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Labor Series

**HERBERT BAKER**

*Interviewed by: James Mattson*  
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Background

Born in Montana, November, 24 1920  
University of Minnesota  
Spouse: Gladys Willis  
Entered the Foreign Service in 1949

Munich, Germany, Tactical Officer at infantry school 1945-1946

Office of Military Government U.S., Assistant Manpower adviser 1948-1949

Munich (Bonn), Economics Officer 1949-1951

Trade Union Confederation established in Bavaria 1947  
Restoring post-Nazi Germany  
Reestablish democratic trade unionism:  
    Karl Fitting, Minister Roßhaupter, Gustav Schieffer,  
    George Reuter, Josef Schilling, Max Werner  
Monsignor George Higgins to Germany to discuss trade unions  
    and the Church  
Exchanges; sending trade union leaders to the United States;  
    returning the property; solving the problems of successor  
    organizations (1947-1950)  
The McCloy Fund 1949  
Founding DGB (German Trade Union Confederation) congress in  
    Munich (October 12- 14, 1949)  
Western Germany inflation

Berlin, Economics Officer 1951-1956

Marshall Plan support in Berlin  
UGLE (United Trade Union Opposition) became DGB Berlin  
Berlin reconstruction  
June 16 and 17, 1953 demonstrations and strikes  
Berlin government restructuring after June 17, 1953 due to immigration

## Soviet March in Berlin, April 1945

Retirement

### INTERVIEW

[Note: This interview was not edited by Mr. Baker. Second interviewer, "Ernie", is most likely Ernest Nagy.]

*Q: ...mid-78, then, I assume.*

BAKER: Right. I think that's the time when I departed there.

*Q: How did the Italian labor situation and the relationships between the confederations strike you on first appraisal?*

BAKER: After being in Germany, I completed Italian language training and had a period where I worked in Dan Goot's office in the European Labor Office of the State Department. As a result of that, I had a chance to talk to a lot of people in depth.

For example, I went over to the Atlantic Council and talked to some people there, and they gave me an article analyzing the foreign policy of the Italian Communist Party on NATO and what kind of tactics they were following. I looked through the literature in Dan's office, and I couldn't find anything that was parallel in terms of the CGIL. So I took this article with me and started, when I arrived, asking questions about what the CGIL's position was as compared to the documented position of the PCI that this professor at the University of Pisa had developed.

Fortunately, we had on our staff an Italian local by the name of Amerigo Doro. I had known about Doro long before, because, during the period when the Communists controlled the labor movement in the pre-Marshall Plan days, Doro was in USIS in Genoa. I think he was the Italian director under the USIS officer there. Tom Lane, who was the labor advisor of General Mark Clark and later the labor advisor during the early post-war period, especially during this crisis period, needed to have somebody in the office who had a newspaper kind of background, so he brought Amerigo Doro down to the labor office in the embassy. And he was a fantastic man. Since he was recognized as a journalist and had journalist credentials, he attended all of the principal political party conventions and the CGIL conventions, and had the most complete documentation of all of the CGIL convention material and all of the statements of the principal leaders. You could simply ask him who said what when, and he could research it out. He had one office with about eight or 10 file cabinets, and those file cabinets were filled full of material about the trade unions, which we've discussed, and the Communist Party and the Socialist Party and the Christian Democratic Party.

So I was interested in trying to produce the labor counterpart of this professor's analysis of the PCI's attitude toward NATO. During my period with Dan, I asked Dan whether he had received the international review that the Soviet Communist Party puts out every 10 years or so, called "*The Strategy and Tactics of the World Communist Movement.*" Dan said that we could get a copy of it. So we got a copy of it, and I turned to the Italian section of that strategy document, and out of that I started working on a series of telegrams called *The Italian Confederation of Labor (CGIL) Foreign and Defense Policies*. I think you could put that into the record as part of this and not repeat what I wrote down. These telegrams were sent in and then combined into one document and declassified.

The basic strategy of the CGIL was consistent with the overall strategy outlined by Zygladen. He was the chief ideology representative of the Soviet Communist Party, and he was the man who coordinated this huge kind of seminar where the leaders of the world Communist movement came together periodically to develop what they called the international Communist movement, and a sketch of their strategy and tactics.

The longer I worked on this, the more I realized that the Italian CGIL was a key part of this European strategy that we've been talking about. In other words, the Soviet line was to change the position to one of supporting regional unity of countries in Europe and unions in Europe, as well as in other areas, like in Latin America and Asia and so forth. Now this needed to have an instrumentality for developing this policy in Europe. Since the PCI philosophy of Euro-communism was almost identical to the Soviet policy of supporting regional unity, you had a CGIL operating at the trade union level to construct the structure of this so-called pan-European federation of labor, with the idea of converting the European Trade Union Confederation into an instrumentality of neutralism in Europe.

Then I tried to follow what was happening in each one, and I imagine you did this, too, in Brussels, Jim, tried to follow what was happening in all these new organizations, the so-called trade secretariats of the European Trade Union Confederation. And it turned out that the strategy was moving step by step. The first group to adopt this line was the European metalworkers group. And they were the first group to accept affiliation of the CGIL in the industrial sector.

Now the reason this was important is that this was causing the ITSs, who had European regional organizations, to slowly but surely dry up, because the focus was going into the trade secretariats of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC).

Of course, since Irving Brown looked at strategy as a whole, he was very, very concerned about this. We reported extensively on the Italian role in the development of the trade secretariats, and also how this affected us in the ILO.

For example, there was a coalition of forces, including the CGIL and G-77 and left-wingers in Europe, that ultimately were creating policies in the ILO that were completely

incompatible with our national interests. This was one of the reasons why we had to pull out for a while, until the issues had been straightened out.

So that was, in brief, what I started doing.

ERNIE: I think where we disagree on this general subject area is in my view that the Soviets were never as shrewd or as effective or as sophisticated in their planning as we give them credit for being. It's of a piece with the fact that we consistently overestimated their strength. We overestimated badly the strength of East Germany, which was constantly being put forward as a success story within the Communist system, and one which therefore, as a prototype, threatened the free economies and so forth. That the CGIL was pressing for the ETUC [European Trade Union Confederation] formula is undoubted. Where I would question is whether they were simply following Soviet policy in that area. I think, rather, the fact that they were frozen out of the international community led them naturally to push their advantages in those areas where they could do so. And the ETUC GRUF organization was a place to do it. If this then led to a kind of regional unity and regional neutralism, those were kind of byproducts of the way the mood of those countries was going in any case. It certainly meant that we had less influence, and that was undesirable. But I think it flowed as much from our unwillingness to have anything to do with them, and therefore their seizing the initiative in those areas where they could assert themselves, and having rather good success in doing so.

BAKER: The conclusions I reached were based on the fact of taking this Soviet policy. Ironically, it's like Hitler's *Mein Kampf*: nobody believed it among certain intellectual circles in the United States until after the fact. The amazing thing is that very few people took the time to read the basic strategy that the international department of the Soviet Communist Party had developed, and which was followed fairly religiously by their supporters all over the world. They had the support if they wanted political and economic support from the Soviets. The irony of it all was that it wasn't difficult to follow, because you could take the strategies that Zygladen and his group had outlined, and if you dug deep enough (fortunately, I had Amerigo to do this), you could get the chapter and verse in the actual statements and resolutions of the Italian Communist Party. When you were in Brussels, I imagine you were following closely the development, like I was in Rome. I think that we fairly well documented the policy movement, which followed this overall general policy.

*Q: I'd like to interject a question now, directed principally at Herb, but also at Ernie. In June of 1980, I attended the ILO conference, and on the fringe of it, the ETUC held a meeting of its executive board. It was an important meeting, because they decided on a number of applications for membership. After the meeting, at the press conference, they announced that they had turned down the applications of a number of leading Communist federations in Western Europe, namely, the French CGT, the Portuguese CGT, and the Spanish workers' commissions. This was, in an important sense, drawing the line between the Italian CGIL and the others. The Italian CGIL, of course, was already in the ETUC, and its unions were already in a number of the European trade federations of the ETUC. The thought occurred to me then, and now, that this difference of views perhaps*

*represented above all a relationship that the CGIL had with major unions in other European countries that the others did not have. Maybe both of you could address this question. What kind of contacts and relationships had the CGIL been building up throughout Western Europe during your respective days in Rome?*

ERNIE: I think that does raise a very interesting question. I do personally view the CGIL as being much more compatible with the European trade unionists than was, for example, the CGT. The CGT always struck me as a much more Stalinist, doctrinaire, uniform, ideological entity than the CGIL in Italy. And I think the Europeans were reacting to this. Of course, they might have been reacting in part to the fact that the CGIL was already in, and they were just closing the door on others. I can't know that for a certainty one way or the other. But the CGIL was adroit at cultivating European contacts, and very successful at doing so. The CISL and the UIL, the Christian and the Socialist confederations in Italy, would consistently sponsor the CGIL into these organizations, would commend the CGIL to the ETUC and to the ITSs of it, and would be sort of running the ball for them, all to the perplexity of those who viewed the CGIL in black and white (or, shall we say, red and white) terms. So the CGIL was a much more complex organization, partly because they were bigger, but, I think, in large measure, because their politics were distinguishable from the doctrinaire policies of the CGT and the others you mentioned.

BAKER: I think that the policy of the CGIL, when you actually read their resolutions, was to support the membership of the organizations that you talked about. They weren't able to achieve it, because there was a struggle going on in the ETUC with the people who were friendly to the ITS regional organizations in Europe, and the AFL/CIO making a strong point of saying that there was no reason to expand the influence of the Communists when you had a legitimate organization already established and with a long tradition of democratic trade unionism. So it wasn't an either/or kind of situation. It was part of a long-range strategy. And they systematically tried to achieve that goal.

ERNIE: One of the ironies in Italy, again thinking of the CGIL as a complex organization, is that you had a political system in which 30 percent, approximately, give or take a point or two, of the election votes would go to the Communist Party. You had a CGIL that was predominant in the trade union field, and was effectively cooperating with the lesser confederations. You would think therefore that Italy would be a stronghold of anti-NATO, anti-Western defense sentiment. In point of fact, Italy consistently has confounded the United States, at least, in being very cooperative in the NATO area, with bases in Sicily, southern Italy, northern Italy, Air Force, Army, name it, in rather large profusion, including during some of the touchier times of the Middle East crises, when France and other countries were forcing us to fly around, forcing us into a lot of troublesome accommodations to prickly policies that they put forward. The Italians, even with this Communist component in their society, have been much more cooperative.

I attribute that to the fact that Italian Communists have not been, and are not, simply Moscow stooges. They are part of the Communist system and were, as Herb pointed out, notably, in the case of opposing the Marshall Plan, lending themselves to boycott and sabotaging that plan, at least at the outset. Despite that history, and probably some others,

they have been much more benign with respect to our foreign policy objectives than we had any right to expect from a Communist organization.

Have we exhausted our Italian dialogue?

*Q: It is Thursday, February 11, 1993. My name is James Mattson, and I am continuing the interview of Herbert Baker on his time as the labor consul in Rome. Herb, will you recall once again when you arrived in Rome, and describe briefly the political situation in Italy and in Europe at the time, and then go on to discuss a little bit the labor situation?*

BAKER: The political situation in Italy was influenced by the Italian Communist Party policy of Euro-communism.

*Q: Excuse me. When did you arrive?*

BAKER: I arrived in 1978. To describe the situation, it's good to have just a few background facts, so that you see what the changes were.

Before Mussolini, there were trade unions in Italy, and, of course, political parties.

When Mussolini came to power, like Hitler did later, he seized the property of the trade unions and all of the mutual aid organizations, which included pension plans, insurance plans, some cooperative housing. In other words, all of the things that go with a labor cooperative movement, in each of the politically oriented groups.

During the war, when the Allied troops moved up from southern to northern Italy, the Italian partisans, led by the Communists, took advantage of the situation where you had developing no-man's-lands to sweep into these areas and to seize the available resources. Since they were led by Communists, this meant that the Communists took these resources, which included most of the buildings and resources that Mussolini had seized from the Christian and Socialist and other union groups in Italy.

One of the first Americans to recognize what was happening was Serafino Rimaldi, who later was the Latin American advisor of the AFL. Serafino was a refugee from Italy. He had been formally the youth secretary of the Italian Socialist Party before Mussolini took over. Serafino came to Italy as part of an OSS detachment, and established contacts with Socialists who were still in Italy, and tried to facilitate the return of Socialists who had escaped from Mussolini. He immediately recognized what was happening. The Communists had developed a United Front against the Mussolini regime, and had served as a partisan movement against the Fascist regime. And Serafino, through his contacts, recognized immediately what was happening, that all of the resources for the post-war situation were being seized by this United Front, led by the Communists, and recognized that, once this was in place, with buildings, insurance funds, pension funds, paper, printing presses, and everything in the hands of this United Front, it would be very difficult to have a democratic movement. And so he recommended that the OSS make

available to the democratic Socialists Jeeps and resources and so forth, so that they could establish their presence as an independent force. But that was during the period before the Marshall Plan, and we still hadn't broken with the Soviet Union, in terms of international policy. So his recommendations fell on deaf ears. And then Serafino gave up, because he was called back to the United States by Nelson Rockefeller, who was named undersecretary of state for Latin American affairs. Nelson Rockefeller asked Serafino to be his principal labor advisor, particularly to try to counteract the influence of Italian Fascists in big countries like Brazil and Argentina and Chile. So Serafino was a first American labor person on the spot to recognize what was happening.

Then you had the period before the Marshall Plan, where the United Front, which the CGIL represented... At that time, you had the factions of the Christian Democrats, the Republicans, what later became the Social Democrats, what later became the Democratic Socialists, and the Socialists who believed in collaboration with the Communists all under one roof. When the Marshall Plan was announced, the Soviets decided to oppose the Marshall Plan. Part of their opposition was to prevent Marshall Plan shipments from the United States from arriving in Italy in France. So the CGIL struck all of the ports, and the CGT in France struck the ports in France. The result was there was a crisis.

At that time, Colonel Lane, who was Mark Clark's labor advisor, and Irving Brown and others attempted to mobilize democratic labor support for the Marshall Plan, which meant that the monopoly power of the Communists over labor had to be broken.

As a result of that, the Italian Confederation of Labor, which became known as CISL, was formed. The idea behind CISL was not to reestablish a politically oriented trade union, but to have a democratic, non-partisan, shall we say, politically speaking, trade union to carry out legitimate trade union functions and not simply be the appendages of a political party.

The CISL, at that time, had many, many difficulties. They had no property. They had no resources. They had no printing plants. They had no ongoing insurance and other programs. So they were organizing from scratch. And with all the resources piled up by the Communists, they were fighting tremendous problems.

The AFL/CIO, through its Italian-American labor consul, and through the Free Trade Union Committee, which had befriended the Italian and European Socialists during World War II, moved to try to build up support for the CISL. This marked the post-war beginning of democratic trade unionism. This was successful in the early stages, and CISL became an affiliate of the ICFTU.

Then there were problems that developed in the Italian Socialist movement.

For example, you had the large group of Socialists who were firmly committed to collaboration with the Communists, as a force sufficiently strong to counteract any kind of reactionary or political or employer influences. At least that was their thesis.

Then you had a group of Socialists who were uncomfortable with the United Front. They wanted to have a separate identity, but were uncomfortable also with a minority identity in CISL.

To complicate the situation even further, you had the Social Democrats, like Seragot, who believed even more strongly in a separate identity.

The Republicans, of course, were anti-clerical, so they believed that any association with the majority Christian Democratic movement was counterproductive. And they also felt that their positions were not adequately expressed in a unity organization that involved the Christian Democrats.

So you had three of the factions that had formally been a part of CISL breaking off to form the UIL. That was the Democratic Socialist faction of the Socialist Party, the Social Democratic Party labor faction, and the Republican labor faction. The Republicans are Italian liberals in the European sense. And together they broke off from the CISL and formed the UIL.

This created problems internationally speaking, because the post-war objective of the AFL/CIO was to help recreate legitimate democratic trade unions, with a coalition of forces that was strong enough to carry out a legitimate trade union function. Of course, when the UIL was established, this reduced the power of the CISL and also reduced the relative power position with the CGIL.

The AFL/CIO ultimately (and there are many details of this struggle) succeeded in affiliating both the CISL and the UIL with the ICFTU, on the basis of supporting a policy of democratic trade unions and anti-totalitarianism, whether it was Fascist or Communist.

During that whole period, there was a strong link between these two movements and the AFL/CIO. They were united in their opposition to the Soviet takeover of Eastern Europe. They were united against all kinds of totalitarian movements and for the development of free and democratic trade unions throughout the world.

About the time that the Italian Communist Party changed its policy and started the so-called Euro-Communist movement, the Soviet policy was also changing. They recognized that, with the coalition of forces on both sides, they were blocked at every opportunity, and that the only possibility of expanding their influence was through a strategy of creating regional unity between the Communist and non-Communist unions and other institutions not only in Europe but in Latin America and Asia and Africa.

*Q: Approximately what time are we talking about that this new strategy occurred?*

BAKER: This new strategy started developing in the late '60s and early '70s.

A key role was played, on the labor side, by the CGIL.



At that time, too, you had another phenomenon. The Christian democratic political and labor movement also was evolving into something different. The Christian Socialists and Christian Democrats were beginning to be divided on the issue of whether you needed to have a coalition with the Communists to get social reform. This happened in Latin America, and of course it happened in spades in Europe, too. You had a young, rising faction in the CISL and in Catholic worker organizations, led by young Turks who believed that it was a mistake to have broken with the CGIL.

*Q: So you'd call it a post-war generation of sorts, who had not been associated with the early years.*

BAKER: Right. You had a similar development in Germany, where you had a younger generation who revolted against the leadership of the older generation that had put in place many of the post-war institutions.

*Q: Did you see the same phenomenon in the political parties in Italy at the time?*

BAKER: There was a faction within the Socialists and Christian Democrats that believed that the PCI should become a part of the government. That was an ongoing debate within these parties, and also internationally speaking.

*Q: Turning back to the unions at this time, what was the attitude of the employers, both private sector and public? Did they prefer dealing with a single group or piecemeal with the different unions?*

BAKER: You had different reactions. Some employers felt that if they could, in effect, buy off a relationship that would create some kind of stability, that was in their interests. Other employers found that this was counterproductive. In Italy, you also had the phenomenon of governments falling every 12 to 14 months. Since you had a coalition government, you had a constantly shifting coalition, with the leading parties of course being in all of the coalitions, but always revolving around the point: Are the Communists included or not? So that phenomenon developed. Ernie mentioned that you had UIL leaders in the metalworkers, and CISL also had young leaders in the CISL metalworkers' unions. They were sympathetic to the creation of unified unions again. In other words, to turn back history to the way it was in the immediate post-war period.

*Q: So when you had arrived on the scene in the late '70s, already there was this working relationship, or was it more? Was it institutional organic?*

BAKER: They had a coalition in the form, and the metalworkers and chemical workers had an actual constitution. In each case, they called them the United CGIL CISL/UIL Metalworkers, for example. As Ernie said, however, each of these organizations maintained in its own headquarters a section that served as a base for this united organization, but the united organization had its facilities too.

Actually, these internal things are matters for the labor movements and the countries involved. That's an internal affair, until it becomes part of a strategy that affects our basic policy. Our policy was to promote and strengthen the Atlantic Alliance. The military-political part of that was NATO, and the Atlantic Alliance was a basic part of our strategy to protect the democratic world against the aggressive moves of the Soviet Union and the international Communist movement.

*Q: Was this the key thing you were going to look into when you first arrived on the scene there?*

BAKER: During my consultation in Dan Goot's office, and talking to people like Serafino Rimaldi and Jay Lovestone and many of the industrial union leaders here also with the Atlantic Council, I picked up a lot of information, including one particular study made by a professor from the University of Pisa about the foreign and defense policies of the PCI.

I had also been briefed by people in the AFL/CIO that the Communist strategy was to infiltrate the European Trade Union Confederation to establish industrial trade secretariats within the ETUC, on a United Front basis, and with that kind of a tactic, dry up the regional offices of the democratic international secretariats, and dry up the regional sections of the ICFTU.

This had never been put down on paper. The thing that was lacking, to me, was all of the policy documentation on the CGIL side. And it was very difficult also to get the policy documentation on the PCI side, because I wasn't responsible for political reporting on the Italian Communist Party. So one of my objectives was to develop an assessment of the strategy, an assessment of the tactics, in order that everybody on the American team, all agencies of the United States government and also the private-sector resources, for example, the AFL/CIO, would have a framework. Which the AFL/CIO already had, because Irving Brown and George Meany and others had this in their mind, but it had never actually been completely documented. So when I arrived, one of my objectives was to try to develop this assessment of strategy and tactics.

Fortunately, Colonel Lane, who was faced with this problem of the CGIL strikes against the Marshall Plan, needed a very, very knowledgeable staff, not only on the American side, but also on the Italian side. He had heard of the abilities of an Italian man who was the head of the USIS on the Italian side in Genoa. And so he succeeded in bringing him down. His name was Amerigo Doro. Amerigo Doro was also a leading journalist in the Democratic European Federation of Journalists. As such, he was accredited and was able to enter any kind of political convention or labor convention. Ever since those early days, he had accumulated all of the resolutions, all of the public statements, all of the biographies of the actors in this political struggle.

I had brought with me the Soviet strategy document that had been developed by the head of the international department of the Soviet Communist Party; actually, the coordinating element for the international Communist movement. It was called, "*The Strategy and*

*Tactics of the International Communist Movement.*” It was edited by Professor Zygladen and had a section on Italy and a section on Europe.

My goal was to see what the parallels were, whether or not the policies and the strategies of the CGIL and the PCI in the labor field were following this basic policy line. With Amerigo’s help, we were able to get all of the resolutions of all of the conventions, and trace the development. It became clear that the strategy was coordinated, and the basic model that had been debated in Moscow about this strategy of regional unity and the development of pan-European political and labor movements really hadn’t been talked about very much in official circles. So, with Amerigo’s help, I developed a series of telegrams that examined point for point the strategy and tactics of the CGIL in foreign and defense policies.

The idea behind all of that, after developing the assessment of the strategy and tactics, was to develop what amounted to an insert to this.

*Q: A counterstrategy.*

BAKER: A counterstrategy, yes.

*Q: What year did you complete your assessment of the strategy?*

BAKER: I think it was in 1979.

So, after developing this assessment of the strategy and tactics, which was in this series of telegrams, I submitted to the embassy a series of recommendations on a strategy of cooperation between the American government, the American trade union movement, and their democratic counterparts in Italy.

One of the problems was that resources for exchanges had been reduced significantly over a period of time. Also, the United States had no counterpart of the kind of government-labor cooperation that existed in individual European countries. For example, nearly all of them had labor institutes or foundations. For example, on the Socialist side in Germany, you had the Frederick Ebert Foundation. On the Christian Democratic side in Germany, you had the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. You had counterparts like that in Sweden, in Denmark, in England, even, although not as developed as in Germany, and also in Italy, where government funds were funneled to expand private-sector relationships through these labor institutes. We did not have that until the American Institute for Free Labor Development was established for Latin America. Of course, through my long experience in Latin America, I was acquainted with the advantages of this kind of institutional arrangement for government-labor cooperation to advance the overall objectives of the country.

So one of the things I proposed was to expand the labor institutions from the American Institute for Free Labor Development in Latin America, the similar institute for Africa, and the similar institute for Asia to one that existed for Europe, too, because then that

would equip us with the same tools that all of the people that we had to deal with and influence had.

*Q: What would that do that the AFL/CIO office in Paris was not able to do?*

BAKER: The AFL/CIO office in Paris dealt strictly with personal relations. No union movement, no matter how rich it is, can afford an international strategy, with extensive exchanges and conferences and other types of activities, without government support. The point was that we lagged long behind the Europeans in developing this kind of structure for international relations. And so one of my objectives was to push for that. So I submitted some proposals. One of those proposals was to have USIA provide financial support for a free trade union institute covering the European area.

*Q: Did you envisage that the institute would have an office in Rome or in Italy somewhere?*

BAKER: It wasn't necessary to have an office. It was just necessary that, when these huge exchange programs were going on between the United Front-sympathetic people and the Soviet bloc, there was some resource dedicated to strengthening the relationship between the democratic trade union leaders who opposed the United Front policy, to have standing contacts, and to develop cooperation on the democratic side.

*Q: You mentioned these huge delegations of exchange with the Soviet Union. What all was the Soviet Union doing then to influence the scene openly? What was the competition, in other words?*

BAKER: The competition was both on the government and the so-called trade union side. For example, many of the Eastern bloc countries had labor attachés or equivalent labor officers in Italy when I was there. There were conventions, both in Eastern Europe, say, in Hungary and Czechoslovakia and other areas in the Soviet Bloc, and they sponsored East-West conferences before or after sessions of the ILO. This was a type of activity that ranged from direct exchange to industrial union exchanges, conferences on topics selected by the WFTU type of organization.

As a result of the decline of exchange due to our lack of institutional arrangements to handle this problem, one of the initiatives was the U.S. Youth Council. This was led by Roy Godson, whose father was one of the very early labor attachés, who had been labor attaché in the United Kingdom and had also been consul general in Yugoslavia and was a very, very sophisticated person on the international labor movement. And so, when the U.S. Youth Council was developing its program, I suggested, and they welcomed the support of, sending a delegation of five young American labor leaders to visit Italy as guests of the CISL and the UIL. The idea was to have a reciprocal visit to start the equivalent of a union-to-union type of program on the labor side.

The information available to democratic trade unionists on strategy and tactics, what was actually happening in the international labor world, was lacking in terms of expressing

what the American point of view was. One of the answers that Irving developed was to cooperate with some key figures in Great Britain to form the Transatlantic Labor Committee, then to expand this from British-American cooperation to key figures in Germany and Italy. And so I helped Irving Brown make the necessary contacts, because I knew all of the people who were interested in stronger cooperation between the AFL/CIO and democratic members of the CISL and UIL.

As a result of that, two or three leading Italians became part of the editorial board of the paper that was put out by this Transatlantic Labor Committee. This included, for example, analysis even of the military situation, where the former defense minister, who was a trade unionist, George Labor, would write an analysis, and the head of the press section of the German Mine Workers, Horst Neigemeyer, and others. In other words, it was a coalition of labor trade union intellectuals who gathered the essential information about the developing political scene. This served as a resource for people who were trying to get oriented on the complexities of the international scene.

One of the arguments that the Soviets and the Eastern bloc and their apologists in ETUC developed was that it was true you didn't have political freedom in the Eastern bloc, but you had social security and you had economic security.

*Q: And no unemployment.*

BAKER: And no unemployment. This was a cliché that we knew wasn't true. Irving was constantly faced with this... Americans in the struggle that was going on in the ILO. And so Irving and I talked about that. Italy was one of the staging areas for the exodus of Soviet Jews coming out of the Soviet Union, and so Irving had the idea of developing a questionnaire to ask specific questions of refugees in different sectors, workers, health people, a cross-section of these refugees, about what the actual situation was.

He knew George Bailey, who came from Seattle, Washington. Bailey had learned Russian as a young man when he worked on the Great Northern Railroad during the summertime in the dining car, where they had Russian cooks, and had developed an interest in the Russian language. Then, afterwards, he specialized in studying Russian, and he went to the interpreters' school. He was assigned by the U.S. Army to be a liaison of the Russian army in the Ukraine, and then later was one of the chief interpreters for the Four-Power conferences in Berlin. George Bailey had married the daughter of [the owner of] a large publishing company in Berlin and was editing a magazine of Soviet refugees. And so Irving asked George Bailey whether he'd be interested in preparing a study based on these questionnaires. I helped set that up and went to the IRC and the HIAS in Rome and also to the refugee camp. I talked to hundreds of people, until we got the background. It was devastating.

For example, the only function that the so-called Soviet trade union did that was of any interest to the people was that you had to have the certification of the so-called Soviet trade union representative before you could even take sick leave. But as far as any representation or anything on grievances, it just didn't exist.

So this was very effective. And it was an interesting type of facet of activities for me.

Then also I knew that the people in the CGIL and the CISL and the UIL wanted relations with the United States, but on their terms. In other words, to reinforce their arguments that relations with all blocs was the correct policy.

As you know from your own experience, however, this was not an obstacle to Irving Brown. He had been in the OSS during World War II, and had been there when the ICFTU was established, and had broken the strikes of the Communists in France and in Italy. He had top-level contacts with almost all of the principal political leaders in Europe. When I was in Italy, he came there several times. He'd call me up and say that he would like to talk to Andreotti, who was the prime minister at that time, but was an old friend of Irving's through all of these gyrations of problems in Italy, and to see Craxi, who had recently been elected the head of the Socialist Party, which was going through a process of a change of policy. So Irving didn't have to go through the trade union structure in order to have a direct dialogue with the most important political figures in Europe. I was fortunate to be with him on several of these contacts, where they would have an intensive high-level dialogue on the problems of developing more cooperation between the United States and Europe, and also the developing problem of neutralism in Europe.

As I went around making contacts, I used a technique that I had used in Venezuela. When I went out to see somebody, they would give me their card. When I went back to the embassy, I would go directly down to the USIS publications section and ask them to make a plate, to put them on the distribution list immediately, not wait until I got 500 cards or something like that. Fortunately, in Italy, there were some Italians on the USIS staff who were willing to cooperate. So, within about a year, I must have had about 500 key people added to this. This meant that they had access to the information that we were putting out, and that they were informed and weren't dependent on what the Communists or United Front organizations were putting out. That was welcomed; I had many people come to the embassy to thank me for having done that.

Then, as part of this Transatlantic Labor Committee's work, I found out, because Amerigo was a member of the non-Communist journalists' circle, that there was a group of about eight or 10 journalists who were interested in the democratic side of the story, but needed to have interviews with people like Irving or other sophisticated people in order to write stories and commentaries about that. So nearly every time he came, we would arrange a lunch with five or six of these people, which would usually include two or three radio and TV commentators and three or four journalists who were interested not so much in the labor technical side, but in the international labor scene, which was very interesting.

*Q: What kind of effects were you seeing with all of these initiatives that you and others had been taking as part of this counterstrategy?*

BAKER: On the trade union institute, we laid the groundwork, and that ultimately led to the creation of the National Endowment for Democracy. That was the solution of the problem. It took years, but it was the result of actions that we had initiated. I didn't stay there long enough to see the results of that, but was happy to see that, at last, we were in the ballgame. Before, we weren't, because you cannot handle everything on a strictly government-to-government basis. What you have to have is the same kind of structure that the Europeans have. Finally, we got it, and I am proud to say that we did our part to initiate the idea, and to spread the idea that it had been effective in Latin America, because I'd had longstanding experiences there.

Other than that, the other important thing that I was involved in was the question of negotiating a social insurance treaty between Italy and the United States.

*Q: How is social insurance administered in Italy?*

BAKER: They don't have a unified system like we do. They have a different type of system. The problem was that there were many Italians and Americans who had worked in both countries, so some of the people in the Social Security Administration developed the idea of totalization treaties. In other words, you would get credit for the amount of work that you had done in the other country, and then you would pay into the social insurance institutes in that country, and get a payment in accordance with the amount of service that you had. You could total up the time to meet your minimum requirements. For example, if it was 15 years, and you had five years in Italy and 10 years in the United States, the United States would pay 10 years, and the Italian social insurance fund would pay for the five years of service there. In other words, you were guaranteed social insurance coverage for your work in both countries. I had done that in Germany, too. The German agreement was one of the first. I think the Italian agreement was the second one on the docket.

In order to negotiate this agreement, you had to have a person who was knowledgeable on both systems, because you got into, as a result of using interpreters and so forth, many misunderstandings simply because words had a different meaning in terms of the institution that one or the other had. It was my job to try to establish the link there, so that we could get a common understanding of how the system would work and so forth. So that was very interesting. That agreement was signed while I was there, and I was very happy about that.

*Q: You were there a total of about five years?*

BAKER: No, about two years.

There was a strong difference of opinion between the ambassador [name of ambassador?] and the AFL/CIO on contacts with the CGIL. The standard policy of the AFL/CIO before World War II, during World War II, and after World War II was no contacts with United Front or totalitarian organizations. The ambassador, during this period of Euro-communism, wanted to establish contacts with Communists at levels just under the top

leadership, and occasionally with the top leadership of the Italian Communist Party. As part of that initiative, he wanted very much to have labor contacts with the CGIL.

*Q: None of his predecessors had had these kinds of contacts?*

BAKER: There had been some predecessors who had done it, notwithstanding the AFL/CIO opposition. Of course, since I had been in the Foreign Service for over 30 years and had gone through about five or six different problems involving the same thing, I was sympathetic to the AFL/CIO point of view, because of the strategic importance of it.

It finally culminated in Irving Brown's coming to Italy for a dialogue with the ambassador about this. The ambassador explained this policy that I just mentioned to Brown, and Brown indicated that AFL/CIO president Meany was opposed to this policy and concerned about the plight of free and democratic trade union forces in the present unstable Italian situation. He meant the developing United Front kind of situation.

Then the ambassador reaffirmed what he thought was United States government policy, to maintain such contacts with the Socialists in the CGIL to ensure that the U.S. government was adequately informed on the situation in Italy.

On the other side, the ambassador agreed strongly with Brown's concern about the need for U.S. action to strengthen transatlantic trade union cooperation. This was the reciprocal gesture on the part of the ambassador.

Then Irving Brown made the following points in this discussion.

He said that the AFL/CIO was pleased to see that the ambassador had included human- and labor-rights issues in his TV interviews and speeches. The ambassador spoke excellent Italian, and as a result, he could appear on TV, and made a practice of doing that. So Brown congratulated him on that.

Then Brown said that he had been in the United States and he had had numerous discussions with George Meany and other AFL/CIO leaders. And he said, following these discussions, he wished to inform the ambassador that the AFL/CIO was unhappy about the embassy's new program of contacts with the Communist-dominated CGIL. (I had not had any contacts; some of my predecessors had initiated this type of contact.) Irving said that the AFL/CIO believed that the primary purpose of the embassy was to maintain government-to-government relations, rather than attempting to intervene in international trade union relations.

And he explained that, in the private sector, one of the few institutions that had counterparts in Italy and Europe were the American trade unions, which have a long history of international relations with their counterparts. What he meant was that the Republican Party and the Democratic Party are unique in the world, that most of the other countries have ideologically oriented parties and a proportional representation kind of government, like Socialists and Republicans, Liberals, and Christians Democrats, that



kind of thing. And Irving said that other democratic governments in Europe have recognized this fact, and international relations in the trade union sector remain the principal responsibility of the respective trade union organizations in these countries. And he said, on the political level, unfortunately, the Republican and Democratic parties in the U.S. have no ideological political party counterparts in Europe, for example, the Socialist, Christian Democratic, Communist, and Liberal parties, and thus are not active in international political party organizations like the AFL/CIO is.

Uncoordinated action or interference by the U.S. government in these international trade union relations, Brown said, is often counterproductive if not coordinated in the same manner that European governments use in relating to their trade union institutions. Such government actions affect negatively the interests of the AFL/CIO, as well as the interests of friendly free and democratic forces in Italy.

And then Brown emphasized that the CGIL is locked into an intimate relation with the Italian Communist Party. The CGIL Socialists have never deviated in the past from the Communist line, and if they did, they wouldn't last very long with the CGIL. Of course, you see, this goes back to this initial reaction and recommendation of Serafino Rimaldi. Unfortunately, which many Americans didn't realize, the Socialists were divided into four factions, and the factions that stayed in the CGIL were committed to that. They believed philosophically that the only way to get social reform was in a coalition with the Communists.

He said, for example, that the top CGIL Socialist, Augustinio Marionetti, who was the CGIL deputy secretary general, was the first to support publicly, in December 1978, the latest overall Communist Party maneuver to gain entry into the government, which led to the present Italian government crisis, which proved that they were an instrument of the PCI. Brown said that, if there are any CGIL Socialists who want to be free, it is not the business of the embassy to help them, but rather of their trade union counterparts, who were in a position to provide effective assistance.

On the question of having contacts for our information and other purposes, Brown said that experience has proven that the only information you will get is what the Communist Party wants you to have, and that these contacts may well be used for disinformation purposes.

Then Irving Brown predicted that changing the past policy on CGIL contacts will likely cause speculation and confusion on whether U.S. policy really supports strengthening free and democratic trade unions in Europe. And he added that such a dramatic step actually avoids the basic foreign policy problem of developing effective means of helping to strengthen free and democratic forces in Italy.

The ambassador thanked Brown for his views, but reaffirmed the U.S. policy of maintaining contacts with all sectors of Italian society to avoid a similar situation as developed recently [1979] in Iran. But he also shared Brown's concern over the plight of free and democratic trade union forces in Italy. And then he assured Brown that he would propose again a project on transatlantic cooperation as part of the embassy's strategy of

cooperation programs. This was the idea that I had written up and the ambassador supported.

When the ambassador discussed the Italian elections and the European elections, which were happening at the same time, he said that future developments may be influenced by how well the Social Democratic parties did in the elections. Brown indicated to the ambassador (I don't think the ambassador knew this previously) that the AFL/CIO had longstanding friendly and helpful relationships with these parties, and that the direct relationships would continue.

So, you see, that was a difficult problem. I never did have contacts with the CGIL, for strategic and tactical reasons that were outlined in this analysis that I made.

*Q: Did somebody else in the embassy have contacts?*

BAKER: Actually, it was the job of the CIA to have that kind of contact. And, of course, we had an officer that was in contact with the PCI. That was his responsibility. So that would satisfy most of the embassy's needs.

Ironically, nothing that I read that came out of these so-called contacts with the CGIL amounted to something solid in terms of policy change or that kind of thing. Actually, all of the policy resolutions and public statements and trade union convention statements of the CGIL were far more important and reliable. And we were inundated with this. Amerigo Doro had a long office with about 10 different filing cabinets full of this, and he had attended every single convention. As you know, in Europe you can document every nuance of a policy if you read the documents and the discussions and the actual text of the resolution, because they seriously debate and they seriously follow their policy after it's established. Nobody substantially deviates from the policy without having to leave the organization.

*Q: Tell me a little bit about your contacts with leaders of CISL [Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori, Italian Confederation of Trade Unions] and UIL [Unione Italiana del Lavoro, Italian Labour Union]. How effective, in your view, were they during the years you were there?*

BAKER: One of the intellectual leaders of this reinstitutionalization of the United Front was the international secretary of the CISL at that time. He had formally been the head of ACLE when this movement for the reestablishment of a United Front organization started. Carniti, who was the president of CISL when I was there, was the man who had negotiated the United Front agreement in the metalworkers, and then later became the president of CISL. So he was onboard in terms of supporting that policy, too. They were accessible; I talked to them. But they insisted on following what I would call a relations-with-all-blocs policy. Basically, they moved in that direction, and there was nothing that either I said or the AFL/CIO said that moved them on that kind of issue. But there were other elements of the CISL. For example, one of the main affiliates of the CISL was the agricultural workers' union, led by a dynamic trade union leader by the name of Paolo

Sartori. And Paolo Sartori was the leader of the pro-Atlantic alliance anti-Communist faction within the CISL. They were exceptionally friendly and took many initiatives to strengthen the relationship. [end tape one]

BAKER: ...of the Carniti and Gabaglio was strengthening the European Trade Union Confederation and expanding its membership and influencing the composition of these new European Trade Union Confederation secretariats. But through the agricultural workers' union, I became aware of the attempts to stack the new agricultural workers' secretariat of the ETUC. They said that the British and the Germans were supporting the election of an English Communist to be the secretary of this new secretariat, and that they, as anti-Communists, were moving to try to prevent this, but needed allies. Irving used his influence to inform people in the French FO and talked to the Germans. They finally succeeded in electing a man from the Italian agricultural workers', an anti-Communist, into that position. That's just an example of the dynamics.

Sartori and his faction, which at that time controlled about 40 percent of the CISL, were very friendly to the United States, and provided the kind of initiative, particularly in relationships with Andreotti and others, that was invaluable to anybody interested in strengthening free and democratic trade unions.

As Ernie indicated, UIL had elected a Democratic Socialist as the new secretary general of the UIL. You remember I said there were three factions: the Democratic Socialist faction, the Social Democratic faction, and the Republican faction. The Republican faction had allied with the Social Democratic faction to elect a man by the name of Rafaele Vanni, who was defeated, while Ernie was there, by the Socialist candidate, Benvenuto, because he negotiated a coalition with the Social Democrats. In other words, you had to have a coalition of two of the three.

Then Benvenuto tried to expand his influence by bringing in a small, distant, left-wing, extremist party, and turned over the international department to that party. It turned out that the head of this international section had a brother who was involved in the kidnapping by the Red Brigades of an American NATO general. Anyway, Benvenuto was also a strong supporter of the reestablishment of the United Front, because he'd been in the metalworkers' when the metalworkers established the... He was the Socialist leader of that organization. And Lama, who Ernie talked about, was the other personality. So you had Lama, Carniti, and Benvenuto as the principal leaders of the coalition that formed in the metalworkers', who also tried to disaffiliate from the International Metalworkers' Federation and to affiliate with the European ITI trade secretariat.

Benvenuto followed a two-track type of relationship. He gave extensive support to East-West contacts. For example, at his convention, he invited all of the Communist-country labor attachés, and there were delegations from all the countries, Bulgaria, Poland, East Germany, all of the Communist-controlled organizations there. And he invited the AFL/CIO, and a delegation came, headed by Jay Turner from the Operating Engineers, and Ernie Lee. When they found out that the convention's international delegates were predominantly East European Communists, they informed the CISL that they would not

participate in any combined type of receptions or so forth, which was a disappointment to them. In a way, it was an affront to the AFL/CIO delegation to try to force this kind of relationship on them.

This was happening at the same level with the Trade Union Advisory Committee, which was really the authentic instrument for cooperation between U.S. unions and the Europeans on international economic policy.

*Q: This was the committee located in Paris that was attached, as it were, to the OECD.*

BAKER: They tried to force TUAC to accept the United Front representation in the TUAC, and went so far as to plan a TUAC meeting in Rome, where the United Front organizations would be the hosts of the other trade unions in TUAC. That meeting was boycotted by the AFL/CIO as soon as they found out what the situation was. So you had this dynamic situation.

*Q: What, in your view, accounts for the success of CGIL in retaining this edge in membership over CISL and UIL? What factors kept it ahead?*

BAKER: I think there are a number of reasons.

The first reason was, and UNIT recognized this internationally, there were Communists in democratic countries who had remained loyal to the Communist Party through thick and thin. They might have changed their policies and so forth, but they remained Communists and wanted to be identified as Communists. Then you had, in the Socialist movement, various factions that followed different types of loyalties. One group was convinced that the only way that you could have reform was in coalition with the Communists. Then you had the other Socialists who believed that that was a counterproductive policy, that you should have a democratic coalition. This was what Craxi did, and he led the Socialists back to power in Italy. That was what he was trying to do, and this was something that Irving supported very strongly. Then you had the Social Democrats, who had a more centrist view on what the institutional fabric and solutions should be. This was the group of Socialists that in many countries played an important role in the recovery of Europe, because it was responsible social transformation on a gradual basis. That's one reason.

The other, and more important, reason was because the CGIL captured the whole labyrinth of social services -- the housing projects, the health insurance funds, the old-age insurance funds, the co-ops -- so every facet of a worker's needs in some way or other was controlled by these services. In other words, if you wanted housing and you belonged to the CGIL, you had entrée into the cooperative housing projects. If you wanted to buy food at cooperative stores where you got cooperative types of services, those were captured by the Communists. So you had this whole structure where a person could live his whole life within this structure, plus you had aggressive representation on the collective bargaining level. As long as they could maintain this kind of leverage, this provided a legitimate basis for people to stay.

The third reason was, in Europe, politics goes in families. If your father or grandfather was a Communist, or a Socialist who worked with the Communists during World War II and afterwards through thick and thin, there was a generation-to-generation transfer of influence.

The fourth reason was the splintering of the democratic movement, which you didn't have in Germany. So the democratic movement had to start from scratch. If they wanted to develop any mutual-aid institutions, which is a slow, bloody process, it would take years.

The fifth reason was that, as a matter of policy, they followed a line that's very similar to the old-line Social Democrats, which is social change on a gradual but steady basis.

*Q: What do you mean, more specifically, when you say the CGIL controlled these social services? Weren't they administered by government organizations, without involvement of the unions?*

BAKER: No, no.

*Q: How were they done then?*

BAKER: When these institutions first developed, you had mutual-aid societies of workers, then you had the formation of cooperatives, then you had the formation of trade unions. This party/co-op/trade union was the nucleus of a movement. They just reinvested their resources and negotiated resources from the government. For example, loans for housing, that kind of thing. On insurance, they operated on an insurance basis; they weren't subsidized by the government. But they did get special tax treatment and so forth that had been negotiated. When you draw even a structure of all of these related organizations, you can see that the structure covers nearly all facets of a worker's life.

*Q: So they deal with some unit of the trade union when they have a problem with their health insurance or retirement benefits.*

BAKER: They have a vacation program. For example, you can go in groups to Eastern Europe. That's what happened when I was there. They have worker education facilities, if you want to learn to read or write. They have worker representation in apprenticeship programs. So you can see that every facet of life is covered by an institution that essentially was seized from Mussolini's Fascists. They prevented the breakup of the property in these property claims very early on.

In Germany, this didn't happen, because we took control of all of the Nazi labor front property. And we held control of that property until it could be transferred to the legitimate, free and democratic successor organizations. There wasn't any possibility of an undemocratic force getting control of that property. Few people realize how important

that was. As they say, politics is actions, and actions involve money, money and resources.

*Q: During the years you were there, what percentage of the members of the CGIL identified with the Communist Party, either as members or voted normally for Communist candidates?*

BAKER: There was a public-opinion survey done on that. I have it someplace in my records.

*Q: Two-thirds? Three-fourths? Or more?*

BAKER: No. I'm just guessing now. I would say it was about 40 percent.

*Q: Less than half.*

BAKER: Less than half. Of that 40 percent, about half were sympathizers, and half were activists. But the bureaucratic structure was so large that, in and of itself, they had enough structure to maintain a dynamic role.

*Q: In the last decade or so, there's been a shop lore movement in Italy of locally constituted unions that want to bargain themselves and, as it were, elbow aside CGIL, CISL, and UIL. Was that going on when you were there, and how did you interpret it?*

BAKER: Through Amerigo Doro, I became aware of all kinds of important organizations that weren't affiliated to any of these, and had never really had any contacts with the embassy, because the CGIL objected to contacts with the so-called independent organizations that threatened them. There were some remnants of the old Fascists groups, the so-called MSI groups, but they were fringe groups. I rapidly expanded contacts with those organizations. They said that internationally they felt abandoned, because nobody seemed to be interested in what the real situation was. Irving had some contacts with them, and they sent a couple of delegations to Paris to talk to him.

I made up a whole directory of these organizations. They had one called the Confederal Chamber of Labor, which was a confederation of independent organizations. As I came across these, I would send in and revise the Department of Labor's trade union directory. That was an important area. Of course, you see, with just an assistant... there must have been 200 or 300 of these organizations. It was difficult to get anybody except Irving politically interested in the importance of these groups. But somebody had to lay the groundwork for identifying who they were, so in case we wanted to develop a relationship, we could do it later based on the directories of where they were and so forth.

But they were important. They were a growing movement of workers disaffected with political ideology, particularly of the United-Front type. Something like you had in Eastern Europe, amazingly enough.

*Q: What about another idea that has deep roots in Italy, namely, the corporatist idea? Was there evidence when you were there that people still supported a corporatist solution, with labor and employers having a certain voice in public decisions?*

BAKER: An economic council, that kind of thing?

*Q: Yes, that sort of thing.*

BAKER: There were these economic councils, but they weren't like the old corporate idea. The difference was, to make the corporate idea work you have to have a monopoly on all sides. And the monopoly was destroyed after the Marshall Plan, on the labor side. Italy was growing. Its economy, in my opinion, was growing faster than it was given credit for, because they had a very large black accounting. It was something like the main situation now here. You had the strong influence of government-owned corporations like the Petroleum Corporation.

*Q: Was there a labor influence in them, or did they have influence over parts of the labor movement?*

BAKER: They were involved in collective bargaining. I found that establishing contacts with the labor-relations people of these large corporations and of the equivalent of the American Chamber of Commerce there, they were labor experts... And then the American Chamber of Commerce's officers had been in Italy since right after the end of the war, so they were very well informed on what was happening. But, as I say, a complex labyrinth of organizations and institutions. I've never actually seen a structural drawing of all of these. It's amazing.

*Q: Outside of the areas of genuine labor bread and butter issues, did you find that the labor federations, individually or collectively, had any significant influence in Italian politics, or were they more being used by the political parties, or neither?*

BAKER: In the Socialist Party, sometimes you would have a deadlock, because of the factional differences within the Italian Socialist Party. You had the so-called mini-Socialists, and then you had, later, the coalition developed by Craxi, who wanted to form a coalition with the Christian Democrats, and who ultimately became the prime minister of Italy. The political factions on the labor side were active on the political side, too. In Europe, every major party has a labor bureau, and the labor bureau participates in the development of policy of each of those parts. So they're as deeply involved in politics as they are in labor; as a matter of fact, almost too much. Where you get that involvement so deep, it's impossible to form what amounts to a trade-union type of organization like we have, say, in the AFL/CIO and like the DGB has been, because the Socialists have not developed to the point that they want to, in effect, squeeze their Christian Democratic faction out yet. I don't think they ever will, because of the history there.

*Q: Turning to some purely American interests, did you ever get involved in any of the issues concerning base workers at the military bases there?*

BAKER: Often, yes.

*Q: What was the role of a labor counselor in that kind of situation?*

BAKER: The exchange service of the Army and Navy and the bases employed Italian labor. They had relationships with a shop steward counsel and with union representatives. Normally, those relationships were direct. Once you solved a certain problem, you'd have a period of peace, and you wouldn't be bothered by it at all. But occasionally there would be an issue that would come up, and then the Army or Navy would come to us and ask us for advice. And then, on my side, I would go to the trade unions and get in contact with the section that dealt with these problems, to find out what the real issues were. My experience was that, in many cases, they could be resolved once the misunderstandings had been cleared away.

This doesn't have to do with Italy, but in Berlin, for example, we had maintenance teams that maintained all of the property that we had in Berlin. They included an electrician, a maintenance carpenter, a plumber, a team that would go in. And there was a smoldering conflict over the wages of the maintenance carpenters. It developed to the point of a threatened strike. Previously, the personnel offices had handled this. And so the general called me and said he wanted me to get involved, because he didn't want to have a strike. So I went to the works council, and I went to the personnel officer, and the personnel officer said, "Look, we don't determine these wages. This is the wage scale that's been negotiated for the employees of the armed forces, and we're simply applying it." I found out that, in the wage scale, there were two categories: one was a maintenance carpenter, and the other one was a cabinetmaker. They were paying the cabinetmaker's scale, which was about 15 or 20 pfennigs lower than the maintenance carpenter. As a result of my experience, I had known so many people in the guilds and the apprentice programs and so forth. And they had given me books with diagrams of trees, showing all the branches of a tree that had developed over the last, say, 80, 90 years. I looked at the tree for carpenters and the tree for cabinetmakers, and, of course, the maintenance carpenter was part of this carpenter tree. So I was able to explain to the personnel officers that they were simply applying the tariff wrong, that they were just using the wrong category. But it was significant, because it meant 20 pfennigs more an hour. So the strike was solved. People said, "Oh, how did you know that, Herb?" And I said, "Well, it's part of the educational process. You know, this is a very sophisticated system, and people feel very, very strongly about where they belong in terms of skill and qualification."

*Q: Back to Italy. There were some NATO bases there as well. Did you ever have any specific dealings with the trade unions on NATO issues? I don't know, perhaps the ambassador or the... to spread the word about the American position on any hot issue or whatever.*

BAKER: As a result of this mailing list that I developed, I tried to see that all of the defense issue commentary that had been done by people who had contributed to this transatlantic... got access to that. Then Irving arranged, through General Haig, for



periodic NATO briefings for the public sector. This was another problem we had. Some of the moles in the Italian government submitted the names of the leaders of the United Front organizations to be the trade union representatives. The CISL and UIL called me up and said that apparently we were very unsophisticated about this. So when I check into it, I found out that the names had been submitted from the United Front organization to their friend in the Foreign Office, who submitted it to NATO. Of course, I informed the ambassador, and I informed Irving. Irving called General Haig, and Haig said, "I'm not about to have that. What our role is, is to explain to the democratic groups what we're trying to do. We aren't trying to open access to this kind of information to people who are cooperating with the other side."

*Q: Were you able to get access for some of the friendly trade unionists to NATO programs?*

BAKER: Oh, yes. You remember I told you about these groups that were cooperating with Irving on this Transatlantic Committee.

*Q: Were there ship visits and things like that as well?*

BAKER: Not while I was there, there weren't any big ship visits. I had that in Brazil.

*Q: Do you have anything else to add before we wind up the interview on Italy?*

BAKER: No, except to say that I've had a lot of contacts in various countries that I've been in, but when I look at the list of all the contacts that I had in about two and a half years in Italy, I would say there must be at least 500 key people and leaders of different sectors.

*Q: So you spent two very busy years in Rome and Italy?*

BAKER: Two dynamic years. I was very happy to have served a purpose of trying to orient people based on my experience. I think that what happened proved that the thesis that we had and that Irving had lived for his whole life proved to be right on the dot when the Communist empire failed miserably. And it proved that contacts with government-controlled unions, like you had in the Soviet bloc, and efforts to negotiate an arrangement with them, was not only a waste of time and resources, it probably prolonged the period where they could have monopoly power.

*Q: Thank you, Herb Baker.*

*This interview is taking place on Thursday, February 11, 1993. My name is James Mattson, and I'm interviewing Herbert Baker about his experiences during his three lengthy assignments in Germany. How did you get to Germany the first time, and when was that?*

BAKER: I got to Germany via the infantry school in Fort Benning, where I was a tactical officer. I was selected for that job based on the fact that I had majored in industrial relations in university. So I was selected to be a tactical officer in the officer candidate school. Do you know what a tactical officer does?

*Q: Tell me.*

BAKER: The student companies are broken down into platoons, consisting of about 50 officer candidates per platoon. And each platoon has an officer who observes all of their activities during the period they're in training. He assigns them command duties in terms of the company leadership, and he inspects their barracks, and also accompanies them on their academic training. Each subject is taught by another academic committee, and the academic committees rate each candidate on each subject.

*Q: How did this get you into the labor field in Germany immediately after the war?*

BAKER: I saw a circular that there were openings for people in the Manpower Division sector of the military government. I applied for it and was selected based on the fact that I had majored in industrial relations at the University of Minnesota. I had also had a continuing interest in labor and cooperative affairs while I was growing up, working with my father, who was a business manager of a farm cooperative in Montana.

*Q: When did you join the Manpower Division?*

BAKER: I was assigned to the Office of Military Government for Bavaria, which was actually formally the G-5 of the 3rd Army, commanded by Patton. When Patton left, General Walter Muller, who had been Patton's G-4, was named the military governor. And I was assigned to the Manpower Division there.

*Q: Do you remember approximately when?*

BAKER: It was late 1945.

*Q: What were your duties there? Tell us a little bit about the ... part of it.*

BAKER: I'd like to give you some background of what the problem was.

*Q: Go right ahead.*

BAKER: Before Hitler seized power in Germany, there were several union organizations, and most of these trade union confederations were ideologically oriented. In other words, every major party had a counterpart trade union group.

For example, the Socialists had the Allgemeiner Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund. That means a general German trade union confederation. Then there was the Christian Nationalist trade union confederation, called the Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund, just like it

is today. The so-called democratic unions, which were known as the Hirsch-Duncker unions. Then there were the Communist and syndicalist unions. Also, the civil servants were organized into the Deutscher Beamtenbund. Then there were so-called peaceful nationalist unions. They were actually company unions. Then there were independent unions. They were Protestant and Polish unions. Then you had the Nazi worker cell groups, like the Communists had cells, in the factories.

When Hitler came to power, the Deutsche Arbeits Front, the DAF, as an instrumentality of the Nazi Party, seized all of these organizations. In many cases, they imprisoned the leaders, particularly the Communists and Socialists and some Christian Nationalist leaders. Others escaped.

At that time, the AFL was instrumental in getting a special dispensation from Roosevelt to permit the entry to the United States of Socialists and other persecuted labor leaders and political leaders from Europe. And the AFL formed the Free Trade Union Committee, which served as the instrumentality for helping these people who spent their exile period in the United States.

*Q: This was during the war, or before the war?*

BAKER: This was during the early phases, before the actual war started. But Hitler was consolidating his power in Germany. Many of these organizations had relatively long histories, and they had developed a lot of mutual-aid institutions. For example, they had workers' banks, insurance-type of co-ops, regular co-ops, housing co-ops, and cultural, educational, and welfare institutions. It was a very sophisticated combination; the labor and cooperative movement very closely linked together. The Nazi Party in effect seized all of the resources. In the postwar period, this created a very complicated situation, because actually the property that had been seized belonged to various institutions. In many cases, if the Nazis expanded, for example, a vacation center, they seized neighboring properties. So you would have five or six claimants to the property that had been seized and subsequently developed by the Nazis.

When the 3rd Army moved through each town in Germany, a local military government was established. The local military government, in many cases, had a labor officer who had been trained as to what to do. And there were very detailed manuals that were the result of research done with the help of many of the refugees who were in the United States.

To give you a few examples, Max Brauer, the former mayor of Hamburg. Ernst Reuter, who in his youth was a Communist became an anti-Communist Socialist. He was also connected to the Socialist refugees, but he spent most of his time in Turkey, however, working for the International Rescue Committee, the IRC. Paul Hertz, who was the mastermind of the rebuilding of West Berlin, was in the Allgemeiner Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund. He was also one of the people who was helped by the AFL Free Trade Union Committee. Otto Suhr, one of the leaders of the Allgemeiner Deutsche

Gewerkschaftsbund, lived in Ohio while he was in exile and was also helped by the Free Trade Union Committee. He was later mayor of Berlin.

On the other hand, some of the other refugees were in London as guests of the British Labor Party and the TUC, people like Hans fear God and Ludwig Rosenberg, who was from the former Hirsch-Duncker unions and later became the international affairs head of the DGB.

The Communists took refuge in Moscow, and they were part of the political/military group that moved into Germany when the Russians moved in.

Each of the labor officers of the local military government detachments had a manual to cover specifically the actions that they were to take when the Army moved through a local area. And the function of the Manpower Division in the Office of Military Government for Bavaria was to supervise the implementation of these instructions.

Now the first thing they did was to take control of all of the labor offices in their area.

The second thing they did was through the labor office, to order the civilian labor requirements for the armed forces as they were moving through.

Then they also established allocation priorities. In other words, the military had the highest priority, and essential activities of the civilian government to reestablish normal activities were established by these manpower priorities.

The next thing they were instructed to do was to take into custody Nazis, and to remove them from all control of labor, social insurance, housing, and pension organizations that were exiting at that time, maintaining the activities of these institutions, but eliminating all of the Nazis who were in supervisory positions.

Then the next thing they did was to instruct the local labor offices and the local governments to maintain the existing wage and economic controls, in order to restore a viable situation until a permanent solution could be developed. That was quite easy in the German situation, because each worker had what they called an arbeits buch. It was a workers' book that they had to present when they were employed, and then they had to have registered with the labor office every change in job, or changes in jobs could be ordered by the labor office.

And then the labor officers were instructed to report on these activities to our office.

The Manpower Division was broken down into Trade Union and Labor Relations; Manpower Allocation; Housing and Social Insurance; and Executive and Field Operations. I started off in Executive and Field Operations. I was also later project officer for any initiatives that we took in developing the projects that you'll hear about.

*Q: When you joined there in late 1945, were there already trade unions that had been formed after the war?*

BAKER: No, not exactly. Let me tell you first what we did with the government, and then with the trade unions and the employers.

*Q: Sure.*

BAKER: The first thing we did at the regional level was to remove all of the Nazis who were in charge of the labor organizations that Hitler had set up. We appointed a provisional labor minister, and selected his early staff. We had very complete intelligence about anti-Nazis and people who had been persecuted who were formerly in the ministry and the trade unions and so forth. So we had a very good idea of who were people that could cooperate with us in trying to reestablish temporarily a provisional governmental organization.

For example, we appointed Albert Roßhaupter, who was a Socialist who had been the war minister in the old Bayerischer Republik, after World War I. His deputy was a Christian trade unionist by the name of Krehle. Then for the head of the Manpower Department, who supervised all of the labor office activities through the country, we appointed Richard Urxley. Urxley, we found out, had been an assistant to Oscar Weigert. Oscar Weigert was the third-ranking man in the Reich Ministry of Labor, who was purged because he was Jewish and took refuge in the United States. His wife was a famous psychiatrist. He was one of the people who helped prepare this military government officers' manual that I told you about, just to give you the idea that we had very, very exact information on who was who and what the organizational changes had been. The first thing we asked Urxley to do was to mobilize manpower for the reopening of the lignite mines in southern Bavaria, because there was a tremendous shortage of coal in Germany as a result of the war.

Then we screened the appointments (I won't go through all the appointments we made). To help us on the screening of people for placement in the provisional labor ministry, we had the help of a young Socialist who had been the youngest member of the Reichstag during the pre-Hitler period. His name was Karl Fitting. He was a labor lawyer, and later he became the famous author of the German co-determination laws both in the State of Bavaria and the Kassel area, and also the co-determination law for the iron and coal industry. And then later they extended the co-determination to large firms employing over 2,000 people. Later, that was his important role. Actually, Karl Fitting worked for us for a short time, and then Minister Roßhaupter came to us and said, well, there's no sense in him sitting here, helping to spin. He might as well come down and work directly with me, and he can head up the labor law section of the ministry, which he did.

Then we also took control of the housing and social insurance. We appointed a very, very old Bavarian social-insurance expert as the head of the social insurance agency. On housing, we applied Allied Control Council Law Number 18, which established priorities for the allocation of available housing that hadn't been destroyed after the war. Also, we

confiscated the housing of former Class One and Class Two Nazis, and that was used to provide housing for the military occupation forces and for people coming out of the concentration camps and other persecuted people.

Moving to the trade union side, a group of trade union leaders came to us and asked for recognition as the leaders of the postwar trade union movement in Bavaria. After long conversations with them, they were told that our policy was to support the establishment of trade unions from the ground up, and that we would be willing to work with them on this process, but we would not provide any recognition in terms of establishing their authority until it was founded in the actions of a democratic constitution for each union, and also after the trade unions had moved to establish a trade union confederation through a democratically elected congress of elected delegates.

The people who came to see us were a very interesting group. Lawrence Hawgen was a trade union leader in Bavaria during the Weimar time. He was a man who was put in Buchenwald, and he was in solitary confinement. I can tell you lots of stories that he told me about his experiences and how the trade unions lost their property even though they had accumulated weapons and so forth to defend their headquarters. But that's another story we can talk about later.

Then the next member of the delegation was Gustav Schieffer. Schieffer was an old trade unionist who hadn't been put in a concentration camp, but he had been put into a work battalion. This was one means of punishing and regulating the democratic leaders. He was also originally from Bavaria.

There was another very dynamic man, who later became a very prominent man on the national scene. His name was George Reuter. He was from northern Germany. It was funny because all the rest of the leaders were Bavarian, and there's a kind of an underground anti-northern-German feeling in Bavaria.

The next member of this delegation was Josef Schilling. Josef Schilling was a Christian trade unionist. Later he became the director of the regional labor office.

Max Werner was another Socialist, who became the organizing leader of the whole area around Munich.

We seized all of the major properties at the state level. For example, the railroad workers had a vacation center in Hammersbach, which is near Garmisch. And there was a big vacation center that had been confiscated by the Nazis and expanded in Kochelsee. We seized that -- all of the properties and funds that had anything to do with these various organizations that I told you about before whose property and resources had been confiscated by Hitler and the Deutsche Arbeits Front.

*Q: How could you determine when the people who came to you as trade unionists were trustworthy people who had democratic instincts and were not simply postwar opportunists?*

BAKER: We had very good intelligence in depth on the former leaders of these various unions. So many parts of their leadership were in exile, and they in turn developed lists of people that they hoped would be still alive, and provided background. So we had lists of people that we could draw from, and we knew who they were before they came. To double check it, we had seized the document center in Berlin, which contained all of the records of the Nazi Party. Even though we knew who they were, we screened their records through the document center. The Nazis kept elaborate records, so there was no chance that we could miss collaboration if it was documented in the document center.

*Q: I like the examples you cited. These were all people who had some pre-Nazi-period trade union records.*

BAKER: Oh, yes. For example, Law Hawgen was about 60 years old when we first saw him, so he had a long history of trade union organizations. The same way with the other people.

*Q: Did they understand what democratic trade unionism was all about?*

BAKER: They did. For example, when they were in concentration camps, the Socialists and the Christian Democrats had many clandestine conversations about what mistakes they had made. And they all agreed that one major mistake was the splintering of the labor movement into so many factions. So, despite the fact that there was a strong anti-clerical feeling among the Socialists, and a fear of the actions of the Socialists on the part of people who were Christian oriented, they felt, in the postwar situation, this should be reformed so that all people who believed in democracy could collaborate together.

But there were some problems, because the Catholic Church was not convinced that the Christians could coexist with the anti-clerical Socialists. There was a move on the part of some fringe groups to reestablish Christian trade unions. So we invited Monsignor George Higgins to come to Germany to talk to the Catholic cardinals about the experience of the Catholic Church in the United States in relationship to the AFL and the CIO. That managed to slow down any initiatives to create a substantial competing Christian trade union organization. So the majority of the former Christian trade unionist agreed to this permanent coalition within the DGB. Later, there were some who still insisted that it was counterproductive to be in a unity organization, and minor groups of Christian trade unions were organized.

They were also determined to have a modern structure, and started organizing from the bottom up, based on local industrial sectors. For example, building workers, miners, chemical, leather, ceramic workers, printing and paper workers, wood workers, metal workers, food and restaurant workers, public service workers, and salaried employees. I'll tell you about what happened later on that structural problem.

But they moved very expeditiously. They organized, during the period of 1945 to early '47, this whole structure, and had a convention of about 400 democratic delegates coming from these various industrial unions that had been organized.

*Q: This was only in Bavaria?*

BAKER: Only in Bavaria, yes. They had 14 industrial unions. And they had a very sophisticated structure at the regional level, including separate sections for women's affairs, for youth affairs, for education, and for works councils and so forth. In other words, they had very modern functional departments in the headquarters, which carried out their activities.

On the employers' side, we met with a committee representing the employers and said that we would not recognize them until the trade unions had formed their organizations. In other words, we wanted to have a situation where there was a balance of power and where the trade unions would have a chance of developing normally on an equal power basis. Ironically, we held out on that until the trade unions themselves requested that we recognize the employers. And so they organized in a structure that was roughly parallel to what the unions had.

*Q: Was collective bargaining, at the beginning, at the local plant level?*

BAKER: You had wage controls in the early days. Then we had long discussions about whether works councils should be reestablished. We were arguing against the formation, again, of works councils at the factory level because we thought that would weaken the trade unions, because most of the direct relationships with the workers were handled by the works council. But we finally recognized that this was really a German problem, and their tradition was strong on that. The main point was to negotiate a solution that would not impinge on the trade union authority to be the representatives of the workers in collective bargaining on individual grievances and individual salary adjustments under the contracts negotiated by the trade unions in the collective contract. That kind of problem would be handled by the works councils at the factory level, and then any adjustments that needed to be made because of the local situation.

Then they held their second convention in 1948. They reestablished the labor courts, with the new law being written by Karl Fitting shortly afterwards. So the grievances and so forth that came about in disputes between the works council and the employers could be solved by the labor courts.

During this period, as you know from Paul Porter's paper, on a German-wide level there had been two disputes. One was on the issue of making Germany an agrarian economy, which was the objective of the Soviets. Another difference between the American Zone and the British Zone, was that the British authorized the refugee trade union leaders to go ahead and organize trade unions in their area. They didn't insist on this policy of organizing from the bottom up.



Henry Rutz, who played an important role with Paul Porter in reversing the policy of dismantling the Ruhr and in restoring the Ruhr as a productive center, was a close personal friend of Paul Porter. He was the military government labor officer for the region of Baden-Württemberg, and then later, since he had enough points, he left this position as a military government officer and became the AFL German-Austrian representative.

*Q: Was that the first time that there was an American trade union representative stationed in Germany?*

BAKER: Right, yes. When he left his official position in Stuttgart, he moved to Frankfurt, where the Baisal administration was. And then later, after the DGB established its headquarters in Düsseldorf, he moved up there.

*Q: When you were in Bavaria, were there any American trade union visitors? Were there any direct contacts between the new German unions and the American unions?*

BAKER: Early on, there were about seven or eight inter-zonal conferences between trade unions in the American, British, and Soviet zones, with the Soviets trying to expand their organizational concept of United Front into the Western sections. Of course, the agrarian economy concept was part of their overall strategy. And they didn't want to have any of the former leaders involved in the situation other than Communists that had worked with them. In the very early days, the CIO was in the WFTU, so you had a couple of visits of WFTU delegations that came through. It didn't really affect us very much, because the policy was developing on a very firm basis, and we didn't have a significant problem of Communists challenging locally the policy decisions that were being made at that time.

But very early on, when the crisis came on the activities of the WFTU as an arm of the Soviet Union, particularly against the Marshall Plan, during the days after currency reform, Bill Dougherty, Sr., came through as a representative of George Meany to insist that the Germans identify very early on with the ICFTU. General Clay called General Mark Clark in Italy, where Bill Dougherty, Jr., was stationed, and sent him up as Bill Dougherty, Sr.'s, driver. They came all through the American Zone and the British Zone, inspecting what was actually developing and insisting that the Germans decide early on to join the free and democratic trade unions in forming the ICFTU.

Also, the Reuthers came through. The director of the Manpower Division was named Clarence Bowles. Clarence Bowles had been in Detroit working for Kelsey Wheel, and he had organized a foremen's union. As a result, he knew the Reuther brothers. So we had a good session with them, and they seemed to be satisfied with how things were being handled.

At a later stage, there was another inspection team, including Irving Brown and Mike Ross, who at that time was in the CIO, but Irving and Michael Ross had basically the same political position, with Arnold Steinbach as the recorder of the delegation. I remember being the escort officer for them, and we took them down on the weekend to a

big house that had belonged to a former Nazi bigwig in Mirnow. It turned out that Dan Topping and Lana Turner were also there, so it was quite a VIP situation.

After that initial phase was over, then we did everything we could to expedite action in several different fields. For example, exchanges, sending trade union leaders to the United States; returning the property; solving the problems of successor organizations.

*Q: When was this, roughly?*

BAKER: This was in the period after the Trade Union Confederation had been established in '47, so, '47-'50. Let me just tell you the various things initially, and then I'll tell you what happened in each one of them. First, exchanges. Second, the return of the property. The rapid development of trade union youth programs on an international level. The rapid expansion of trade union and worker education to help build up a cadre of democratic trade union leaders, which even included the production of a movie. We also supported various initiatives of the youth groups. We got the Army to release surplus Army tents for Whitsunday youth demonstrations in about five different parts of Bavaria. We invited over several experts from the United States, including such people as John J. McCarthy, who was the vice president of Gimbels for training and personnel. He had formerly worked with General Somervell during World War II when they organized the Training Within Industry program, to rapidly train foremen and supervisors for war industries. The TWI program was the result of a collaboration of about 40 or 50 outstanding training experts in the United States. Then we also had other experts, such as Charles Shaw, who was an employer representative to the ILO, a former top vice president in charge of personnel for ESSO/Exxon. Then, later, we had various McCloy Fund projects.

But going back to exchanges. We saw that one of the things that needed to happen fairly quickly was the reestablishment of international contacts, particularly between the Bavarians, which we were responsible for, and their counterparts in the United States. So we organized the first group of trade unionists to go to the United States. Jim Taylor was on the other end in the Labor Department. We wrote Jim and made several recommendations and provided background on the people and what we thought they would be interested in. And Jim Taylor worked on that.

*Q: How did you select the people for this first exchange?*

BAKER: At first we selected key leaders, like Hawgen and Krehle. In other words, the top leadership we wanted to be sure to get into this action very quickly.

Then on the question of return of property, this turned out to be a lot more complicated than we thought. In Germany, every property transaction has to go through what they call a Grundbuch, a property register. In many cases, there were multiple claimants for the same property, so our property control branch had to arrange what they called a balancing fund so that they could negotiate who would get what property. We also worked as rapidly as possible to return the worker bank property, because the trade unions wanted to

have an institution that they controlled that would be a place where they could deposit their funds and also be a resource for small loans and so forth for trade unionists. We worked with Wolfgang Richar, who had escaped from Germany via Czechoslovakia to Turkey, where he worked for the IRC. Then, when we managed to return the property of the Kochelsee vacation center, we helped the youth section develop the first international trade union youth conference. We had representatives from Holland; I remember Rietlan and Koppers and Myer from Holland. We had a delegation from Norway, headed by a German refugee who had taken up Norwegian citizenship, but he came down with a group from Norway. Then we had a delegation from the French FO, and from Sweden. And then, two years later, we had a second international youth conference, in Kulmbach, where the same countries, plus a couple more, were invited to another international youth conference.

On the trade union educational side, the traditional German system was to have education by lecture. Albert Facil, who was the educational director for the Bavarian DGB, and George Reuter, who was vice president of the Bavarian DGB and later vice president of the overall DGB, wanted very much to modernize this so it would be more attractive to youth, and to have several kinds of different training aids and so forth. We finally got the resources. The film studios were under the control of the Information Division, anyway, so we arranged for a script to be written with the trade unions by a professional script writer, including the two top actors in Bavaria. So that was the first educational film that was developed in Bavaria.

The Communists in East Germany used to have huge youth demonstrations on Whitsunday. The Bavarian trade union youth leaders came to us and said that they'd like to do something so that the only action in the country wasn't only in Eastern Germany in terms of these big propaganda demonstrations, and asked us whether they could get some Army tents. I was a project officer for that, and I went to the G-4 of the Army and asked him whether we had any surplus tents, and he said, well, I think I have quite a few. So we managed to get enough for five different locations, in Regensburg, Nürnberg, Steinburg, and over in Augsburg. In each district area, they had their own youth celebration, using these surplus Army tents.

When John J. McCarthy came over, he gave a demonstration of the master's training program of conference leadership and the TWI program. TWI was job instruction training, job methods training, and job relations training, which had been highly successful in developing the skills of leaders and foremen during World War II. The Division sent me up to take this master's trainers program, and when I got back, I thought that the whole method was so modern and so effective that it probably could be applied to the trade union educational program. So I succeeded in getting EES to delegate two of their people from their training department to go up to take this master's training program, and then detail them to the Bavarian DGB education department to develop a trade union counterpart of conference leadership training and job instruction training.

Then I remembered from the infantry school that the Army had a tremendous training-aids program, using every possible technique to make information interesting, like

venetian blinds and flannel boards and so forth. So I asked the training section of the military there whether they'd be willing to give a demonstration, and we would invite all of the people involved in trade union educational activities.

Then we had the problem of translation. I remembered that the Nürnberg war crimes trials were finished and that they had sent the equipment to Frankfurt. So I called up and asked them whether we could use it, and they said sure. Then they gave me a list of the interpreters that had worked for the Nürnberg war crimes trials, so we recruited them.

So we had the Army training experts giving a demonstration of all these training aids, with translation equipment from the Nürnberg war crimes trials and the interpreters. It was a great success.

As a matter of fact, when I went back to Germany, one of my friends said, "Do you want to know what happened as a result of this?" I said, yeah. So they took me down south of Bonn, where they have a special area for training with aids. They even have split-screen movies, where you can do time and motion study and stuff like that. And all the techniques that we had exposed to them in this demonstration.

Then, after the Basic Law was approved, when the military turned the functioning over to the State Department, and the High Commission was formed, John J. McCloy felt that more had to be done to quickly support the so-called reeducation programs in Germany. So he went to the United States and, within weeks, got a tremendous fund, called the McCloy Fund. So I helped develop two trade union projects to be supported by that, which included a trade union youth home and training center outside of Nürnberg, and an addition to the trade union headquarters in Munich, which had become too small.

Then the next step, after the trade unions had been established in Bavaria and in Baden-Württemberg, and Hessen, and the British had established their trade unions, they formed a founding congress committee to organize the formation... [end tape two]

*Q: Continuing the interview of Herbert Baker on his years in Germany. He is about to tell us about the founding DGB congress in Munich.*

BAKER: This congress was held in the Deutsche Museum in Munich, from October 12-14, 1949, with 487 delegates from 16 unions. They elected Hans Beuchler, from the Ruhr area, to be its president. Soon after he was elected, the DGB opted to be part of the founding group of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. I was one of the foreign delegates to this congress. There were representatives from Great Britain, the FL, the French, and other organizations.

I'll never forget, the Deutsche Museum is a huge building, with narrow windows. All of these delegates were smoking these German cigars. I looked up and there was a shaft of light coming in (I have a picture, as a matter of fact), and sometimes you could hardly see the speakers for the smoke of the cigars.

But it was a very historic congress, and I think I'm one of the few people who has a complete set of the documents that were submitted at the congress for the approval of the organization, the approval of the action program of the DGB and its policies on everything from domestic economic and social problems through co-determination to international affairs. Ludwig Rosenberg, who, as I mentioned before, was formerly from the Hirsch-Duncker unions and in exile in London, became head of the international department. If you go over this initial action program now, you'll find that they have achieved every one of these goals that they outlined in this action program.

*Q: What were some of the most controversial issues at the time? Or was anything controversial?*

BAKER: Actually, co-determination was controversial, because they wanted parity, for example, in the iron and coal industry, and finally succeeded in getting that. Then they had the equivalent of one-third representation on firms in individual states. And then, as we'll note much later, when I returned in 1972, there was a movement to expand the iron and coal parity co-determination to other large firms, which finally resulted in all firms over 2,000 employees having parity co-determination.

I might make a parenthetical comment. This is, I think, different than the general impression generated by the short description of co-determination. Works councils' functions are prescribed in law and are separate from the trade unions. The works councils are elected on a factory level, and they can be organized on a regional level if a company has branches in various spots. But the point is that the employees of the company elect those representatives, union or not. And the route of the union influence is through these elections. If the union has a slate, and that slate is approved during the election, then that's the way they get on the boards. That is separate from the general trade union collective-bargaining activities. So, since everything is prescribed in law and can be interpreted by a labor court, you have a very structured cooperation between management and labor.

Usually, there are three directors. There's a director, a technical director, and a social director. Usually, the social director is nominated by the trade unions or the works council. This is very important for large firms, particularly in areas where they have co-determination on hiring and firing, because this means that all of the hiring and firing goes through the personnel or social director. It also means that, since the law provides in many states that you cannot fire a person until the dismissal has been registered with the state economic authorities, they have the opportunity, if something can be done in terms of a loan or some governmental action, to have employment security extended through that device.

*Q: Do you recall at all who attended the founding DGB congress from the American trade union movement?*

BAKER: I think Irving was there. Henry Rutz I know was there. I could see if I have it in my papers. I remember Sir Vincent Tuson and Bob Willis, who was a famous TUC

leader. I remember Rosé Etienne, and Bothero, from the Force... And Wright Long and a few other Dutch. Oesterhos was there from Holland. Louis Majore was there. I think Elmer Cope was there, representing the CIO, but I'm not absolutely sure about that.

*Q: How powerful was Hans Beuchler? Was he simply the first among equals, or was he a veritable powerhouse?*

BAKER: He was a veritable powerhouse. He was a dramatic personality. Just by his very stature and the way he spoke, he commanded attention. He wasn't blustery or anything like that. Some political leaders have force, and he was definitely a man who had force. He was a very forceful speaker.

*Q: At the end of your five years in Bavaria, how would you characterize the German trade union movement that had developed and grown there? How important was it in the local economic picture and the local political picture as a force for democratization?*

BAKER: My impression at that time was that it was one of the most significant actors on the democratic side, and very well organized. Everything was completely documented, after long debates about, for example, things like structure, programs, organization, and finances. You go back over the reports that were submitted to each of the two congresses of the Bavarian Trade Union Federation (I have one of them), and they're astounding. They have the whole detail of what happened in each industrial area, what happened in terms of women's organizations, what happened in terms of youth organizations, what happened in terms of publications.

Incidentally, when they couldn't get paper, that was another one of the positive things that we did. We controlled the allocation of paper for newspapers, and we succeeded in getting an allocation for the trade union publications. They had special publications for shop stewards, publications for youth, a general paper, like the later *Welt Arbeit* on the national level.

So it was a very excellent organization. They were prepared to dialogue with the government and political parties on all issues affecting the economic recovery and the general political development.

Of course, one advantage, because of this coalition between the Christian Democrats and the Socialists, you had the makings of a moderate coalition. They deliberately decided to make sensible wage demands that accompanied the rate of economic recovery of Germany. As compensation, they insisted on getting special action on social insurance and on housing. At first, they supported rent controls, but when it became apparent that the reconstruction of housing was not fast enough, they agreed to keep rent controls only on the existing supply and release rent controls from new housing construction. Then there was a tremendous boom in housing. Housing was constructed faster in Germany than almost any other country in Europe, for example, in contrast to France, where they maintained rent controls for a long, long time.

The currency reform was planned by a joint group of representatives from the United States, Great Britain, and Germany. They were holed up in a camp, with no contacts with anybody else. It was a complete secret before it was announced.

In Field Operations, I had four or five people working for me, and we went out to inspect the warehouses in all of the various key localities to see whether they were full of goods that had been accumulating because they didn't want to sell while the inflation was so high. To give you an idea, a carton of cigarettes was worth 2,000 marks before currency reform. A pound of coffee was worth 600 marks. We found that all of the warehouses were full. So when currency reform was announced, the people just got about the equivalent of a week's wages. The fact of the matter was that there was hardly a small bounce in the value of the mark, because there were so many goods hoarded.

*Q: What effect, if any, was there upon organized labor in Bavaria by the Berlin airlift and the whole Berlin crisis in the late '40s?*

BAKER: The biggest impact was that the refugee flow rapidly increased. When the Russians blockaded the borders, people started streaming out of Eastern Germany, as each repressive law was passed, passing through Berlin. There was a refugee center there, but of course they couldn't all stay in Berlin, so they flew them off to Hamburg, and I think there was a center down around Frankfurt and also in Bavaria. So the whole refugee problem was exacerbated by the Berlin blockade.

One interesting thing about the blockade. I was in Frankfurt when we announced that we were going to fly stuff into Berlin. I went into the officers' mess and saw one of my roommates from college, and I said, "What are you doing here?"

He said, "Well, I was in the Air Force in Alaska. Not more than 24 hours ago, we were in Alaska. Now we're here, and we've already flown our first load of goods to Berlin and back."

*Q: You said that, before the war, the trade unions were divided along political lines, each one attached to a political party. Therefore, they decided that they would unify after the war, and all of the tendencies would be in the same trade union movement. Was it difficult for them to learn to work together? How did they initially handle their relationship with the political parties? Did they find that they were more effective or less effective in the political arena?*

BAKER: Actually, since these people had suffered together in the concentration camps, they had concluded, after the hardships they'd gone through, that they needed a unified democratic approach. They rejected the Soviet approach, because it was another form of dictatorship imposed from the top down. They were willing to accept Communists who would accept the democratic elections and democratic constitutions that they had developed. So there were Communists in the Bavarian trade union confederation. Not very many. I think the screen actors and actors' section, which was very small, was Communist dominated. And then in a lot of the works council elections, for example, in

MAN (Maschinen Augsburg/Nürnberg), they have huge factories in Nürnberg, the works council chairman there was elected by the workers. But this was based on the fact that he had been in a concentration camp and came back and had a legitimate prestige in that firm, but never became what amounted to a power center opposing the coalition of the Christian Democrats and the Socialists.

*Q: So, by and large, Communist influence within the new unions was negligible, with a few places where they were noticeable.*

BAKER: Right. For example, we heard about the attempts of the FDGB from the East Zone to influence what was happening, through these big programs that they had in Eastern Germany. There were some people who went over, but we had a positive answer in each of these areas. Of course, the Socialists remembered that the Communists and the Nazis collaborated with each other before the Nazis came to power. There was the Hitler-Stalin Pact, too, which many Socialists and Christian Democrats never forgot.

*Q: Turning to the Manpower Division, there have been two very different allegations made about it. First of all, I'd like your comments on the allegation that, in the initial postwar years, it was a hotbed of Communists. What can you say about that?*

BAKER: That was true, up to a certain point. What happened was that Harry Dexter White, who was the international affairs representative of Secretary Morgenthau of the Treasury Department, was very influential in the FEA (Foreign Economic Agency), which was the predecessor of the military government organization. When the FEA moved to London and later to Berlin, the head of the Manpower Allocation Section was Dr. George Wheeler, who was a Ph.D. economist from the University of Chicago and from Reed College, and Mortimer Wolf, who was a labor lawyer, was the head of the Labor Relations Section. They were supporters of the Soviet line on our relationships with the previous trade union leadership. By and large, they supported the Soviet line, and a crisis developed within the Manpower Division. Of course, through the activities of Henry Rutz and Irving Brown and Paul Porter, and people that they oriented, like George Meany and Dobinski and others, Mortimer Wolf was removed, and he was replaced by a democratic guy named Harold Mulaney. George Silver, who was from the New York Jewish Labor Committee, came in to work with Mulaney. So that, for that initial period, this allegation was true.

When we saw that the situation was rapidly deteriorating in Western Germany because of the flood of currency coming in, feeding the inflation, we put on the agenda currency reform. Our proposal was that all of the currency for Germany would be printed in one place, under Four-Power control. The Russians proposed printing it in Leipzig, Berlin, and Hamburg, which meant that the situation would stay the way it was and we'd have no control over the money supply. That stretched on and on, until we finally had to make a decision. Of course, that decision was made, and we had currency reform, which I mentioned previously. But then George Wheeler and his family got on an airplane and went to Prague, because he saw that the policy had changed and there was no possibility of influencing it then. Then he became a political advisor to the Communists in



Czechoslovakia, and also he was involved in their foreign-aid activities in Africa for a while.

Incidentally, when some of the people were writing revisionist history, he wrote several reports that you find in some of the Berlin literature. We were astounded to find out that many of the things I told you about had been distorted, based on Wheeler's articles. As a matter of fact, when this Free University student contacted Franz Loyo, who was the oil workers' representative in Geneva, he in turn sent a copy of it to Paul Porter and to Henry Rutz. Then, as you can read from the Paul Porter submission, they immediately corrected the record. It was the first time that Paul Porter had put down what actually happened. And what he said was absolutely correct.

We didn't have the problem in Bavaria, because, first of all, the initial organization was proceeding so rapidly on the plan that I outlined. There was nothing to indicate any infiltration of the Communist solution there, so, actually, we didn't have any problems and didn't feel threatened when McCarthy sent delegates over there. There was nothing to be afraid of, because everything had been done to support democratic free-trade unions, which was the policy of the United States government.

*Q: There'd been a very different allegation that the Manpower Division and, indeed, the military government sought to reduce the workers to being, as it were, the pawns of the capitalist system, and that the American policy was not really to encourage and support works councils and co-determination, but was finally dragged into it. It was really simply to, over the long term, manipulate the German workers. Would you care to comment?*

BAKER: I think that's completely untrue because we delayed the recognition of the employers' associations until we were requested by the unions to permit the functioning of employers' associations. On the issue of co-determination, there was absolutely no question about the state works' council laws, written by a person that we'd had long relationships with. On the question of co-determination in the iron and steel industry, I refer you to the statement that General Clay issued when the co-determination issue came up there, which in effect said that it was a German problem and the Germans would decide what they wanted. And they got what they wanted.

*Q: Is there anything else you'd like to talk about in Bavaria?*

BAKER: We were talking about the supervision that we had from the headquarters in Berlin.

Joseph Keenan was the labor advisor to General Clay. Keenan, who was a well-known labor personality from the electrical workers, played an important role in the whole development of the AFL/CIO, was a close friend of George Meany, and was really one of the most active trade unionists on the political side, having been a personal friend of Truman and Stevenson, and participated in nearly every campaign before he died. General Clay, after this dispute about policy developed in Berlin, asked Keenan, who had worked with General Clay on the War Production Board, to be his personal labor advisor.

Joe Keenan didn't speak German, so he was very fortunate in finding a man named Willy Stark, who had been an Austrian refugee intimately acquainted with politics in both Austria and Germany, to be his driver/interpreter. Keenan was very interested in getting an on-the-spot view of what was happening. He drove down to the Ruhr area in a Jeep driven by Willy Stark, and they talked to the trade union leaders. In the early postwar days, there was famine, in many cases, lack of housing, lack of practically everything you needed to be professionally active on the trade union side. Keenan would take direct action to find ways to help them get on their feet so that the movement could get started again. He came to Bavaria a couple of times, and of course we took him down to talk with the trade union leadership, and informed him on what was happening. He seemed happy with the situation as it was developing.

The people who actually showed a personal interest in what was happening there included the Reuther brothers; of course, Irving Brown; and Henry Rutz, who had been one of the senior military-government labor officers and who'd played an important role with Paul Porter in terms of changing the plan to dismantle the Ruhr and in the battle with the Communists on the trade union structure situation. The visits of Irving Brown and Arnold Steinbach and Mike Ross were highlights, kind of like inspection visits, to see what was happening and to supplement their impression from the reports that we had been submitting to the Manpower Division in Berlin. We'd be invited to go to Berlin for conferences.

One time while I was in Munich, it was decided to have a conference of manpower labor divisions from Italy, Austria, and Germany. So I was assigned the job of organizing that conference. We took over the Schneefernerhaus, on top of the Zugspitze, and we called it a conference of "high-level" planning. That was one of the times that I had long conversations with Tom Lane about the Italian situation.

I also served temporarily in both Baden-Württemberg and Bremen. In Baden-Württemberg, when Henry Rutz left, he was succeeded by a labor lawyer from Duluth named Freidman. He, for one reason or the other, had to go home, and they needed to have somebody to cover the office. So I worked both in Munich and Stuttgart during the period while he was gone on a leave of absence. He was gone for about two months.

The reason it was significant to me was that the International Transport Workers Federation was trying to reorganize after World War II. The ITF played a very important role in World War II, because the railroad workers and the transport workers were very instrumental in underground transportation and support of the Allied troops in Europe. They decided that they would have a worldwide convention. And because of the importance of Germany and the importance of having German participation again in the ITF, they decided to hold the congress in Stuttgart.

They sent their representative, Fred Strauss, to prepare the congress. It turned out that Fred Strauss had worked with General Gross, who had been in the Allied forces, and when the war was over, he went back to New York, and I think he was in charge of transportation for the City of New York or some other place. He came back to be military

governor of Baden-Württemberg. But General Gross had known Fred Strauss when he was serving during the war in Europe.

When Fred contacted me, he said he had many problems. The main problem was how to house all of these delegates coming from all over the world, because a lot of the housing was either under the control of the occupation forces or bombed out, with very few hotels left. We called on General Gross, and he asked General Gross to see if there was any way that he could arrange for certain vacant facilities that weren't being used by the armed forces to be used to house the delegates and stuff like that. So I went around with Fred, and we finally got enough accommodations for the delegates to this congress.

It was a great affair. They invited General Gross to be a keynote speaker. He made a very good speech, which Fred Strauss and I wrote for him. It was very interesting for me, because I'd already met people like Reitlund from Holland, and I knew Omerbeku, who was one of the heroes of the International Transport Workers. So I met the delegates from all over the world. Mike Quill came, too. It was an historic occasion, and it was interesting to be intimately involved in the preparations for it and to get an inside picture of the reorganization of the ITF as one of the most important worldwide labor organizations.

*Q: So, after about five years in Munich, the capital of beer and sausages, you went to Berlin, where you found more beer, but white beer this time. What kind of an operation was that when you arrived?*

BAKER: When I arrived in Berlin, one of the main political battles between the Communists and the Socialists and Christian Democrats in Berlin was in the FDGB that was established in Berlin, that was the FDGB for Berlin, LandBerlin. Berlin is both a city and state.

*Q: So there was a single trade union movement for all the workers in Berlin when you arrived?*

BAKER: No, not when I arrived, but historically. Right after the end of the war, that was established when the Soviets and the Communists attempted to impose the United Front, by forcing an amalgamation of the Socialists and Christian Democrats and others into the SCD. The Socialist Unity Party that replaced both the Communist and the Socialist Parties in Eastern Germany was in reality just a new name for a Communist Party. And on the trade union side, the same thing. In the FDGB, which was the Free German Trade Union Confederation, many of the Democratic Socialists, including some of the people who had been in exile in the United States, opposed the imposition of an undemocratic structure without the full participation of the workers. With democratic exchange of debate and opinion and decision making, they formed what was called the UGLE, the United Trade Union Opposition. They in turn suffered from the problems of lack of any physical facilities or wherewithal to operate. They were supported initially by Irving and later by Henry Rutz. The UGLE family finally became the DGB Berlin, about a year after the establishment of the DGB. They had delegates to the Munich Conference, but

because of the situation, it wasn't possible for them to affiliate immediately. But as soon as possible, they did affiliate. So, when I arrived in Berlin, they had already affiliated to the DGB.

I was the chief of the Labor Branch, which included being the American representative on the Labor Committee of the Allied Kommandatura, which was the tripartite military government. Originally, it included the Soviets, but the Soviets walked out when currency reform took place. The Labor Committee was the ultimate occupation authority in Berlin, but we rapidly delegated most of the functions and authority to the German Ministry of Labor.

During the initial period, some of the people, both American and German, wanted to reform the social security system, and have a united system consisting of health insurance, old-age insurance, and accident insurance, and have that in a combined social insurance agency. Professor Schellenberg was a leader of that reform. And they succeeded in establishing this Unified Social Insurance Institution, which was opposed in Western Germany, because all of the social insurance funds that existed before the war wanted to reestablish the same system after the war. They had identification with the property and funds that had been confiscated by the Nazis and they wanted returned, and to return to the old system. So, when Berlin ultimately became an ex officio part of the Federal Republic, by virtue of financial reasons, Berlin was forced to abandon these reform institutions that had been set up. And Schellenberg became the chairman of the Social Affairs Committee of the Bundestag. Even they gave up on that struggle.

*Q: You mentioned the term frei gewerkschaft, or free trade union. What did that mean in the German context? I know, in 1949, for example, it was also used in the naming of the international confederation of free trade unions. What's the significance of the adjective 'free'?*

BAKER: I think the only reason why they used the word free is that they did not want to have any identification with the old Allgemeiner Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund, which is ADGB, or the DGB, which is the Nationalist Christian organization, or any of the rest of these other organizations. Of course, the line of the Communists was that the way to freedom was through communism; therefore, the organization was an instrumentality, through communism, to achieve freedom and economic and social security.

*Q: In effect, the Communists misused the term, because it had an important meaning for the German workers.*

BAKER: It was also an attempt to forcibly amalgamate all of the existing ones under Communist control.

*Q: What were the most significant things that happened during your years in Berlin?*

BAKER: The most significant thing, I think, was the development of labor participation in the recovery of Berlin. There was Marshall Plan support for housing, vocational

training, productivity teams, and all kinds of activities to support the economic recovery of West Berlin. It was my job to work with the people in the Marshall Plan who were developing programs Europe-wide. I was trying to get as much Berlin participation as possible.

For example, I told you that Paul Hertz, who was an exile supported by the AFL Free Trade Union Committee while he was in exile, was the senator in charge of reconstruction for Berlin. So he was not only sympathetic, but identified with labor participation in the whole recovery effort.

We organized, with the Berlin DGB, a small committee consisting of the educational chairman of the DGB, Gustav Pietsch, who incidentally was one of the founders of the Esperanto movement before World War II, and Louisa Huels, who worked in my office. The first exchange of students in worker education involved Alice Hansom Cook, who's a famous name in the American trade union scene, and Louisa Huels. Louisa Huels went to the United States, and Alice Hansom Cook went to Berlin. I was very fortunate to have Louisa Huels working with me, because she'd had the experience of going to the United States. We had a committee. The individual industrial trade unions and the employers association would nominate people to participate in these various productivity teams in various industrial sectors and on various issues and projects that involved teams going to the United States, either trade union teams or joint employer-union teams or joint labor-management-technical-expert teams going to the United States. So they would nominate the people, and we sat as a joint commission to develop the teams.

We sent every single U secretary of all the unions in Berlin and most of the heads of the unions. Harry Greer, for example, was U secretary of the DGB and later became the senator for labor and a member of the German Bundestag. The head of the public service union's U section, Dieter Schwevley, also became a top figure in the Berlin Senat. Rudd Kuhn, who was U secretary of the food and restaurant and beverage workers', became a vice president of Narl and Gunuth, the DGB national union. And Horst Wagner, the U secretary of the metalworkers', later became senator of labor, and now he is the head of the Berlin metalworkers' and the metalworkers' for the whole State of Brandenburg. So all of these people emerged as prominent leaders later in Germany.

So I was very happy with that development. We had tremendous resources, because we not only had the labor exchange through the High Commission, but we also had these Marshall Plan funds. So I think, I'm not exaggerating, I think we must have sent about 500 or 600 people to the United States.

*Q: Now what results did you see in the first few years?*

BAKER: I mentioned what happened. Many of these people emerged as prominent leaders in Berlin and Germany.

Paul Hertz was the mastermind of a very, very successful recovery program. For example, one time I talked to him, and he said that if they cleaned up the rubble and tried

to haul it out of Berlin, there'd be enough rubble to build a wall all the way from Berlin to Frankfurt, which would be a tremendous waste of resources in terms of transportation. So what he did was pile up all the rubble into hills, and now they're called the Berlin Hills. They're actually parks, with little circular paths that go up to the top, and you can sit on a bench and look around Berlin.

Another original idea of his, they had these huge bunkers to protect the population against air raids. And, of course, one military-government objective was to destroy all war installations. So the British were trying to blow up these bunkers. And every time they tried to blow them up, they wouldn't succeed in blowing them up, but blew all the windows out for about a mile around. So, finally, Paul Hertz went to them, and he said, "I sympathize with this, because I was a refugee, but there's a better way of doing this. We'll just cover it up and make a hill out of it." So that's what he ultimately did.

Then another part of the plan was to reconstruct the least-damaged houses and so forth first, and close in on the center of Berlin. And the other plan, which he and the trade unions, construction unions, and the Berlin Senat worked out, in Wettig, the old workers' section, they used to have these huge worker blocks, which would be a building that would cover a whole block, but the center of it would be a court, a dark, dingy court. It was typical of the very dingy living conditions, and was characteristic of the poverty you saw in the worker neighborhoods. So Paul Hertz looked at the problem, and he said he discovered that the Americans and British had concentrated on bombing intersections. As a result of bombing the intersections, they had bombed out the corners of buildings. So you had parts of buildings standing, with the corners bombed out. Then he said, "Well, this provides the source of an idea. Why don't we reconstruct the buildings, using the remaining structure, with the corners knocked out, so that you'd have sunlight four ways and greenery inside." And they used to have these high ceilings. So they reduced the height of the ceilings, so they could get more living space into them. And they made very nice little apartments that way.

In Berlin, there were several housing projects that had been developed by the Socialists and the Christian unions. Some of them were very attractive projects. But they were under Property Control, because they were part of the DAF. So I worked to solve that problem, of returning those to the unions.

The printing and paper workers had a beautiful headquarters that had been taken over by the Nazis. And it wasn't very badly destroyed, so it was important for them to get in it. So we worked with Property Control to restore that building. Then, of course, they renovated it, and it was a beautiful building.

Then, as this was happening, there was a mounting crisis developing, as East Germany was being communized. The Communists went about this very systematically. For example, if they wanted to take over certain sectors of business, they would nationalize the business, and then, as a result, you would see a flow of refugees from the people affected. The level was constantly rising as they went through this whole procedure. Berlin was about the only place you could get out.

*Q: They had no problem in crossing the border there?*

BAKER: The inter-sector borders were open. Once you got to East Berlin, you could get on the S Bahn, which circled Berlin. Also, the U Bahn was still open when I first arrived there.

But, anyway, you had these refugees who would come to East Berlin, and then they would get into West Berlin. I became aware of it after the 17th of June, because the Refugee Section of the mission was transferred to my office. They had a rising trend. I think, before the 17th of June, you had 80,000 refugees a month coming through Berlin. Of course, they were trying to screen them before they sent them out to Hamburg and Bavaria and around Frankfurt. The refugees were security screened by the intelligence agencies, and then turned over to a German refugee screening. When visitors came to Berlin, I was often the escort officer, and I'd take them down to these refugee screenings. The equivalent of two divisions of the newly established military in East Germany had defected, so much so that the people on the screening committee actually knew the numbers of rifles in individual barracks and that kind of thing. So that was a rising crisis.

Because of the Marshall Plan and the fact that Berlin was off the beaten track, we got visitors normally on the weekend. When they'd complete their tour in Western Germany, then they would come up for the weekend to Berlin. I worked about 52 weekends out of the year, because I had to take care of these people. If they were labor people, I would take them down to the Berlin DGB, which would give them an excellent briefing about the situation, after we had given them a briefing at the headquarters, which was a very elaborate briefing, with slides and charts and everything. Then the Berlin DGB would ask me to take them over to East Berlin. Now on the 16th of June, I had one of these groups. What I used to do was take them through the Brandenburg Gate and then down past the old red city hall Rathaus, which the Communists occupied when they had the first free elections, and so the democratic government had to move over to the Rathaus in Schoenburg, and then down Stalinallee, which was the show housing project that the East Germans were building. And then we'd go out to Karlshorst, the Russian headquarters, because it was surrounded by these barrels of barbed wire. In other words, they were kept isolated from the rest of the population. And then we'd come back and go in back of Stalinallee, because, something like in Moscow and other areas, you'd see the real situation.

*Q: What they called the Potemkin Village type.*

BAKER: That's right. On the 16th of June, when we went down Stalinallee (it used to be the old Frankfurt Railway), we noticed that the workers weren't working on the parts of the housing project that were still under construction. They were just gathered, and it looked like they were talking about something or other. I didn't think anything about it, and we drove on out to Karlshorst. But when we came back, we couldn't really return, because the street was full of workers, marching down Frankfurterallee. And they were marching toward the FDGB headquarters there. It was kind of funny. We just parked for

a while and watched what was happening. The FDGB shutters went down, and they couldn't talk to anybody there. Then they moved out, and moved off to the right, to the Humbolt University, on Unterdenlinden. The students joined them there, and they marched up to the Brandenburger Tor, where the old Hotel Avalon used to be. You could cross over to Potsdammerplatz, past the old Hitler bunker. Then they gathered in the Potsdammerplatz. I took the people who were with me, hurried over to the Kampinsky Hotel, and dropped them off. I came back, through Brandenburger Gate, and then I went down the street almost to Potsdammerplatz, but it was just filled with people. Then I got out of the car and went over to see what was happening. It was a completely peaceful demonstration. I asked somebody what was happening, and he said they were protesting the fact that the work norms had been increased. They hadn't increased the wages, they'd just increased the work norm. They calling for Minister Rau, the development planning man, to come down to talk to them. He refused to come down. As soon as they heard that, I remember seeing a carpenter in white overalls jump up on a platform. He said, "We want bread, and we want freedom!" Then the whole place exploded. Then I followed, and they marched back down to the foot of Stalinallee, and they held another mass meeting. They elected a delegation and approved a strike proclamation for all of Berlin. And then the strike committee went to RIAS (Radio in the American Sector).

Gordon Ewing, did you ever hear of him?

*Q: Yes.*

BAKER: Gordon Ewing was the director of RIAS. So the delegation went in and said they wanted to read their strike proclamation. So, quick like a flash, he called the mission headquarters and asked them what the policy was. In effect, they said wait a minute. I guess they were trying to telephone Washington or something. I don't know exactly what happened. But, anyway, he didn't get an answer, so he had to decide what to do. Finally, he said, "This is an American station. I cannot allow you to read the proclamation. But if you leave the text of the proclamation with us, on our next news broadcast, we'll read the text and report that you were here." So that's what he did.

Then they sent the text of the strike proclamation by radio, telegraph, and by bus drivers and others throughout all of Germany. And then you had this tremendous uprising, when the first thing they did was to release a political prisoner. They marched on the jails where the prisoners were. Then, of course, the Russians closed in with five or six divisions, and the 17th of June happened.

By coincidence, also, the Berlin Film Festival was going on. Irving Brown called me up and said that Gary Cooper was coming, and that he had told Gary Cooper that I should take him over to see the trade unions. It happened that the postal workers were having their national convention there. So I called up one of my friends and said, "Would you be interested in having Gary Cooper come over as a visitor?"



And they said, “We’d love to have him.” So, when he arrived, they asked him to speak. He said that he had been one of the organizers of the Screen Actors’ Guild, and gave a nice little talk about the importance of trade unions.

Then he asked me, “Am I safe in Berlin?”

And I said, “Why?”

He said, “Well, didn’t you know, there were two Communists, they were German refugees who were members of the Screen Actors’ Guild, who were expelled when there was a war between the factions after the Marshall Plan. And two of them ended up as ministers in the East German government.”

*Q: Do you remember their names?*

BAKER: One of them was Bertol Brecht, and the other one was this famous Communist agent in the United States.

*Q: Eisler?*

BAKER: Gerhart Eisler, yes.

*Q: It is Wednesday, February 17, 1993. I’m James Mattson, and I’m resuming my interview of Herbert Baker upon his years in Berlin. He had just completed describing what he had observed on the 16th and 17th of June, 1953, in Berlin.*

BAKER: Yes. On the morning of the 17th, we got news that several divisions of the Soviet army had, in the meantime, surrounded Berlin overnight. We only had a token force there, the equivalent of a regiment, no match for the massive force that the Soviets showed. They drove their tanks right up into Potsdammerplatz. But, despite the fact that they did that, the workers started throwing rocks and so forth at the tanks. Of course, the Russian troops moved in, and the strike was put down. There were literally thousands of refugees who came into Berlin, including many of the construction workers on the Stalinallee and their leaders.

Gary Cooper had come as a delegate of the Screen Actors’ Guild to attend the Berlin Film Festival. Irving Brown had called me and asked me to arrange contacts between Gary Cooper and the trade union movement in Berlin. Gary Cooper, as soon as he saw what the situation was, went to the organizer of the Berlin Film Festival and suggested that all of the program that was planned after the strike be canceled, and that all the resources be given to the refugee striking workers in West Berlin.

Then, of course, you had a massive influx of correspondents and personalities who were interested in what happened. This was the first major upheaval in the Eastern bloc after the end of World War II, and something that many people thought was impossible,

because of the disciplined German worker. They said he would never strike against something like this.

*Q: Did this come as a surprise then to the West Berliners and the Allies?*

BAKER: I don't think that it came as a surprise to the Berlin DGB. They had been aware of the increasing pressure on the workers ever since 1945, which had led to their forming an opposition group and ultimately the United Trade Union Opposition, which later became the Berlin DGB. But I think that the whole concept of a German revolt against Soviet control wasn't anticipated by most of the thinking people in the foreign-policy establishment.

*Q: Looking back, what was the significance of the workers' revolt then, in the long term?*

BAKER: In the long term, I think the fact that a disciplined work force like the Germans were revolting against the kind of oppression that existed in the Soviet Zone indicated that the real situation in the Soviet bloc was much worse than most people thought it was. People like Irving Brown and others had been saying that this was the case, but there was no dramatic evidence of it like you had there. Also, the Berliners had been calling attention repeatedly to the kind of oppression that existed. There was a general understanding of it, but it wasn't as dramatic.

The irony was, after the 17th of June, the Berlin government reorganized, because they were faced with this flood of refugees. As a result of this reorganization in the German government, the Refugee Department was switched over to be a part of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. So we reorganized in the mission, and the Refugee Section was switched over to the Labor Affairs Branch. I asked the people who were working in that branch to give me the background of the flow of the refugees, by composition. The amazing thing was that, if you went back two or three years, you could trace every single repressive act that the East German government had imposed on the East Germans. For example, when they moved against the small shopkeepers, there was an increased flow of small shopkeepers. When there was the so-called agrarian reform, you had a flood of small farmers. You had the equivalent of two divisions of German paramilitary forces that the Soviets had organized as a supplement to their army. The trend was up. I asked my staff to have two charts: the refugee flow before the 17th of June, and one that would start after the 17th of June, so that, if we just studied the trends, we could have a lead indicator as to what happened. And the irony was that you had the same kind of trend in the buildup before Poznan, in Poland, and the uprising in Budapest, the Hungarian Revolution. In other words, this was going in cycles. You could trace this refugee flow as an indicator of unrest. To give you some idea, I think there were 70,000 or 80,000 people coming through Berlin a month, before the 17th of June.

*Q: Was there anything significant about their ages or what kind of people they were?*

BAKER: It was a cross-section of the workforce. You had, for example, apprenticeship carpenters and trained carpenters and others, all kinds of crafts that were working on the

project, because if you've been in Berlin, you know the Stalinallee was a huge Potemkin Village-type of housing project. They had large numbers of people employed in putting that thing up.

As a matter of fact, this is a little diversion, but one of the dreams of Eleanor Dulles was to help the West Berliners sponsor an architectural exhibition, which would mean the invitation of all of the best architects in the world, like Corbusier. They were all-star architects. Stebbins was one of the designers of the U.N. building. Oscar Neimeyer from Brazil, who had also worked on the U.N. building project in New York. Each one of these architects would design a building for the center part of Berlin, which still hadn't been really completely reconstructed. In other words, this would be the Western answer to the propagandistic Stalinallee. I told you, too, that the reconstruction plan policy was to rebuild the partially damaged buildings first, and then close in on the center of the city, which had been almost obliterated. This architectural exhibition was to be the culmination of the reconstruction effort. We have the conference hall in Berlin, the Oyster building, down near the old Reichstag.

You had a number of people who came to Berlin who subsequently wrote books about the 17th of June. I wrote a telegram describing what I saw, because I was the only American eyewitness who saw the whole thing. Many came in later and interviewed the refugees and so forth who were the leaders of the strike. RIAS, after the 17th of June, had a special broadcast for workers in East Germany, and they in turn interviewed the refugee strike leaders on precisely why this was necessary, so that the people would be informed.

There was another very interesting phenomenon about the reaction to the 17th of June. As soon as the news spread to various German cities, you had an immediate reaction, and masses of people would go down to the place where the political prisoners were in jail. Their first attempt was to free those prisoners, until the Soviets moved in with force and took over total control again.

*Q: This was obviously a high point of your years in Berlin, and certainly historic in every sense. Looking back again, what kind of attitude towards the future, towards their proximity to the East, did the German labor leaders come out of this episode with?*

BAKER: The Berliners, dating back to their resistance to the formation of the FDGB by Ulbricht and the Communists who came back with the Soviet army, believed that the democratic resistance to this kind of dictatorship ultimately would lead to the reunification of Germany. Their main objective, to start off with, was to keep world support for an independent Berlin, because, in those days, there were many people who did not think that Berlin was worth fighting for. So they concentrated their effort just on trying to get the story out. Of course, the irony was that you could read about this, but you could not get the whole flavor of the situation unless you went to Berlin, because there was such a dramatic difference between East and West Berlin that you saw firsthand what a difference it makes to have a democratic solution versus a Communist solution.

*Q: Did the DGB leaders remain in close contact with the workers on the other side of Berlin after the 17th of June?*

BAKER: They had contacts with the East German workers ever since 1945. Initially, what happened, ironically, as I mentioned to you previously, the Soviets marched into Berlin in April 1945.

*End of interview*