workers were always pretty independent minded, and they

won autonomy from their headquarters. The same with the Steel Workers. There was no struggle like this; they were autonomous; their autonomy was respected, and of course, as I say, the auto workers were dealing with multinational companies, but the steel industry in Canada is largely national, and that worked quite well. There were strikes of course. The hard rock miners were one of the Communist unions in Canada. There's gold mining and all that sort of thing way up in the arctic, a really tough bunch, but I think overall there wasn't all that much difference. It just varied by company and by industry.

Q: Was the percentage of organization higher at that time in Canada than it was in the United States?

WIESNER: Yes, I think it was.

Q: Now it is something like 40 percent in Canada and 12 or 13 percent in the private sector in the United States.

WIESNER: Yes, it was higher, and there wasn't the resistance to it. They have never gone through a Reagan-Bush period of restriction and fighting trade unions on the Federal Government that we've had here. The public service unions, of course, are strong in both countries, but yes there was a higher proportion, and even out on the prairies. Some provinces at that time were led by the New Democratic Party, the NDP, which was a socialist party, like Saskatchewan. Other provinces have gone that way later. I think British Columbia even for while -- I'm not sure about that -- after I left. During the time I was there it was under the control of what was called the Social Credit Party, which was an agrarian, rather right-wing party, but never did they have the kind of legislation and government fighting of trade unions that we have seen in the U.S. in recent years. Altogether it was a very, very enjoyable period.

Q: Was that your last labor assignment?

WIESNER: Yes, it was.

Q: Would you describe briefly what you did afterwards?

WIESNER: Yes. One of the things that irritated me about the Canadians was that they were almost like Swedes and Indians in the sense of being sort of preachy about the faults of the United States, and of course nothing brought that out more clearly than the Vietnam War, where Canadians by and large thought that we were absolutely wrong to be there. Actually behind the scenes the Canadian Foreign Office was very helpful in trying to mediate between the U.S. and the South Vietnamese Government on the one hand and Hanoi on the other hand. A fellow by the name of Blair Seaborne in the Ministry of External Affairs was sent over repeatedly as a emissary. I became quite well acquainted with him too in Vietnam. So what I was reading in Canada was that the U.S. was wrong to be in there, and I wanted to become a part of it, just as I wanted to become a part of the thing in Germany, so I volunteered to go out and I was accepted. I had tried to go to the

Senior Seminar in the United States, but I wasn't selected for that, and one of the reasons for it turned out to be a fluke. I told you I have only one eye, but somehow it had gotten in my record what belonged in the record of another fellow with the same last name, who belonged to AID, that he had had detached retinas. I found that out after I was rejected for the Senior Seminar, because nobody with that kind of defect could serve abroad again. I screamed over the telephone at the personnel people that I couldn't possibly have detached retinas in both eyes, because my right eye is artificial. But it was too late anyhow.

Q: This was before the grievance process?

WIESNER: Yes, that's right. Well, anyhow I wanted to go to Vietnam, and I was accepted. As a senior officer, I was not allowed to take the full year study of Vietnamese as a language. I always try to learn the languages of the countries that I am in. I became pretty fluent in Turkish, relatively, but they said, "It would be to expensive to send you and pay your salary for a year. We just send junior officers to that kind of training." So I got five weeks, and then went on and did two years of study, an hour a day kind of stuff, in Vietnam. Never did become fluent in that language. Well, all Foreign Service people who were assigned there and who were not assigned to the Embassy, which had a relatively small staff, went into pacification program, which was called CORDS, Civil Operations for Revolutionary Development Support. It later became Rural Development Support. The head of that was Ambassador Robert Komer, a real fireball, who had come out of the White House. He was selected by President Johnson to pull together the Pacification Program under the military commander. He became deputy to the Commander, Military Assistance Command Vietnam. COMUSMACV,. Deputy for Pacification, that's a military rank with a four star equivalent rank. He had been known as "the blowtorch" in the White House when he was in charge of Vietnam affairs there. He assigned all senior officers and when I was interviewed by him . . . -- and this was in December or maybe it was January of 1968. . . -- he said, "How would you like to take over the refugee program?" The previous head of it was going to leave, and I said, "Well, Mr. Ambassador, I don't know anything about refugees, and I don't know anything about heading a big staff." He said, "What I need is managers." He appointed me to head it. Well, President Johnson had different ideas. He selected a few months later John Frederick Thomas, who was then head of the Cuban Refugee Program in the United States and a black. It was his personal selection. He came out there in April, and I became his deputy. By the way John Thomas is now 85 years old, and I haven't met him since those years, but I am going to meet him this Saturday in Brattleboro, at a luncheon of the Foreign Affairs Retirees of New England. He lives in Vermont. That really changed my life fundamentally.

Q: Was there any labor content at all to the work in Vietnam?

WIESNER: Not to mine. I was given this job just a few weeks before Tet 1968, this enormous, coordinated Viet Cong assault on every major city in South Vietnam and a lot of the small towns all in one night, all of which is described in detail in my book [Victims

and Survivors: Displaced Persons and Other War Victims in Vietnam, 1954-1975 (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1988)]. The fighting in most of the cities ended within a few days. In both Saigon and Hue, it lasted for a month, and I formed under CORDS a coordinating committee for the relief of the 800,000 or so people who became war victims in the cities, because their homes were destroyed, their places of business were destroyed in the fighting. Fires raged uncontrolled in the slum areas and so forth. I brought together people from USAID logistics, from the U.S. military because the military had the only surviving communications system and the only surviving transport system in the entire country. The Vietnamese military was fully occupied and tied down in fighting. The U.S. military was partly tied down in fighting, but it had this enormous transport capacity and the military communications system. We used it, and we also used Air America, which was financed by AID and CIA. We moved everything. We moved tents; we moved blankets; we moved food; we moved this very pungent fish sauce, the Vietnamese call Nuoc Mam, which is put on just about everything. It's full of vitamins. We moved that in plastic containers that were supposedly unbreakable but a number of them did break. Oh, they stunk up those planes something awful.

Q: You were in Saigon at that point?

WIESNER: I was in Saigon, but I went everywhere through the whole of South Vietnam, usually with the Minister of Social Welfare and Refugees. He would go to see how the relief effort was going, because on the ground it was carried out by his officials. The logistics of it were carried out by us. We furnished what he and his people said they needed. Our own refugee officers in the field would get on the phone and scream, "I need 2,500 blankets yesterday." We would do our best to supply them, and we did. Then an operation was quickly mounted bringing together the whole Vietnamese Government and U.S. side, CORDS, to begin rebuilding, and within a year all those people were back in homes, either their previous homes in their previous locations or in new locations, so that was my baptism of fire. I bought together, as I say, the military and various components of CORDS and USAID and the voluntary agencies, which are private, non-profit organizations like the IRC whose report I have just given you, who were already there and had their people out in the field, and UNICEF. It was a coordinated effort. For the first few days the Minister, whose name was Ngugen Phúc Que, said, "You people had better stay off the streets and let us handle the relief effort." This book [Victims and Survivors] has pictures of their doing it, but after a while he allowed the voluntary agencies to go out and work too, but the movement of supplies and the coordination of the effort was done through our office.

Well, altogether from 1954, when the French war ended and Vietnam was split, to April 30, 1975, I figure that approximately 11 million of the 20 million people in South Vietnam became displaced or war victims, well over half of the population, the largest single displacement to my knowledge since World War II. And it had enormous social and political consequences and contributed to the defeat of the South and dislocated some millions more in the north as a result of the U.S. bombing and so forth and the population movements of the Communist Government.

I spent 14 months in Saigon. When John Thomas left and a Foreign Service Officer was brought in as the new Director of the Refugee Division under Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker . . . -- He was a friend of his and had known him in India. -- It was felt not to be proper for two Foreign Service Officers to hold . . .

Q: Who was the other Foreign Service Officer you were working with? Ambassador Bunker himself?

WIESNER: No, Ambassador Bunker was the top man over Komer, and then Colby succeeded him. So I was moved out then to become the Regional Refugee Director in II Corps, which included the central highlands and then on up to I Corps, the five northern provinces where the heaviest refugee load was, and stayed there until July 1970. I came back as a Foreign Assistance Inspector in the Department. That's a job that no longer exists. It's part the Foreign Service Inspection Corps now. Do you want me to go on as to what I did after that?

Q: Yes, in summary.

WIESNER: In 1971, as a result of a military crackdown by the Government of Pakistan, West Pakistan, against the people in the east, the Bengalis, some ten million Bengali refugees fled into India within a few months, the largest refugee movement across a border since World War II. A massive international relief effort was mounted including an inter-agency committee in the U.S. The Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Refugee and Migration Affairs, Frank Kellogg, who headed this committee asked me to become the secretary of it, and I did for ten months. There again we had State, Defense, AID, USIA, and the voluntary agencies, and we moved $105 million worth of relief supplies to India in a very, very efficient operation. For one thing that was the time when the U.S. was bringing the boys back home from Vietnam, and I had as an associate on this committee the logistics director of AID, who developed the idea of using those planes on the back haul to carry our goods through Calcutta. That saved us a lot of money. Then we used commercial planes too. We would charter those. I bought, for example, a million and a quarter blankets as a part of a total of five million that the international community furnished. I got half of them from Sears at very advantageous prices. The rest of them I bought directly from the factories. Half of these were shipped by air, and the other half were shipped by sea on one ship. We had containers with doors built for them of such a size that they could be used as temporary shelters for these people. The blankets were baled and were put in there, and we put them on the ship and then the Longshoremen struck. The ship was in Charleston, South Carolina. We did everything. We went to the AFL-CIO. We went to the union. "For God's sake, this is a humanitarian emergency. Will you release the ship?" Finally, they did, but it got there after the two weeks' war was over or about the time it ended. So the stuff was simply transshipped into Bangladesh.

Q: The time of independence of Bangladesh?

WIESNER: Yes. That was an experience. Then as an Inspector, I went back to Vietnam twice in 1972 and inspected both the public health program and the refugee program. I became a disaster relief expert. I had gone to East Pakistan. In 1970 there was this tremendous cyclone and tidal bore in what was then East Pakistan that killed 300,000 people in one night. The flood waters rose 30 feet and held there for six hours over this absolutely flat country, and of course it killed people and it killed cattle and just devastated the countryside. The corruption and partiality of the Government in Islamabad in the handling of that relief effort was one of the things that led to election defeat the next year of the government party and then that in turn to the crackdown. (Telephone interruption)

Q: Continuation of the interview with Louis Wiesner. This is October 1, 1992. Shall we continue with your Foreign Service career? After Islamabad and Pakistan and the relief effort in Bangladesh?

WIESNER: Yes. Well, after that I went back to being a Foreign Assistance Inspector and inspected AID programs. I had inspected AID programs in 1970 in Thailand, and in 1971 before the Bengali crisis, I went to Peru to inspect the disaster relief work after the great earth quake of the previous year, which had killed something over 60,000 people within a very few minutes. Then after the assignment to Frank Kellogg for the Bengali refugee crisis, I went back into IGA as it was then known and went to Vietnam twice in 1972. In April . . . -- That was during the Easter offensive of the North Vietnamese, who swept down across Quang Tri Province, the northernmost province, and in from Laos and Cambodia on the West and came very close to conquering the country at that time. -- . . . my two colleagues and I went to Quang Tri right during that offensive. We had to helicopter up from Da Nang in the Deputy for CORDS' helicopter, because the air field, which was across the river was already in enemy hands. We found about 50,000 refugees crowded into the city and around it in schools, pagodas and so forth. It was raining. It was the end of the rainy season and very, very hard on these people. Then we went to other parts of Vietnam and inspected the public health and refugee programs there. I went back in October of that year, by which time the offensive had been defeated, and the recovery was well under way. At that time we saw a remarkable development of new hamlets that were created down in the more southern parts of South Vietnam for refugees who could not be resettled in the northern part of South Vietnam. This was under the leadership of Mr. Phan Quang Dan, who was the Minister for Land Development and Hamlet Building as it was called. It was very successful, a durable resettlement of refugees with enough land so that they could cultivate and earn a living. All of this is described in my book, Victims and Survivors.

Then I helped to inspect the program in Colombia. That was very interesting. This was long before the Medellin drug cartel seemed to be in power. It may have been subterraneously, but we found no signs of it at that time. We weren't looking for any. We were looking into agricultural programs and food for work and so forth and new housing projects funded by AID. One of the things that impressed me most about those was that the low cost housing that was being assisted by AID was being bought by the poor people

who lived in the housing. One of these developments was called Ciudad Kennedy right outside Bogota. In the cities around the country, outside of Bogota as well. It occurred to me that the difference between that way of assisting the poor people with housing, where they had an ownership interest and took care of their places and improved them, was such a marked contrast to the rental public housing policy of the United States that I just couldn't understand why we hadn't adopted something like that in this country. Because once you do that with low cost, low interest loans, you give people an interest. The property is theirs and they take care of it, whereas, as you know, in the United States most public housing is trashed very quickly.

Q: I think Secretary Kemp would agree with you.

WIESNER: Yes, I think he is trying to introduce something like that now, but this was back in 1973, and it was very, very successful. Well, then the Director of the Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs in the Department Ray Laugel came down with cancer, which killed him within a very short time, and Frank Kellogg asked me to take his place and I became the Director of the Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs, which was my last assignment in the Department until my retirement in August of 1975. Among other places I visited Israel because the U.S. was funding absorption centers and housing for Russian refugees going there. They were very, very fine projects. The last major work that I did during that time was participating in the Interagency Task Force on the evacuation of refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia in the spring of 1975, and we don't need to go details of that. They are all in my book.

Q: Then you went with the ...

WIESNER: Then I retired on August 15, 1975, and one month later went to work for the International Rescue Committee. Karl Sternberg, who was the Executive Director, wanted me to go to work right away, but I said that I needed a month for relaxation. In order to avoid conflict of interest with my previous work, where I had been giving grants to the IRC and other volunteer agencies, for the first two years really I was put on the domestic resettlement side as the inspector and counselor in the setting up of offices around the United States. Then I became after that the Administrator of the Medical Programs Division overseas, and again I don't need to go into all the details of that, but that was very productive. I retired again February 1984 in order to write this book which was published in 1988.

Q: This is the book <u>Victims and Survivors</u>?

WIESNER: <u>Victims and Survivors</u>, yes. I was elected to the Board and then to the Executive Committee and have been a member of both ever since.

Q: Are those voluntary positions?

WIESNER: Oh, yes. [The earlier work] was paid, not very much. The IRC doesn't pay very much. The tax laws prohibit the paying of compensation to directors of a voluntary agency. It is permitted to pay for their travel to board meetings, but I have refrained from claiming that. I simply claim it on my income tax instead. We meet about eight times a year in New York, and I have done some traveling for the IRC. Well, I did a lot when I was administering the medical programs, and then since then mainly to El Salvador twice and Pakistan.

Q: Turning back to your career as a Labor Attaché, how would you assess the role the AFL-CIO in U.S. foreign labor programs in the posts were you served?

WIESNER: Well, I have told you about role of the AFL and the CIO in Germany on two sides of the question of how to organize the trade unions. The AFL position eventually prevailed, although it wasn't just an AFL position; it was the position that I and my friends in the Manpower Division felt was the proper way to go about this, and so there was a confluence of interests and views between the AFL and ourselves, which prevailed. It wasn't the AFL determining our policy or making the policy; we both felt the same way and that is what eventually happened. Since then, of course, the AFL-CIO and the DGB are very closely related in the ICFTU and generally speaking. In Canada I have described the conflict between one union in the AFL-CIO, the SIU of North America, and Canadian sovereignty and Canadian policy. I was on the side of abiding by and respecting Canadian sovereignty, and eventually the Canadians asserted their interest and put the union under trusteeship and prosecuted the head of it and so forth. In Europe, when I was Labor Advisor to EUR, we worked very closely with Irving Brown and AFL-CIO. There again the interests and views coincided with those of the U.S. Government, meaning ourselves, and AFL-CIO, and there was very good, close collaboration there.

Q: How were your relations with the Department of Labor? Were their guidelines clear?

WIESNER: I don't recall that they had any guidelines at that point. Initially the Department of Labor was not in the picture. In the work in Germany, for example, there was no involvement of the Department of Labor at all. I think that came later. When I came back from Turkey and became the Labor Advisor to EUR in 1959, by that time the Labor Department's program was well developed. George Lodge was the Assistant Secretary. At some time I also dealt with Phil Kaiser either then or I guess when I was in Canada. Both of them were good friends, and as I said earlier Saul Moskowitz and I worked hand in glove together on our problems. The State Department took the lead in political matters, matters of international relations per se and the Labor Department had the stronger role on strictly labor and particularly economic-labor matters. Both of us dealt with the trade unions and the AFL-CIO, either separately or jointly but always on the same wavelength. So there was no conflict. It was a good cooperative relationship.

Q: What role did USIA play?

WIESNER: I forget the name of the very effective Labor Information Officer in London. Perhaps you remember that or you may have even interviewed him at some time. We didn't have much relationship with USIA in any of the posts that I served in, as I recall, including Canada, so I just have no further information about that.

Q: I guess AID was not represented in either Canada or Germany?

WIESNER: AID didn't exist in those early days. Well, yes it did, of course. It arose out of the Marshall Plan. We worked closely with them.

Q: What was the relationship between the Labor Attaché and the Marshall Plan people in Germany?

WIESNER: The Marshall Plan took over from the Military Government the assistance to the reconstruction of Germany ,and of course that was vital in its rebuilding. I don't remember whether I dealt with people at that time in Paris, but when I was in EUR, I did work with the people in what was then called OEEC, the U.S. representatives there. At that time there was a Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OEEC, later OECD, in which the AFL-CIO [participated]. (End of side A, tape Two.)

. . . about our interaction.

Q: But there was no marked conflict?

WIESNER: There was a division of labor between the two sides?

Q: What about the role of the CIA? Do you care to comment on their function?

WIESNER: I was assigned to the CIA from 1951 to 1952, and I just don't want to say anything about what went on there. It was the sensitive part of the agency, and even now I think it wouldn't be appropriate to comment on it. As I mentioned earlier, during the trip that Saul Moskowitz and I took to Scandinavia in 1960, where we were consulting with Arnie Geijer of the ICFTU, I assumed that the CIA was assisting in supporting the anti-Communists in Finland, but I have no evidence to support that.

Q: Of course there has been a lot about the funding issues that came out later?

WIESNER: Yes, and in Italy too, I assume that the CIA was providing some of the money that went to support CISL, but I have no evidence to support that.

Q: What about instructions from the desks while you were Labor Attaché? Did you get your primary instructions from say the German Desk and the Canadian Desk?

WIESNER: Oh, yes, well in Germany we worked very, very closely with the Office of German Affairs, which later became a Bureau under first Ambassador Murphy, then

Hank Byroade. They supported us in this anti-Communist fight 100 percent, but remember in those early days right after the war, the Morgenthau Plan was the dominant plan, and it had been accepted by President Roosevelt and was carried on by President Truman until 1947 and that really called for the destruction of Germany's economic potential.

Q: Was it that late? I didn't realize that.

WIESNER: Yes. It was widely disregarded by the Military Government. General Clay modified it more and more and more, and in practice the commanders on the ground did from the very first moment, because they had a population that had to be fed and had to have work, and so they were engaged in helping to rebuild the factories and so forth and the agriculture. At the same time reparations were being collected by the various Allied Powers, except for the United States, which never took any industrial material or anything like that as reparations. The policy toward trade unions arose out of the same group of people who were responsible for the Morgenthau Plan. The State Department's people in charge of German Affairs, Jimmy Riddleberger and so forth, were fully supportive of our position, both politically and with regard to trade unions and eventually prevailed.

Q: Could you characterize in a few words what the labor policy of the Morgenthau Plan was?

WIESNER: Well, the labor policy was really the "bottoms up approach" to delay the creation of all democratic institutions, to require them to go through this elaborate bottoms up procedure, because it was based on a profound distrust of the whole German people. The feeling behind that was that they were all Nazis or supporters of the Nazis, whereas we found and we had known this in advance that there were divisions. There were the democratic trade unions and Social Democratic and Christian Democratic opposition that existed all during the Hitler period, and they were the people that we were trying to encourage to take over power and replace the Nazis. The great majority of the Germans I found had gone along with the Nazis as long as they were succeeding, and many of them remained loyal to the end. Denazification was not an easy process, particularly before the analysis of the party archives. Once that had been done, and you could check names, then it was easier. Many of the Nazis, and there were people who were more than nominal Nazis, were leaders of industry and business and so forth, whom the military commanders and military government felt were essential to the recovery of the country, particularly in coal and steel. There was a big fight always over the Thyssens and Krupps and so forth. By and large I think the economic revival people got the upper hand, and many of those who were more than nominal Nazis remained in their positions in the industries. So I would say that the Morgenthauists and the pro-Communists were working hand in glove on labor policy and were eventually defeated.

Q: Was it a conscious coalition?

WIESNER: Well, it was the same people in many cases. There were pro-Communists in Finance Division . . .

Q: Among those who were supporting the Morgenthau Plan? And the military authorities who decided to go the other route were doing it on their own authority?

WIESNER: Very much so.

Q: Did they have the backing of Washington?

WIESNER: Well, yes and no. There was a famous directive JCS 1067 which embodied the Morgenthau Plan and was comprehensive. That's discussed in my book, the long report. Just as I was instructed by this Corps Commander of the 23rd Corps to go and kidnap the wine coordinator in 1945 before the war ended, he was trying to help the wine industry recover and get back on its feet, which really strictly speaking was contrary to the spirit, if not the letter, of the Morgenthau Plan and of JCS 1067.

Q: So it was basically an on-the-ground, pragmatic approach towards making the country viable?

WIESNER: Precisely, the U.S. military commanders and General Clay felt that we really couldn't do anything else. We had to. Otherwise we would have had to feed these people or else let them starve and many of the more extreme Morgenthauists were prepared to let them starve, and as a matter of fact in the winter of 1946-47, the coldest winter that Europe had suffered in many decades, thousands and thousands of people did starve. I went around into Western Germany in the dead of winter with Jim O'Donnell, who was at that time the Newsweek Bureau Chief and Marguerite Higgins of the Herald Tribune, and we visited hospitals and saw the edema cases and we saw the pitiful ruins of houses that people were living in and saw their hunger edema cases and they wrote about it and that influenced policy back in Washington eventually. Then CARE packages were coming in and other aid coming in, but it was not sufficient. People did starve.

Q: No one challenged General Clay in this first two year period?

WIESNER: General Clay was distressed about this as anybody else. He was doing his best to alleviate conditions. He was torn. As a good military general he was beholden to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but at the same time he was very sensitive to conditions on the ground. As I say, he was torn.

Q: Basically American soldiers were not able to watch people starve.

WIESNER: They are not and they didn't.

Q: Okay. Let's see.

WIESNER: Have we finished that question? I forget what that question was in its broadest sense.

Q: That was a very broad question.

WIESNER: Instructions from the desks.

Q: And the question of the Morgenthau Plan and when it ceased to be our policy.

WIESNER: Of course when I was in EUR covering the whole continent I worked very closely with all the desks including many, many young officers who later became Ambassadors like Arthur Hartman and so forth. No, we didn't do anything in the political area without clearance of those desks.

Q: What about the role of Congress and Congressional visits in your work as Labor Attaché?

WIESNER: As I say, there were a lot of them to Germany. I do not recall much liaison with Congress when I was in EUR, and of course with regard to Canada, there's a very close relationship, and the Congress and the Canadian Parliament have their own channels of communication which bypass the Administrations of both countries. Well, not of both countries because Canada has a Parliamentary system, so the Parliament is the Government, and those were very, very extensive, and of course I mentioned the negotiation of U.S.-Canada Auto Free Trade Pact, which had to be ratified by Congress and was. I don't recall any particular Congressman that I had met or dealt with. The Canadians were always of the opinion that they were neglected by the United States and misunderstood. It's like sleeping next to an elephant.

Q: Would you like to comment on the position of the Labor Attaché within the Embassies that you served in?

WIESNER: Well, as I say, in Germany it couldn't have been better. Our whole Political Division in Germany in the Military Government was suspect by a number of the military officers. We were the "striped pants boys" although we didn't wear striped pants, but that was the image. The Manpower Division from the very beginning going all the way back to Bushy Park when Major David Morse was head of it couldn't have been more cooperative, and they just took me right into their midst and made me part of it. You see that was a big division and had a lot of officers, and the factions developed within it, the "bottoms up people" and the Social Democrats, who one book called the "Porter-Rutz group."

Q: Ambassador Porter was the leading figure?

WIESNER: Well, he wasn't an ambassador then. Yes, Paul Porter.

Q: He was the leading figure in the group?

WIESNER: He was a leading figure, but we worked so closely together and people like David Saposs, the eminent labor-historian, who was in that division, and then a number of trade union people, people who came out of the trade union movement. Harold Mullaney, who was a major. I forget what union he was in. John Messkiman, who came from the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks. George Silver, I have mentioned from Jewish Labor Committee. Joe Dunn. I forget what union he was from. Then, of course, Joe Keenan, who was above the Manpower Division, but worked very closely with it. After Dave Morse the head of that division was Leo Wertz, who later was Assistant Secretary for Administration of the Labor Department; both were really fine people.

Q: Did these folks collectively help shift the balance in favor of the Social Democratic forces?

WIESNER: Well, once we got rid of the pro-Communists they did. (Pause) Within the military government, my position couldn't have been more pleasant in that sense. Within Embassy Ottawa the same way, just wonderful relationships right across the board. As a regular Foreign Service Officer, I had a certain in in Embassies. It wasn't as if I had come in as an FSR or something like that. They would be looked on with a little more suspicion, I suppose.

Q: Do you feel that it was an advantage to being a regular Foreign Service Officer rather than coming in with a labor or trade union background?

WIESNER: Oh, absolutely. I think so, particularly with someone like W. Walton Butterworth, the soul of the old style Foreign Service people. Oh, yes indeed.

Q: Do you have any comments on what you think the Labor Attaché program should be?

WIESNER: Well, I haven't kept up with it. I don't really know what they are doing now. I assume that they are doing the same things pretty much that we did. Let me go right back to the beginning when Otis Mulliken lectured to our little Foreign Service class back in the fall of 1944. What he said was, "We created this Labor Attaché program because of our perception that in the postwar world labor is going to have a much more important role in the formation of governments and the determination of political and economic policies and we as the United States need to know the people involved and the forces involved and to crank that kind of reporting into the data base. . ." -- It wasn't called data base at that time. -- ". . . for American foreign policy." He couldn't have been more right. As you probably have heard a dozen times by now, in 1945 Sam Berger had these wonderful contacts with Clement Attlee and the whole Labor Party. When they took power he was the only one in the Embassy who knew them, who had any contact with them. He was the person who had to introduce these people to the American Ambassador and so forth. And that really solidified the perception that Labor Attachés had a proper

role and needed to be integrated into the Embassy structures and into the formation of foreign policy.

Q: This was presented as a departure from the traditional relationship between the Embassy and the Foreign Ministry or head of state?

WIESNER: Oh, yes. Clement Attlee succeeded Churchill as the Prime Minister, and he brought in Ernie Bevin and all these other people, these rough hewn trade unionists. I met Ernie Bevin; he came out of the Miners Union. These were not the typical striped pants government people, but Sam knew them all and Herb Weiner did too.

Q: So this was a direct contact between the Labor Attaché and grass-roots organizations, in this case the labor movement?

WIESNER: Well, the Labor Party had been in the opposition during the war years. It was long-standing and dated back to early part of the 20th Century. Herb Weiner wrote a book about this. But the typical Embassy officer dealt with the government and the elite.

Q: And ignored the opposition parties?

WIESNER: Yes, well they certainly did in England. Absolutely. Had no contact with them at all. You must have heard this.

Q: Oh, yes. Could you describe Otis Mulliken?

WIESNER: Otis Mulliken was on the Civil Service side. I am not sure how he got this job. He was a mild mannered person, really a wonderful, wonderful individual. He used to have these Labor Attaché conferences, and he was sort of a father figure to us. After some years he was eased out of that. I guess he was succeeded first by trade union people like Phil Delaney, then by Foreign Service Officers like Horowitz. He later moved into IO, the Bureau of International Organizations Affairs, where he kept that labor and social affairs portfolio. He died many years ago of cancer, I believe. A fine person.

Q: Did he describe in his presentation the initial impetus for the Labor Attaché Program? Who had come up with the idea?
WIESNER: He came up with the idea, as far as I could tell, and the rationale for it was precisely what I have just described. He felt that labor would become an important player in the postwar period, and we needed to be in touch with it. The emphasis as I recall was largely political rather than economic at that time.

Q: When did the economic aspects become more significant?

WIESNER: Well, it varied by country. As international statistics on employment and earnings and so forth and the interrelationships of economies became closer, then the economic side of labor reporting became more important. For example, in Canada this

was vital. We compared unemployment rates in the U.S. with Canada. They were always higher in Canada in those years, because Canada remained depressed even when the U.S. was experiencing upturns for reasons that I have forgotten. And labor productivity is very important, particularly when you have multinational companies. By and large Canadian wages remained at a lower level than those in the United States during the years I was in Canada, and so did their productivity. For one thing the Canadian factories even Ford, Chrysler and General Motors were smaller and they didn't have the economies of scale, but once the Auto Free Trade Agreement was in effect, then there could be specialization. Such and such a car was produced in a Canadian plant, another one in a U.S. plant and sold in both countries and you had more rationalization. Then the unions, particularly the U.A.W., pressed for parity of wages and eventually got it. But the Canadian dollar even today is selling at about 85 cents U.S.

Q: Did the AFL-CIO in any way effect your assignment pattern?

WIESNER: No

Q: The AFL-CIO did not intervene in one way or another?

WIESNER: No.

Q: Okay., I think we have covered most of the outline. Are there any final summary comments you would like to make?

WIESNER: Let me say this that my experiences as Labor Attaché and as Advisor to EUR, despite these conflicts like the Great Lakes Shipping Labor Dispute, were among the happiest of my whole career. Assuming that Labor Attachés function today the way they did when I was in that field, I would recommend this field to anybody, Foreign Service Officers and people coming in from the outside. It's essential. The program is essential, and I assume that the cooperation between State and Labor is still good. Is it?

Q: Yes, I think basically it is.

WIESNER: There are conflicts. There are inevitably jurisdictional rivalries between government departments. I am delighted that the Labor Attachés have remained within the mainstream of the Foreign Service. I am not happy at all at the separation of the Commercial Attachés and the Agricultural Attachés from the main body of the Foreign Service. I think that is wrong. I think it ought to be integrated, and I am happy that the Labor Attachés are in the mainstream. I think that works to their advantage in Embassies. They are not regarded as outsiders and so forth, but are part of the Embassy structure. Right now in so many embassies abroad the State Department element is largely just the administrative house-keeper for the multitude of other agencies who have representatives there, and I think that's very bad. I think we should bring them back together, and I am happy that the Labor Attachés have never separated.

Q: On behalf of the Labor Diplomacy Oral History Project, I want to thank you for participating and giving us this really very valuable presentation.

WIESNER: Thank you for interviewing me. I am happy to be part of this project.

Q: It was a great pleasure to enjoy your hospitality up here in beautiful New Hampshire.

WIESNER: With snow on the ground.

Q: With snow on the ground on October 1st. (Pause)

One small addition to the transcript. Go ahead.

WIESNER: Well, Don says that the speech by Secretary James Byrne at Stuttgart, which really signaled the abandonment of the Morgenthau Policy, was in September of 1946 rather than 1947, and that was the dividing line.

Q: Thank you very much for that addition.

End of interview