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

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Initial interview date: June 8, 1993
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INTERVIEW

"Observations on Labor and the Marshall Plan"

Introduction to the Interview

WEINER: This is Herbert Weiner. This tape was recorded on February 17, 1994. It is the audio portion of an uncut video interview filmed on June 8, 1993 at my home by Eric and Linda Christenson for a proposed film documentary marking the 50th anniversary of the

Marshall Plan. What follows are my recollections of the sources of labor diplomacy as a function of U.S. foreign policy, labor's role in the Marshall Plan and subsequently during the Cold War, and my observations on the inter-dependence of labor freedom and a democratic culture.

Interview

Q: Today is June 8, 1993, and we are interviewing Herb Weiner, who is with the State Department. Are you still with the State Department?

WEINER: I am still a consultant in the Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for International Labor Affairs.

Q: All right. You worked with labor issues during your career?

WEINER: I have been working on labor issues off and on for some forty years as a career Foreign Service Officer. It was all "an accident" of my initial assignment, which was to go to London instead of my originally scheduled assignment, which was to go to Reykjavik, Iceland, to do visa work. That assignment to London at the end of 1947 thrust me willy nilly into the middle of the Marshall Plan and into an area of the Marshall Plan-specifically the role of labor-which is little spoken about now but which has been a very important part of American diplomacy since the end of World War II. I find, however, that there are considerable misconceptions about the Marshall Plan itself and about my particular interest, the role of labor in the Marshall Plan.

As I recall it, the two most important perceptions that existed right after World War II were that one, people had a clear recollection of World War I and its aftermath; and two, nobody wanted to repeat the mistakes which had been made. And the term, "return to normalcy," which had been popular after World War I, became a phrase of derision after World War II.

Now, after World War I, there was mass unemployment and poor conversion arrangements. People thought of the period after World War I as being a time of heavy unemployment, social pain and so forth. So by the end of World War II plans had already been drawn up in the middle 1940s, at least to my personal knowledge by the British government, for what you might call "a brave new world."

And in the United States, a rather interesting, but obscure, development took place, at least obscure as far as the *public* was concerned. The Roosevelt White House, in particular Mrs. Roosevelt and Dr. Isador Lubin, who was special assistant to President Roosevelt mainly for labor affairs and had been a professor at Harvard, sent a directive to the State Department saying, in effect, "We know what governments want, but we don't know what the people want, and there could be a vast difference." This difference was beginning to affect American diplomacy and it is important to recall that for the first time in history we had had a total war, and to prosecute the war, all sides had needed

cooperation of working people and the general populations. And the general populations were suspicious.

In World War II, I served in the Japanese theater, in New Guinea and in two invasions of the Philippines (Leyte and Luzon). We were preparing for the invasion of Japan while General MacArthur was negotiating the surrender. I remember a great deal of popular distrust of governments. But there was also a feeling that we did *not* want to go through a war like this again.

And I recall very vividly an incident in our division. I was in the Eleventh Airborne Division in the glider infantry, which had had serious casualties. In the battle of Manila, out of 8,500 in our division, we lost about 4,000 killed and wounded. It had been a bitter battle. We also learned that those who survived continued to survive. It was usually the relative newcomers who got killed or wounded first.

We were told to turn in all equipment, all uniforms, anything that was even remotely faded. And while we had not been told specifically why, we guessed it was probably in preparation for an invasion of Japan. We later learned that we were supposed to be the shock troops to land in Kyushu. Well, our division was used to being used as shock troops-paratroops and glider troops-although we only had one occasion when paratroops out of our division were actually used.

I recall this incident happening at our company command post. We were in Batangas Province in a little town called Rosario, and we were listening on a scratchy short wave radio to reports of progress in the armistice and the surrender negotiations in which General MacArthur was then engaged. The issue that hung fire at the time was what to do about the emperor. Should he stay or go?

It was rather interesting. There were three of us at the command post. One chap was from Kansas, another from the hills of Kentucky, and I was from the East Bronx. Three unlike people, if you ever saw them! I never considered myself much of a soldier. I had been a school teacher before I went into the army in a vocational high school in a tough (Bedford-Stuyvesant) neighborhood in Brooklyn, but I considered the other two real, tough soldiers. But nice guys. We got along very well. And suddenly one of them turned and said, using an expletive, "Oh, (expletive) the emperor. I don't want my children to come back twenty five years from today the way I came back twenty five years after my father." And I felt that same way, because my father had been in World War I. As a kid in school, I used to wear his old World War I iron helmet. They said it was steel, but it was really iron. I would let the kids hit me on the head to show that I was tough.

But my friend's point stayed in my mind. It stayed in my mind simply because one of the things that I did notice about World War II was that, while there was a great deal of opposition about the United States getting involved-a great deal of neutralism and isolationism-once the war started, everybody was in it. And I never saw an anti-war

demonstration or heard an anti-war speech. There might have been some who expressed concern over the war, but there was no question that the country was behind the war.

It took Pearl Harbor to get us in; two years after Germany had gone to war. The feeling after World War II was one of *no return* to the post-World War I situation. This was going to be a new world. It was going to be reconstructed. But suspicion was there. In a sense, you could say that this was demonstrated politically in the election in Britain in 1945. Churchill was a war hero. Nobody questioned that. But who was it that said Churchill had mobilized the English language and taken it to war? And he did it effectively. I remember on Sunday afternoons my grandmother, who had been an immigrant from Poland, listened religiously to Churchill in those scratchy short wave broadcasts and she would proclaim he was a great man. He had a tremendous following.

Before the 1945 election, the embassy and the American public, and I think the American government, expected that since Churchill was such a great war leader and so universally recognized, he would walk in. The labor attaché said, "No. Labor will win." The others didn't know what was going on down below. And Labor swept to victory in 1945 general election with the biggest majority in parliamentary history. I believe it was a hundred and forty-six seats in Parliament over the Conservatives and Liberals as the Opposition. This was a massive Labor victory. And the verdict was: Churchill is a great man. (And in all my dealings with Labor people after that, there was never any question about his being revered, and about his being the personification of the best in Britain.) But they did not want his domestic policies or to go back to the Conservative party policies of the post-World War I period.

It may not be popular today in terms of current political perspectives, but there was at that time tremendous support for a break with the past in economic and social policy and therefore for the Labor Party throughout Britain. In the United States two things were recognized: one, the United States was now an international power whether it wanted to be or not; and isolationism was out. Two, the government had to play a larger role in the economy because the individual did not have very much influence or control over serious social and economic problems, but did have the pain.

Well, a lot of that increased government involvement had started under Roosevelt with the Social Security System and so forth. There was a great deal of suspicion among working people about governments and doubts about the benefits of the free market system. Roosevelt recognized early on that he needed the support of working people in the United States for his domestic policies.

Now it was recognized that if American foreign policy was going to be successful, it had to concentrate on several things. One: The guiding political principle in our foreign policy was that we did not want a resurgence of dictatorships. In those days, the issue was a resurgence of a Nazi Germany or a Fascist Italy or a militaristic Japan. These were the targets. The Soviet Union was considered to be our ally, not one with which we were particularly happy, but a convenient ally. I remember the remark Churchill once made: "I

would get in bed with the devil if he is on my side." The point was that politically there was to be no return to dictatorships of any sort, and the promotion of democracy became enshrined in American foreign policy as an objective. The feeling was that wars are bred in a crucible of dictatorship, and that democratic governments are unlikely to go to war.

Secondly, there had to be economic growth; and thirdly, the benefits of this economic growth should go to the whole population. We could not have extremes of rich and poor. If a country is going to be unified and economically vibrant, everybody has to feel that he or she is benefitting from economic growth; everybody had to feel that he or she could participate politically; and everybody has to feel that he or she is a free individual.

Within that framework, there were subsets, for example, the feeling that you had to obviate war in Europe. And there was much public discussion of an old issue, namely the unification of Europe. People saw the United States of America as prosperous, big, and vibrant. What if it had a counterpart in Europe, say a United States of Europe? This was not a new idea. It had been advocated at the end of World War I.

The argument ran that by integrating the economies in Europe, and more particularly weaving together the German and French economies, you would obviate a major cause of the wars in Europe that had taken place for a whole century before. Economic integration would obviate a source of war in Europe. Also it would promote economic growth through a more effective division of labor, the creation of large markets, and mass production. These would be "good things."

There is a tendency today to say that promoting democracy is our newest foreign policy gimmick. Democracy has been an active, specific part of the foreign policy of the United States since the end of World War II. We have an interest in it. That doesn't mean that every government is going to be friendly. Some will be friendlier than others at various times. But by democracy we are not just talking about a parliamentary process. We are talking about building institutions that have a stake in democracy for their own existence, and collectively would constitute a sort of balance of power in society. Sometimes some groups would be more influential than others, but there would be others to offset them.

This stake in institutional democracy embraces for the individual the idea that to make it work requires personal freedoms and civil liberties including freedom of religion, freedom of press, alternative political parties, free speech, freedom of association, freedom from forced labor, et al. All these things are built in correctives. Democracy also has to have free institutions: Churches, which are free to organize and propagate their beliefs; free trade unions, not just for the sake of collective bargaining, but so that people would feel that they could have more freedom to exercise more equitably in the labor market.

Well, the labor aspect became very important right after World War II, and everybody could see the need. I recall my arrival in London. I was amazed. We had not really suffered in the United States during the war. As a matter of fact, we had done very well.

There had been a tremendous expansion of the economy. The standard of living in the United States was higher after the war than before the war. The gross national product, I think, was just about double what it had been. Unemployment had disappeared. Real wages were up. Whole new industries had developed.

In Britain, you could see there was destruction. London was in rubble. If you went to a restaurant to eat, you had the choice of having bread or a "sweet" dessert with your meal; and there was a five shilling limit on the charge for a meal. I remember one time soon after I arrived, one of the fellows said, "Let's go to lunch." I said, "Where?" "Oh, well, there's a bombed out movie theater, and the only thing left is the lobby. They have turned the lobby into a little restaurant." But despite all the rubble, there was a feeling of optimism. There was a feeling you had to do something. Not only *want* to do, but *can* do.

The other thing was that we knew in this country was that we could not go back. But isolationism was still very strong. President Truman, whom I consider one of the great Presidents of the United States, understood the concept of aligning political forces. And what he did was something which, when I look back, I find really remarkable. The home of isolationism at that time was the Republican Party. And the two leading Republicans in Congress were Senator Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan, who was the Republican Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Senator Robert Taft of Ohio. Truman brought Vandenberg in on his side. Vandenberg saw that the United States could not just return to where it had been before the war. Senator Taft hung on to his isolationism, but Truman, in effect, had split the Republican Party and could add those who split to his support on foreign policy issues in the Democratic Party.

But to carry out an internationalist foreign policy, Truman had a lot of selling to do, and among other people he had to sell were those in the unions. It's not that unions were so large, but for every union member there are a couple of other people in the family who share his or her sympathies. So the constituency is far larger than the union membership. And also the importance of the numbers is equaled by the importance of the strategic position of the unions. In other words, you don't have to have a lot of members, if you can have them in the right place.

During the early days of the Cold War, I used the following illustration. "If you want to knock out the railways of France, how many troops and how many bombers would you need? You only need one railwaymen's union." So I used to tell this story to help people keep these things in mind, because it was within the ranks of labor where a good part of the "Cold War" began to take place. Well, Truman got the unions on board-both the old AFL and old CIO, which had been bitter rivals. And within the CIO at that time, there was still considerable Communist influence among about ten of its affiliates. But the leadership, CIO President Philip Murray from the Steelworkers and Secretary-Treasurer, Jim Carey, of the Electrical Workers, were both very patriotic men, and there was no question where their loyalties were.

Now, the AFL at that time was headed by President William Green and Secretary-Treasurer George Meany. They had become converted to internationalism. Meany was an internationalist in large part because of a feud he had with Green. Meany involved himself in international affairs because Green wouldn't let him do anything else, and he became a genuine foreign policy expert on a national level. I remember I used to meet George Meany on occasion, and he really knew whereof he spoke. He understood international politics.

Anyway, on June 5, 1947, General Marshall in a speech at Harvard University announced in general terms the Marshall Plan. I remember some time afterwards I was at my first economics section staff meeting at our embassy in London, and I was in terrible fear of the Economic Counselor, who in those days in London was next to God. His name was Don Bliss. And I recall the staff standing around the room; it was show and tell time, and everybody told his little bit of story. He looked at me, and I said, with some trepidation, "Sir, in view of the speech General Marshall made at Harvard, are we supposed to do anything about it?" And he said, "Well, young man, as you advance in the Foreign Service, you will discover that the politicians make these speeches. Our job in the Foreign Service is to tell them what they meant, and then to figure out what to do. If it succeeds, they are the heroes, if it fails, we are the bums."

And so this was my introduction to the Marshall Plan. Well, Truman, on the domestic side, got support from major Republican businessmen and the trade union leadership. One of the most important people on his side was Paul Hoffman, then President of the Studebaker Corporation, who had gained an enormously favorable reputation in this country for his war work and how he had converted the Studebaker plant to war production. And Studebaker had very good labor relations.

So these were all people who came from different sides, yet they had viewpoints that were at least complementary. They could understand the importance of doing something, and that the United States could not live by itself. And the other thing was that you could *see* the damage and the need for aid to reconstruct Europe. You only had to travel. We had reached a point where the dollar was the only real currency, and where the balance of payments were so bad, that it was like someone playing poker and only one party had any chips.

Q: Let me just interrupt you for a second. [Pause]

WEINER: There were other things that struck me when I came to London. I can still remember my very first night. There were really no places to sleep. A lot of the hotels had been damaged and the rates for what there was were ridiculous. So the embassy found me a room in the home of a widow who had about five or six rooms she used to rent out in this big old house. A woman officer of the British Navy (a WREN), some other man, and I were there. It was December, and I was just plain cold. And I still remember that my mother had kept telling me, "Take these winter long johns." And I said, "Why?" And she said, "Oh, you know, the socialists "don't give steam" (heat).

Anyway, I arrived in London and I was shivering. I had come off the boat at Southampton and taken the boat train to London, then made my way by taxi to this address. I can still remember the place. It was called Cromwell Road, right near the Kensington Museum. Anyway, I was cold and she had some food, chopped up cabbage. It wasn't exactly sumptuous, and I was shivering. And she said, "Well, come and sit by the fire." Well, it turned out to be an electric fire. There was a lot of fog in those days, and the windows were badly fitted because the place had been badly shaken by the German bombing. The fog would seep through the window sills. So you could be sitting here, and just about six or eight feet away was a so-called "fire" in the fireplace. And you would see this yellow fog, because the houses all burned coal. London in those days was either black or yellow. If it were raining, it would be yellow fog, and it would choke you. Sometimes fog was so thick that the buses had to stop running.

And my landlady said, "Now, you stand this way towards the fire, but now turn around so it gets the other side of you," because there wasn't enough heat. And so I would turn around. She said, "It's like toast. You toast a little bit on either side." And I said, "You know, I've never seen a fireplace before. I came from an apartment in the Bronx. We had a radiator in the corner of the room." And she said, "You move the sofa up closer to the fire. Isn't this cozy?" I said, "Well, I guess it is." And finally she said, "Don't you have fireplaces?" I said, "No. Frankly, I never saw a fireplace in any house I've ever been in." She said, "You don't say? Then what do you sit around?" And that was my introduction to London.

Then I said to her, "Well, I understand there is now a socialist government here? But where is the class struggle?" "Oh," she said-she was a conservative-"that's going on. It's just that there's a different class struggling." And this conversation would go on. I was a Roosevelt New Dealer, and she was an old line Tory conservative. But we got along very well.

Her name was Marie Rowell. She was a widow of a doctor, and she had a couple of grown children. Because of the war damage, there was always something to fix. She also had all sorts of men friends who would come over and fix things. I said, "Marie, that's wonderful. You are getting all kinds of free labor."-You could not find any labor for hire, and everything was terribly expensive. I said, "What's the secret of your success in getting these people to come over and fix things." She said, "It's very, very simple. Don't waste your credit on small favors. Save it for big ones." And she was getting her house fixed. I learned a lot from her about human nature.

But in any case, the British were a good natured society in the sense that people knew times were difficult. Food was rationed. There were black marketeers, but black marketing was not rampant. Britain was a country of law-abiding citizens. Things were tough, and there were black marketeers; but this hadn't cut into the cloth of the society. And I got a lesson in economics. I had been an economics major at Columbia; and when I

went into the Foreign Service, I still had my dissertation to write for my doctorate. I didn't write that until a few years later.

But my real education in economics came in London on a very interesting day, February 12, 1948. The House of Commons had been destroyed during the blitz when the Germans were sending the VE rockets over London; so the House of Commons was meeting in the old House of Lords; and there were very few seats for outsiders. The House of Commons was having a great debate on economic policy, in particular, on the incomes policy. I was the assistant to the Labor Attaché. I was sent there to see whether the Government would get the cooperation of the trade unions to restrain wage demands, to work longer hours, and to reduce or eliminate strikes. A big claim to power of the Labor Government was that it had the confidence of working people, so that a Labor Government could ask for restraint and sacrifices. A Tory Government, on the other hand, would not have had that kind of confidence, and that confidence was essential. And so I went to the House of Commons. We had only one ticket in the embassy, and I was given that very treasured ticket.

The debate in the House began at 11 a.m. and went on until 10 p.m. in the evening. I sat there afraid to give up my seat, crunched in the gallery of the House of Lords, leaning over the rail; and I saw an all-star show of some of the greatest economic and political minds of the day. I heard Sir Stafford Cripps, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer and then considered a brilliant politico-economic mind, lay out what British economic policy of restraint should be. The issue was restraints on wages, prices, and profits. Everybody had to restrain himself was the policy, and the buzz word was *productivity*. After Sir Stafford Cripps had spoken, Churchill spoke for the Conservatives, then Clement Davies, the leader of the Liberal Party, then Herbert Morrison, the powerful Home Secretary in the Labor Government and in the Labor Party.

Q: Clement Attlee?

WEINER: Clement Attlee was Prime Minister. Then you heard Attlee. Then came the heart-searing left, Aneurin Bevan, who got up and spoke with his heart in the coal mines. "These miners, who are struggling in the pits, who are soaking in all that coal dust. . . " He was talking about the Welsh miners. Then his wife, Jennie Lee, who could bring you to tears, spoke. This was the greatest political theater I have ever seen in my life. I learned more about economics and its interrelationship with politics sitting there for 11 hours in my seat in the House of Lords. And believe me, I had to *go*, but I wasn't going to give in, and I sat there. I think I had a piece of candy in my pocket, and that's all I had that day. I listened to the debate-and I don't think that I have ever forgotten the lessons I learned about economic and political policy, and how you combine them to make people understand what they must do to save the country. And knowing about government policy by itself was not enough. Would the British Trade Union Congress support the government? Did it, in turn, have the support of its members? You had a lot of union members, about 8,000,000 in the British Trade Union Congress and possibly another

1,000,000 in independent unions, accounting for 40 percent of the labor force. Unions covered every major industry in the country.

Q: How did the unions react to the idea of productivity*?*

WEINER: That was the *key word*. Productivity was the big buzz word, and here's where the importance of organized labor came in. We knew, and governments throughout western Europe knew, that productivity had to be increased if there was going to be more to eat and more to live on. It was simple.

Q: And how was that going to be achieved?

WEINER: And it couldn't be achieved without investment and without the cooperation of working people. And we kept driving home one lesson: Increases in productivity come only a little bit from working harder. Big increases in productivity come from working smarter with more and more *capital*. The big block towards increasing productivity was not a question of working harder. British workers were working harder than anybody I had ever seen in my life. They were working long hours, but the results were hardly enough. They were working with antiquated or broken down machinery. Assembly lines were short, where they should have been long. Moreover, there was great distrust left over from the Depression period, when increased productivity meant losing your job. You produced more; you lost your job. Why? Because there was a mentality, and I believe it still exists to a large extent in many parts of Europe, that there is just so much "in the pie," or it only grows a little bit, and so you have got to keep cutting that pie at the expense of somebody else.

We have a concept, and I think that it is a normal subconscious concept in this country that I believe explains why we often run into problems in our dealings with Europeans, that of *a growing pie*. Each one gets more of a growing pie. Europeans think of a fixed pie, and a lot of that has to do with the way that their societies are constructed and also their suspicions. So the question was how do you get British workers to understand the benefits to them from increased productivity. Governments cannot talk to them; they don't trust governments, which they believe had always sided against the working man. Even a Labor Government has its troubles. Certainly they are not going to believe the American government. America is the heart of capitalism. We hoped they would believe American workers.

And here is where what others called a silly, crack-pot idea began to bear fruit. A man came out to our Embassy in 1948 from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' new Productivity Office, I believe it was called, and he came up with an idea. His name was Jim Silberman, and I think that then was the only time in my life I have ever seen him. As the "kid" in the Embassy, it was my job to shepherd him around to meet various people.

He said, "It's no good to send an economic mission of experts from Britain to the U.S. or from the U.S. to Britain and so forth. What you have to do is send workers, not one or

two, but hundreds of them, thousands of them. Let them get to know each other's cultures. Let them learn. Workers will listen to other workers where they won't listen to their employers or to the government." And that was the beginning of "people-to-people diplomacy." Nobody else in the Embassy would touch him because they said he was a "crack pot." "What does he mean we are going to send hundreds or thousands of workers. He's a nut case." I went around with him. They figured, "Well, Herb is okay. He's a youngster. No one will blame him for anything. He can get away with it."

I remember an incident at that time very, very vividly. We went to call on the Director General of the British Employers Confederation, which is the counterpart of our National Association of Manufacturers (NAM). We were talking about the textile industry, which was mainly concentrated in the Midlands, particularly in Manchester. Now the textile industry was in a bind. And I remember him saying, "Well, you Americans are so wasteful. We have these weaving machines and other machines, and they are as good as new. They may be a hundred years old, but you know, we shine them up and we oil them. We keep them in good shape. And besides, wages, after all, are low." Remember, Britain had been losing its textile industry to the colonies, to India and so forth. And so he said, "Why should we invest in new machinery?" He had no concept of obsolescence, and this was true in much of British industry. Well, I can't put a figure on it, but I found this was a very strong British attitude towards investment.

Being a smart aleck, I said to him, "Well, Sir, would you therefore advocate a general wage rise." What I had in mind was the American experience, where because of the pressure of increasing wages, businessmen kept investing in more efficient machinery. The British had no such concept, so there was a problem of educating the employers, the business managements, and the investors as well. On the part of the working people, there was a fear about investment in machinery, a fear that workers would lose their jobs if they increase productivity, and the fear of unemployment was *very, very strong*.

So, the AFL and the CIO began to send representatives to Europe under the aegis of the Marshall Plan programs. The labor attaché at that time in London, Sam Berger. He had been hired initially by W. Averell Harriman as labor consultant for the Harriman special economic mission to Britain during the war. Harriman recognized the importance of the idea of knowing what Labor people wanted. At war's end, Sam Berger became the labor attaché at the Embassy in London, where Ambassador Lewis Douglas recognized the importance of labor's role in the post-war reconstruction of Britain. As a matter of fact, Sam (who died on February 12, 1980) was becoming a legend by that time. He was the one in the Embassy who had predicted the Labor Party's victory in the 1945 general election in Britain. He seemed to knew everybody in the Labor Party. He had links to the cabinet. The other people in the embassy were still dealing only with the old British establishment and the gentility of British society. But they didn't know what was going on in the guts of the country. I went to the coal mines, to the pubs; I lived with these guys. There was a tendency among the old line political officers in the embassy to ask, "Who are these socialist upstarts?" But these socialist upstarts had the power in the factories, and that's where "the war" was going to be, where the economic war was going to be won,

and where the peace was going to be won. Workers had to see that they were going to get something for their efforts and that things were going to improve.

Ambassador Harriman had recognized that. He had hired Sam Berger who had been a captain in the U.S. Army but had earlier specialized in labor affairs while he was in the United States. Sam had studied labor relations at the University of Wisconsin with Selig Perlman, who was the dean of the labor economists in those days. Anyway, Jim Silberman was not getting any hearing until one day he seemed to hit pay dirt. He ran into a fellow who was the principal back room advisor to Herbert Morrison, who was a very powerful cabinet minister in the Labor Government. In Labor Party ideological terms, he was about in the center. And the advisor sold the idea to Morrison, who in turn sold it to Sir Stafford Cripps. And sometime afterwards, Cripps went to Paris for a meeting with Harriman, who, I think, by this time had been appointed head of the Marshall Plan for all of Europe and was headquartered in Paris. Out of the blue, Cripps and Harriman announced the creation of the "Anglo-American Productivity Committee." Among other things its projects involved having working people visit back and forth to try to get a transference of culture and attitudes towards production.

By now, however, the big complicating political factor was the rise of the Soviet Union. There we ran into a real problem. During the war, and this was true throughout western Europe, the Communists had gained an enormous amount of popular credibility for their role in partisan warfare, particularly among working people, and in the trade unions in France, in Italy, and to a large extent in Britain. As a result they had considerable influence. Also, they had a "papacy," and the "papacy" was in Moscow. The Soviet Union, as a conscious political decision, decided to fight the Marshall Plan. The Communists claimed it was a device for the United States to take over domination of Europe and to impose capitalism on it and to isolate the Soviet Union. .

And so the Soviet Union took "the war" to the factory floor. At the time popular speculation about possible Soviet ambitions focused on a possible military sweep through Western Europe since all the Western armies had virtually been dispersed. But we realized soon afterwards that what the Soviet Union couldn't take earlier by force, they thought they could win without military action by warring on the factory floor, by preventing increases in productivity, by strikes, and by industrial warfare. And that was the key to their plan.

Oh, I misspoke earlier and referred to a joint communique by Sir Stafford Cripps and Averell Harriman. It was Paul Hoffman, not Averell Harriman. I remember that when the announcement was made, it caught the embassy by surprise, and I was gloating over the inclusion of Jim Silberman's idea.

Q: Okay, the battle was going to be won. . .

WEINER: Now, they were talking about the factory floor. One of the things I have heard people say-and this bothers me and maybe it is a generation gap-is that the Marshall Plan

was our answer to the "Cold War." The Marshall Plan took root for different reasons, and the "Cold War" evolved after the Marshall Plan was underway, although there were already suspicions in the West about the post-war intentions of the U.S.S.R. mixed with the hope that somehow the wartime alliance would cooperate to rebuild Europe. The Soviet Union chose to make the Marshall Plan the arena for the "Cold War."

The Marshall Plan was specifically aimed at the economic reconstruction of a physically devastated Europe. And as soon as it was announced, the leading statesmen of western Europe began to organize a conference, which took place in July of 1948 in Paris, to coordinate their positions on the Marshall Plan. Editorial Note: The actual date was July 12, 1947

L. Q: 1947

WEINER: No, July 1948 was the meeting. The announcement was July 1947.

L. Q: Yes, but then they met within a month after that.

WEINER: Was it a month? Well, maybe it was. I had thought it was 1948.

L. Q: Molotov came to Paris in 1947, and then they met a few days after that.

WEINER: Well, I stand corrected then.

Q: That's why we were able to get it through Congress.

WEINER: All right. Well, then I stand corrected. Now, I've learned something.

L. Q: The Marshall Plan was finally passed by Congress in March of 1948, then the conference became the organization, and so the organizational entity of the organization --

WEINER: Well, which became the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) in those days.

L. Q: That was in 1948.

WEINER: I see. Okay, I had it wrong then. You are right. The July 1948 higher level Paris meeting was for organizing the implementation of the Marshall Plan by the European powers. Editorial Note: See "The Marshall Plan: Origins and Implementation," Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, April 1967. But I remember this. The reaction was immediately positive. This was not a long considered reaction. Somewhere I have seen references that the Marshall Plan was a reaction to what was really only a monetary crisis. It was a hell of a lot more than that. Everybody could see the damage. You could walk around Europe and see it. There was no question. I remember the

announcement that the Anglo-American Productivity Committee had been set up, and I was just sitting there gloating, but I dared not say anything because someone would have smacked down that saucy kid. And I thought Jim Silberman's recommendations had come good, and he had been vindicated.

Anyway, on the Cold War, the atmosphere at the time was that the Soviet Union had been an ally, and had suffered terribly during the war with heavy casualties, physical damage and so forth. There was no real love for the Soviets, but there was a tremendous amount of Communist influence, particularly in the various ranks of organized labor. Not domination, but enough influence to affect policy.

Now, what happened was that each time the Soviet Union took a step, people were rather puzzled. The Cold War was not something declared. Nobody even used the term "Cold War." It sort of crept up on us incrementally. We took a "What are they up to?" kind of approach. And then you got almost a defining moment when the Soviet Union pressured Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Yugoslavia against becoming parties to the Marshall Plan. They were all at different stages in their deliberations on the Marshall Plan. I think that Poland had actually accepted an invitation to the July 1947 conference and then was told to pull back. Czechoslovakia had been about to accept, and then President Edvard Benes was called to Moscow and told he would have to give up the idea. Tito in Yugoslavia was considering it and let out hints, but never went in. Then the Soviet Union itself, which had been offered an invitation, denounced the Marshall Plan as a plot for the capitalist Americans to establish hegemony over western Europe.

Well, war broke out on the factory floor, and so you had the situation in Britain, in France, in Italy, and in the low countries where Communist-dominated or influenced unions began to call all sort of strikes. It even took place in Australia, where I was transferred to in late 1949. The same Cold War was being fought in Australia through strikes in the coal mines and steel mills, called on the flimsiest of excuses using industrial issues for in effect politically motivated strikes. At one time Communist trade union leaders almost succeeded in tying up Marshall Plan shipments in the North Atlantic. I remember working feverishly with my boss, Sam Berger, over a weekend to prevent a general tie up of the North Atlantic sea routes.

It is interesting how skillful these guys were. That's why I have always argued, you don't need a majority, you just need a purposeful fraction to do the damage. What happened was this. A freighter arrived from Canada, which had been organized by a Communist-dominated seaman's union called the "Canadian Seaman's Union," which was a small union. The American seaman's union, the Seafarers International Union, also had a very powerful branch in Canada. And what happened was that this ship docked in London, and those seamen called a strike aboard ship, complaining about working conditions and so forth. And the parties couldn't settle the strike.

Now, when you get into labor negotiations, you can never tell what are the real issues and what are the surface issues. Sometimes you spend your time trying to figure out what is

really bothering the parties, "which tooth really hurts," and you can't tell. The vessel itself was not of any great importance, but the Communists were very skillful. And they said, "Well, the men said they're not going to work." So the company flew a new crew over. Now flying was not very common, but the company felt strongly enough and actually flew in a crew from the U.S. These crewmen were all members of the Seafarers International Union, the American union, which had a branch in Canada which was still the biggest of the seamen's unions then.

"Ah-hah," said the leaders of the local strike on the ship, "they are sending in strike breakers from the U.S. This ship is declared black." Now there was strong Communist influence in those days on the British docks. You didn't have to explain the issue or anything. "They're out, we're out." So, the London dockers struck in sympathy, initially against American ships.

"Well," said the captain of that ship, "that's all right. We won't unload in London; we'll go to Liverpool." So they arrived in Liverpool, and the fellows on the docks in Liverpool said, "Well, how do you like that? That ship is black," meaning boycotted. The Liverpool dockers wouldn't work the ship. So the ship went on to Bristol, and the Bristol dockworkers declared the ship black. Before you knew it, about 20,000 dockers were out on a sympathy and protest strike tying up all shipping, all starting from this one obscure incident.

"Well," said the American dockers, which was the International Longshoreman's Association (AFL) at the time, "if the British dockers are going to boycott our ships, we are going to boycott British ships." Well, all these Marshall Plan shipments in the North Atlantic were threatened by a complete tie up. That's how skillful this operation was.

I remember Sam Berger and I worked like dogs sending cables to the State Department. And the man who was in charge of labor affairs in the State Department at that time was Daniel Horowitz. He had been the first American labor attaché, and he is still alive. I'm trying to get him to do an oral history. Sam was sending cables saying, "Please get to International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) and tell them not to strike British ships in retaliation." Meanwhile, we were contacting the General Secretary of the British Transport and General Workers Union, Arthur Deakin, who was an anti-Communist although nominal President of the World Federation of Trade Unions, the Communist-dominated international labor confederation. But that's a separate story.

What happened was the following: The American labor leaders were informed, "Look, this dock strike is a political game. Don't fall for it. Get somebody here so you can talk it over with the head man," i.e. Arthur Deakin. (Mind you these strikes were called locally, and they just catch fire.) And so what happened was that the two top U.S. and U.K. dock union leaders somehow got in touch with each other. The American said, "Look, call your guys off. We won't do anything to your ships." Then Prime Minister Attlee got on the radio to ask people in the name of the Labor Government go back to work. (The dockers would never have done that for a Tory Government.) Troops were not the answer. That

would have inflamed the situation. If you had had troops out there, you would have had every union in the country out on a general protest strike. So out of loyalty to the Labor Government and with pleas from their own top labor union leadership, the dockers began to go back to work. There was also tremendous public pressure on the dockers not to jeopardize the interests of the country. The American longshoremen worked the British ships, and eventually the strike died. But this was an illustration of how the Communists tried to disrupt the economy through labor unrest. Now, multiply that by what happened in the coal mines, in the steel industry, and just about anywhere you turned. This kind of warfare was carried on in Europe, at least all through western Europe, especially in France, where the central labor federation fell under Communist control, and in Italy, where the central federation had also fallen under Communist control.

During the days of the wartime grand alliance and early post-war period, the British Trade Union Congress and the Soviet All Union Central Council of Trade Unions laid the groundwork to form in 1945 what was called the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). It was fed by a hope that the wartime alliance would carry into a common effort, on the labor level, to rebuild a world in which workers benefited from the prosperity of their countries. The post-World War II world was going to be "the brave new world." However, once the Soviet Union denounced the Marshall Plan, the Communists-and here the Communists again were very clever, very skillful-demonstrated their control of the WFTU Secretariat with Louis Saillant, a French Communist, as General Secretary. The top WFTU names were not Communists: Arthur Deakin, the General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, which was the biggest union in Britain with about a million to 1.2 million members, was, President of the WFTU and, if anything, an anti-Communist. Jim Carey, who was a Vice-President of the WFTU, had made a reputation for defeating the Communists in the CIO and was trying to get the WFTU to support the Marshall Plan. The WFTU, however, took the position, "We are not political. We do not support it, because we are not political. We are a trade union organization." Moreover, their affiliated organizations. . . were looking for a lead. Some non-Communist affiliates said, "The WFTU is neutral. Okay, we are neutral, too." That was not what we, the U.S., wanted. We wanted support.

Anyway, what happened was the WFTU did split, in essence, over the Marshall Plan. There were other technical issues that were used, but the basic issue was over support for the reconstruction of Europe. And later on in November 1949, a new international federation, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) was formed. It is still in existence and very important and is the big survivor. Both the AFL, which would never join the WFTU-and here the basic issue was one of democracy-and the CIO joined in founding the ICFTU. The foreign policy differences between the CIO and the AFL was reflected in the tendency of the CIO and the TUC to take the position that Communist-controlled unions could be brought around to reasonable positions, and that you have to keep talking and maintain contact. The AFL said, "No. It isn't only a matter of their support for the Soviet Union. By their inclination, the leadership in these organizations saw labor unions as a political instrument to bring about the destruction of a free society. These people do not want a free society. Democratic unions have to have a

stake in democracy, so that they can be independent. Free unionism means independent of government, independent of the employer, independent to organize, and independent to make their own decisions. Labor unions in the Soviet Union are tools of the government and tools of a political party. These were the principles at stake in the U.S. in the battles for control of the garment unions, in the United Automobile Workers Union (UAW) and other U.S. unions when the Communists at one time tried to capture the leadership of the unions. The AFL argued the Communist unions were using associations with non-Communist unions to gain acceptability for themselves.

And I knew two of the men personally involved in the international trade union wars over the Marshall Plan, Jay Lovestone and Irving Brown. Lovestone (December 15, 1897-March 7, 1990) had been a founding member of the U.S. Communist Party and eventually became at 29 it general secretary. Over the years after his expulsion in 1927 on Stalin's orders, Lovestone became an uncompromising anti-Communist and eventually Director of the AFL-CIO International Department as well as a very close advisor on international affairs to George Meany.

Lovestone's emissary during the "Cold War" was Irving Brown, AFL Representative in Europe (Paris) for some 40 years before his death in 1989. Brown (November 21,1911-February 10, 1989) became in time very close to Lane Kirkland, Meany's successor. In later years, Brown's relations with Lovestone became strained in a personality conflict, which both sought to hide from their common political enemies.

Lovestone and Brown argued, "It's not just that a union is a collection of workers; it's a question of whether you believe in democracy? We're not saying what form of democracy, but democracy in a sense that they believe a union should be totally independent to act on behalf of its membership. That is the union must be free to be independent of government, political parties and employers. It must be free to bargain and free to act within the law. It must have a stake in democracy."

The ICFTU has taken on that position. The British TUC, the CIO, and the [Netherlands] Confederation of Free Trade Unions (NVV) walked out of the WFTU in January 1949 and were central in forming the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in November 1949. The AFL joined as a founder and driving force in establishing the ICFTU. And from then on, it became a question, not only of contests in Western Europe, but throughout the world, subsequently to establish free trade unions in the newly independent areas in Africa, in Asia, and in Latin America.

The question came up of how to organize the Marshall Plan. And here the argument was that the organization should be outside the Department of State and staffed by people with backgrounds in the private sector. It should have all the advantages of autonomy, to be able to work more freely. So a separate organization was formed named the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), and Paul Hoffman was sent to Paris, I believe. I forget what his title was at the time. And they set up missions in each country for ECA.

L. Q: Harriman was sent to Paris.

WEINER: Was it Harriman who went to Paris? I forget. I remember the names Hoffman and Harriman. I forget just what the sequence was. I would have to brush up on that.

Q: And your role was within the. . .

WEINER: My role was within the embassy. I was the assistant to the labor attaché. What happened in London was they sent us an ECA Mission to Britain, which was technically within the umbrella of the embassy, but was an independent unit in the way in which it reported back to ECA Headquarters in Washington. In that unit, they had a labor advisor, Jim Killian, who incidentally died a few years ago. He had been a Vice-President of the United Paperworkers International Union (AFL), which was a substantial union at the time.

Killian's main concern was with working people. Now the labor attaché and I were also concerned with working people, but ECA was specifically concerned with the *programs* that were being developed under the Marshall Plan, technical assistance of one sort or another and international exchanges of workers in factories. We used to work pretty well together. Jim was a very nice guy. But one of the questions we used to have was where do our jurisdictions start and stop. We never really worked it out as far as I could see. It depended an awful lot on personal relationships. Killian wasn't really quite sure what he was supposed to be selling. He came over with the idea that they in ECA were new ambassadors or something like that.

And there was the question of double teaming in a way, because they would go to some of the same contacts we had. There was some confusion, but fortunately the personalities worked together well, so our relations didn't turn into "turf battles" or anything like that. These were all fresh people, not out of the government bureaucracy. And the labor attaché became the economic expert. I spent most of my time reporting on the trials and tribulations of the coal industry, which was the *key* industry at that time in Britain.

The British miners union, or what was called the National Union of Mine Workers (NUM), has now just about disintegrated, together with the coal industry. When I was in Britain, there were 600,000 unionized miners. Now the NUM claims possibly 18,000 members. They were a big power in the Labor Party, a big power in the TUC. They were sort of the "aristocrats" of the labor movement. In the public mind they personified organized labor, and there was great sympathy for miners because they had such dirty jobs.

I didn't really appreciate this until my turn came to crawl on my belly through a hundred year old mine in Doncaster. The president of the mine workers union said, "Herb, if you really want to be a labor attaché and want to understand us, you have to come with me and crawl through a mine." I did! Boy, I never forgot that experience. I suddenly began to realize that a hot shower was a hell of a lot more important that just any shower. It was

not like bathing in the morning. It became an industrial necessity, because your ears, your nose, every pore had coal dust in it. I had to stand under that hot shower, for I don't know how long, to wash out that dust, and even then it didn't wash it out completely.

And I began to understand why, for example, a miner would walk out if he had cold tea instead of hot tea, because that was the only thing he had to keep him going or give him a break. I began to understand that these are not just personal comforts. I began to understand why it was so important to dock workers that there be covering in rain. You put on your rain coat and go for a walk in the rain. To a dock worker, those are his working conditions. If he stands outside pulling boxes or managing loading or something, he will be pretty well beat if he doesn't have any covering. People say, "Ah, what are they making such a fuss about? They walked out because it is raining." I began to understand the difference between personal comfort and what things are crucial to working people.

Q: Can you remember some specific instances of how the British coal industry made capital investments in order to increase productivity, or in weaving or textiles, or any of the other industries? Or to reconfigure the assembly lines?

WEINER: I do not remember specific cases of reconfiguration, but what I do remember is that the big issue in collective bargaining was *productivity*. And so consequently, there would be "clauses." Now, Britain does not have legally enforceable collective bargaining contracts the way we have in the U.S. Such a labor contract could make a union vulnerable to all sorts of law suits, especially from unofficial "wildcat strikes." Britain has a completely different legal structure. Unions don't have the same degree of membership discipline as in the United States. Here in the U.S. a union seeks a contract to give it legal standing and establish its recognition. In Britain, it's quite the opposite. Their system of law only gives unions rights by way of *immunity*. For example, in Britain the employment contract is seen as being between the individual worker and his employer. Here, a collective bargaining contract is seen as between the union and the employer. In Britain, if a union calls people out on strike, the employer theoretically could sue the union for inducing a breach of contract. To give unions standing, Britain had to give them immunity from their equivalent of the anti-trust laws and immunity from the contract laws. So, in Britain, there isn't the same kind of contract, but there are agreements of all sorts, and they are sort of informal, and they say the most popular lady in Britain is "Tina Lea." This Is Not A Legally Enforceable Agreement. A lot of them are handshake agreements and so forth.

But what you did have-and this became very important-was that unions in their agreements would agree to measures to increase *productivity*. This became the buzz word. That might involve shifting workers around in the plant-they didn't shift easily-and mainly their acceptance of new machinery. This would involve tradeoffs: Somebody would be guaranteed a job or would have a voice in the introduction of machinery. Well, in that situation, that was rather practical because there was a chronic shortage of labor in Britain at the time.

But there was another reason to be careful about efforts to shift labor. Britain is not like the U.S. where people go from one job to another and move from one part of the country to another. We Americans buy a house here and sell a house there. In Britain, the work force was tied to existing housing. Housing is short. So British workers look for work in their locality. They don't readily move to take a job somewhere else, because they can't find a place to live, and rents are terribly high. So the labor force is really tied very much to where people live, and they can't readily move. It becomes a real matter of social adjustment. Also work groups tend to become social groups, especially in the coal mines. Now that's breaking down somewhat, but because of the cost of housing, the labor force is not as mobile. We are blessed in this country by a labor force that is highly mobile compared to other countries.

Q: And also a class struggle and animosity between. . .

WEINER: It's an easy thing to say, but I think underneath it all, there is a class consciousness. When they took a poll here in this country and they asked people whether they were in the middle class, something like 94 percent of the people thought they were. I used to use this illustration: You walk up to any worker in this country and ask, "What class are you?" and he answers, "I'm in the middle class." Why? He doesn't think of himself as staying a worker all of his life. He wants to be the boss or have his own business. In Britain, the guy figured he didn't have much hope of not being a worker.

Also, remember, the British are carrying class consciousness over from a different kind of society. We had the advantage of building a society from scratch. British workers tend to see themselves as, "Well, my father was a worker; I'm a worker." He sees himself as part of a class. We Americans have "a thing" about working for a living. It's a "good thing." In our own history, for instance, there were times back in the 1830s when newspapers used to carry articles signed "working man" or "mechanic" on any particular issue in a letter to the editor. And it would turn out this "working man" or "mechanic" was actually a pretty wealthy man who probably did not think of himself as "working class.". In Britain, the "working man" thinks of himself as "working class."

But when you think of it in another way, it's not quite that. British class identification is hardly clearly defined. Britishers of different "classes" may go to different schools in some cases. In Britain now, Oxford and Cambridge, for instance, are publicly funded, and "working class" students go there. Oxford and Cambridge are no longer bastions of the aristocracy. There you can get a free education more readily than in the US. But, I would say class is a state of mind. After all, look at the prime ministers. Ernest Bevin never got out of grade school, but he was a tremendous foreign minister. Clement Attlee was seen as coming from the middle class. He was a well-to-do guy. Why was he seen as middle class? Because he had been a major in the army.

The late Harold Laski was a professor, and one of the leading theorists of the Labor Party and the Socialists. These people like Laski are intellectual socialists. I don't know if they would call themselves "working class" or "middle class" or what. But the tendency is to

think of stratified classes, even today. Thatcher didn't come from a wealthy family. Nor did Major. Major had been on the dole. His father had been unemployed. Ask him if he's working class. "Well, I was a working man." But go through the listings of the people in the government, even the Tory government, and you'll find people from "working class" origins. And if you go into the Labor leadership, what do you find? Take John Smith, the late leader of the Labor Party. He was highly regarded by all elements constituting the Labor Party. He was never a factory worker. He was a Queen's Counsel, a lawyer from Scotland. Tony Blair, who on Smith's sudden death in 1994 won the Labor Party's leadership, also is a barrister from a well to do family who told his Labor Party at the 1996 Annual Conference that class divisions have no place in a modern country in the 21st Century. You go through his shadow cabinet. These are not horny-handed sons of toil. The concept of working class is a convenient thing. If you ask, they say "working class." But it is not a very useable political concept. Thatcher's father was a grocer. She made her money on her lecture tours after she was prime minister. That's what made her rich. She wasn't rich before. She married a well-to-do man, but she was what you might call in the United States "middle class."

L. Q: But whatever there was in terms of class consciousness, how did that bump up against the Marshall Plan? How did the Marshall Plan bump up against the notion? How did that effect each other?

WEINER: In terms of the attitude of working people towards the Marshall Plan, there always was a mixture of feelings. I wrote my doctorate on the attitude of British Labor towards public ownership, and it dealt a bit about where socialism fitted into Labor thinking. And this socialism colored, shall we say, the thinking and the dogma of people who were trade union members and/or affiliated to the Labor Party. Their attitude towards the United States, and towards productivity, and towards the reconstruction of Europe was that they wanted everybody to benefit and not just "the capitalists." It was the capitalists that sent them to war in World War I; but World War II was the "people's war." They fought it. And so their attitude was, if anybody's going to make money, they wanted to share it. And so there was always a tinge-and there still is a tinge in the Labor Party among the more doctrinaire elements-of seeing the United States ideologically as the bastion of capitalism.

And when the Soviet Union became an important power, it was seen, especially in the early days, as "the workers state." And there was a tendency among British socialists to say, "Oh, but the dictatorship is temporary; it is a passing phase," and so forth. "The Communists are socialists in a hurry." There was also a tendency to put a mild interpretation on the excesses of the Soviet Union, even through Stalinism, and to have a colored interpretation of seeing the United States as being the home of unbridled capitalism and trying to propagate capitalism to the disadvantage of the workers. But in the end, the relationship between the United States and Britain, whether with a Labor government or a Tory government, was that we are the two primary democracies. And so the relationship between the United States government, whether a Republican or a

Democrat administration, and the British Government, whether Tory or Labor, was built on the feeling of mutual interest.

But the feeling of suspicion towards American capitalism among British socialists was always there. The counterpart feeling among conservatives was "Who are these upstart Americans who want to take over our empire?" There was some of that around in Britain, and there still is some of that around, but it is not a governing feature of Tory politics.

But feeling among workers in Britain was "Don't touch our popular social programs. Don't touch our national health service. That's national policy. Everybody shares. They see the Tories as doing things to benefit the rich." This is the general attitude. And there are those kinds of feelings around. But at the same time, for example, the Labor Party program today doesn't talk about socialism. The word doesn't appear. It doesn't talk about nationalization of industry-although the major nationalization took place under a labor government-but not so much for ideological reasons. I wrote in my book on British nationalization that nationalization as applied in specific cases had become pragmatic national policy and applied by Conservative, Liberal, and Labor governments.

People don't know or haven't focused on the fact that broadcasting in Britain, for example, was nationalized under the Baldwin Conservative government largely at the behest of radio manufacturers who wanted somebody to broadcast something so they could sell radios and with broad public support that control of the medium should not be left in private hands. The Government appointed the Crawford Committee to report on the matter and the Committee actually sent a delegation to the United States. It looked at American radio in those days and they said, "Ah! Terrible, commercials," and so forth. And that is how Britain ended up with government-owned radio. The airlines were nationalized under a law passed by the Conservative Chamberlain government. London transport was nationalized by a succession of Labor and National governments. Electricity was nationalized largely because there was no uniform electricity. There is a wide variety wall sockets and varying voltages within the city of London.

In the coal industry there were many small mines and continual coal strikes. There was a lot of strife. As a matter of fact, that was what set off the so-called general strike of 1926. But these small coal mines didn't lend themselves to large investment. When coal was nationalized, sure there was a lot of argument mainly over what price the government would pay. There was nobody with the legal authority to make these properties contiguous, so you could develop large scale mining, and nobody with the capital willing to invest in large scale mining. This nationalization had initially been developed as a Labor Party policy and carried out under a Labor government.

Now there were other cases of nationalization, as for example with the railroads, that were more doctrinaire. But in any case, the railroads needed investment, and there wasn't much private investment available to update railroads, especially after World War II. So, you have to be careful about equating Labor with socialization and nationalization. I have a quotation in my book from Churchill, who, as far back as 1910, advocated, as a Liberal

Government minister in those days, nationalization of the railroads. These were seen as public issues. Now, I'm not saying that later on nationalization didn't divide political parties with the Tories generally being against and Labor being for. But if Labor comes into office, Labor is not going to re-nationalize what the Tories de-nationalized. Far from it. Nationalization does not appear on Labor's election platform. So the ideological blurring that has taken place has really blurred the so-called classes. People still tend to talk in those terms, but in terms of its practical impact on politics, if you're going to talk so much about class solidarity, why is it that in the last three elections a minority of union members voted Labor? In the last general election in 1992, only 44 percent of union members, mind you, voted Labor. And yet theoretical socialists talk about the bond of solidarity of the working class.

It's a highly questionable concept. There hasn't been a popular majority Labor vote for the Labor Party since the 1979 election. Class solidarity is nice and neat, but I wouldn't base election policy on it. I wouldn't base party policy on it. Do you know what the Labor Party platform is today? It's advocating a good climate for investment. Investment is primary. The Labor Party has become the standard bearers of investment, any kind of investment. Bring your money.

Q: We've heard from someone else-I can't remember now who said it-the British didn't invest in as smart a way as Germany or France or the Netherlands.

WEINER: If you want me to say it, I'll say it.

L. Q: Go ahead.

WEINER: [Reading from a Department of State publication]: American policy toward Europe in the 1940s was forged as a pragmatic response to a mounting economic and political crisis. The vast destruction of European production capacity was threatening the collapse of social order in much of Europe. Shortages of food and fuel, particularly coal, Europe's overwhelming source of energy, were becoming severe, with adverse chain reactions in the work force and in the production of goods needed for reconstruction, for example, steel and machinery. Inflation was accelerated. Governments, having used much of their income-producing foreign assets and reserves to pay for the war, were becoming desperately short of foreign exchange as U.S. loans and grants ran out. It is estimated that between 1938 and 1947, on the average, Europeans standard of living, per capita gross national product in constant dollars fell by more than eight per cent. In Italy, the decline was over twenty-five percent. In West Germany more than fifteen percent. In France, nearly ten percent. Low countries, six to seven percent. In Austria and Greece, about forty percent. In contrast, per capita GNP in Britain had increased by about four percent, and in the United States almost fifty percent.

Q: Those are amazing numbers.

WEINER: And that comes right out of official State Department publications.

Q: Well, we have is a good sample. You know, you are an excellent presenter of these ideas and--

L. Q: Okay. Go ahead.

WEINER: I would like to sum up something. There's a tendency-I have heard this said before-to say that the Cold War is over, and ask what do we do now? And some have even said that U.S. policy of furthering democracy is a current foreign policy gimmick. Looking at it as someone who saw the Cold War from its beginnings right through to its end, I want to emphasize that the furtherance of democracy has been an American foreign policy objective since before the "Cold War." Looking at it in large historical terms, the "Cold War" was a test of our perseverance and effort to subdue dictatorships without war and not on terms that were set by the cold warriors. Now, the question for democracy is not whether there's a Soviet Union or not. The question is: Do you want to build institutions that perpetuate themselves in a democratic form?

In terms of labor, the question is not whether unions are organizations of working people. Communist-controlled unions do not have much in common with unions that are not communist controlled. I have talked with some of the leaders of the former official Communist unions in Russia. A lot of their union behavior-and you can't really measure it or make determinations in an objective way on this-has to do with an outlook. People from the old official unions still see unions as a device for political power. They have no particular dedication to a democratic form of government. Many leaders of the old official unions, although they say they are independent of government, keep up their relationships with "their fellow apparatchiks" who manage the various formerly government-owned industrial enterprises with the benefits going to the old Communist Party bureaucrats, and they see their function in terms of gaining power again. They are driven, in many cases, ideologically. You don't call them Communists anymore; it doesn't really matter what the label is. But they think in terms of political power and the use of industrial power to gain political power, and to perpetuate it. They do not allow very much for the kinds of change that come with democratic forms and processes. So the issues of democracy remain the same. They are pregnant even now all through Eastern Europe and in what was the Soviet Union. And so democracy is not an automatic successor to absolutism. Democracy is the most difficult kind of government to make work, because it depends upon a delicate balance, and it depends upon a culture. It can work, but it's tough; it's not easy, and once you lose it, it's even tougher to get it back. That's all I've got to say.

Q: Why that's a great summary!

End of interview