The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Labor Diplomacy Oral History Project

ROBERT KINNEY

Interviewed by Morris Weisz
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INTERVIEW

[Note: This transcript has not been reviewed or edited by Robert Kinney.]

Q: This is an ADST interview with Robert Kinney at his home near Melbourne, Florida, on an auspicious day, January 15, 1991. Bob, you've read the general outline of materials that we want to cover, and perhaps to begin with you would want to say, just in summary fashion, give us this information listed under the identification. Without going into the specifics of the various assignments, what we want is first your current address, which I have and I'll put into the record in Melbourne, your telephone number which I can do also, but the posts and the Washington assignments in which you served in labor capacities. I think we would like to have it, the non-labor, capacities too. If you went

outside of the labor field and, if possible, the dates of each. Okay, Bob?

KINNEY: Well, there weren't any Washington assignments. I had no special link with Washington outside of attending on behalf of the CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations] meetings or hearings on areas like workers' housing and health.

Q: That's before you came to the government?

KINNEY: Yeah. On the Committee for the Nation's Health, social affairs, things where I either went because I was asked to go as a special assignment or to fill in for someone who couldn't attend.

Q: Well, let me interrupt at this moment because we are trying to follow this outline. That what you did before would be included in the brief biographical summary. For the identification what we would want is your government work in the State Department. You joined the State Department when?

KINNEY: Well, the story goes this way. I was in New York working for the national CIO Community Services Committee. Leo Perlis was the director and Irving Abramson was the chairman. This was shortly after the Marshall Plan was established, and in 1950—I forget whether it was Leo or Irving—said that I ought to go down and look into the possibilities of working in that field since I had done some work in international relief, which I will tell you about later if you like. I thought about it and was interested and expressed an interest. And one day I was told to go down, by Irving I think, to see Bob Oliver, who was taking over as labor advisor to the Economic Cooperation Administration. Bob—I happened to know from my work earlier in the labor movement.

Q: That would have been around 1950?

KINNEY: Nineteen fifty. So, I did call up and I went down and had a long talk with Bob about what they were doing and how they could use me, and he said, "You're hired." He turned me over to an assistant, who got all kinds of forms and background on me for security tasks and that sort of thing. He said, "Go on back and give me a call in about a week to ten days." I did and Bob said, "You're hired. You're going to be my special assistant." He said, "You can inform your people up there that very shortly you'll be leaving." He said, "In approximately six weeks to three months, we'll want you down here ready to go to work. Move your wife and do whatever is necessary."

So, I proceeded on that basis, and the time came to decide exactly when—the day of the week, the day of the month, that sort of thing—that I would arrive, and I called Bob. I couldn't get him. I got his administrative assistant and he said, "Well, your security clearance hasn't come through and you can't assume you're hired until you are actually approved."

I said, "My God, I've given notice for my house and job and all that sort of thing. How

much longer do you think it will take?" He said, "My God, we'll do our best." And it came through just about the day before I had to leave. So, I got down to Washington and went to work. It was kind of fascinating, that atmosphere. Burt Jewell was the AFL counterpart of Bob Oliver, and Bob and Burt got along pretty well.

Q: Now this is not the ECA but the ICA [International Cooperation Agency]?

KINNEY: ECA, Economic Cooperation Administration. The ICA came two years later.

Q: Right. This is an office on Connecticut Avenue?

KINNEY: That's right.

Q: Eight hundred fifteen Connecticut Avenue?

KINNEY: That's right.

Q: And the people, just to put it into focus, the people working there were people like Ben Hasko, Mensies, Sol Lozier? That group?

KINNEY: That's right.

Q: Okay, I've got you correctly placed.

KINNEY: And Ward Melody was down a couple of floors, and he had a counterpart, an old boy who was very nice actually but whom Ward didn't like from the AFL [American Federation of Labor]. They were at the information end of things. We had sort of a little USIA [United States Information Agency] operation there.

Q: Harry Martinson was heading that in the Paris office.

KINNEY: That's right. Well, about that time Nelson Cruckshank came in. Either he was out of town when I first arrived or had been on the job. I didn't know. Although Burt Jewell was still there, Nelson was taking his place apparently. Anyway, he was the equivalent of Bob Oliver.

Q: In Washington this was?

KINNEY: Yeah.

Q: Because later on he was in Europe, in the Paris office.

KINNEY: Well, I don't know.

Q: Yes, he hired me.

KINNEY: He was not well.

Q: Nelson?

KINNEY: Oh no, Nelson was fine.

Q: He was in Washington and then moved to Paris. Is that it?

KINNEY: No. Maybe he moved to Paris toward the next year when the elections came.

Q: Okay, that's right.

KINNEY: Bob left, and I guess he left about the same time although I thought he was still back there.

Q: He left early in 1952 because I came to the Paris office in July of 1952 and he had just left. Okay. Anyhow, I now know the way you fit in.

KINNEY: Well various people in there specialized in areas, and they had nobody to really specialize on the labor end as such in the Far East. I had a little bit of an introduction because under the old War Relief Committee we dealt with the international relief agencies.

Q: UNRA [United Nations Relief Agency]?

KINNEY: No.

Q: Not UNRA?

KINNEY: The National War Fund.

Q: Oh, I see.

KINNEY: There was American Relief for France, for Czechoslovakia, and for the Philippines, and for China. I met a few people in the Asian field including a group of Chinese trade unionists, believe it or not, who came through Washington. We had a big to do for them. So, Barry Leftbridge, who was my equivalent on the economic side, and I got along fine. We took a trip out to the Far East and to Asia. We first went to the Philippines and then on to Thailand— We had to skip Indonesia for some reason where we had planned to go—and Burma, which was kind of fascinating and then came back. That was my on the scene—

Q: Not Japan?

KINNEY: No.

Q: We had a separate operation in Japan?

KINNEY: Yeah. Well that wasn't technically an ECA country then.

Q: That's right. We were occupying them.

KINNEY: That's right. So, I worked there for some eight months. It was really fascinating and included a lot of introductions to the European labor scene, including a one day conference, which we all attended with Irving Brown, who was just in all hot and bothered about France and that sort of thing. I thought he was sort of a classy phony, frankly, but he had a likeable side, which I later came to know, but that's another story.

Q: That may be another story, but that may be something you might want to cover while you're discussing specific problems. But then you said you served there for eight months and then you went abroad?

KINNEY: As best I recall, there was an opening in Manila that Bob wanted me to consider. My wife was very enthusiastic, I must say, more than I was at that time. Anyway, the powers that be decreed that I would be the successor.

Q: To?

KINNEY: I am trying to think of his name. He was a nice guy out of the Amalgamated.

Q: When you say the "Amalgamated," since you have a New York background, you mean the Amalgamated Clothing Workers.

KINNEY: The "Amalgamated Clothing Workers."

Q: The Amalgamated. The Amalgamated Association is also referred to as another union, but it doesn't matter—

KINNEY: Anyway, the ECA had a big swinging operation going. [It] had a labor education program in sight and low-cost housing, social welfare. You name it. We had a good technician who was there on government labor relations, a former NLRB [National Labor Relations Board] member, officer Ron Stevenson and a couple gals from the Labor Department, who were women in child labor.

Q: Standard? Was she one?

KINNEY: She certainly was. Golda Standard. A wonderful person. So, what we had there was a labor division, called the Labor and Social Welfare Division. We had about six people there and it was a sizable division within the aid operation.

Q: That's what I was going to say. This was still within the AID [United States Agency for International Development] operation. Was there at that time a labor attaché also?

KINNEY: There was a labor attaché who was outgoing.

Q: You mean outgoing in personality or leaving the country?

KINNEY: Leaving the country.

Q: I see. Well, the record.

KINNEY: For a long time, there was a gap and he was not replaced. I don't know whether at the embassy's— Maybe he hadn't gotten along too well. I can't remember who he was. At any rate, the embassy asked the AID, ICA— It became ICA fairly soon— Director if it would be all right if I sort of filled in in writing quarterly reports and the requirements until it could get resolved, and after a while they seemed to think that I was just about what they wanted. The ambassador sent a letter to Washington, which went to a guy who turned out to be a hell of a good friend of mine and of yours, I think. Oh damn, a former teacher from China.

Q: Oh, my lord. What was his name? We both have name problems.

KINNEY: A terrific guy, he taught labor economics at St. John's University in China before, and he was the only guy around who was a Far East expert.

Q: His face is in front of me. Just continue. By the way, we don't have to worry about names since both of us forget them so easily because we do have the list of all the people who were—

KINNEY: Anyway, the embassy asked if I could be assigned dually as their man as well as ICA's. There was some disagreement about it in Washington. I don't know; I wasn't there, but one of the provisions that finally was made at Washington's insistence was that I be accorded full status within the embassy as well as the AID program if this arrangement took effect.

Q: Including a diplomatic passport?

KINNEY: Yeah. Well we had that.

Q: You had that in AID.

KINNEY: I still got my passport, had it for almost four or five years. There wasn't any problem on that score. Well, where does that leave us?

Q: Well, where that leaves us is in going through your various assignments, and I want to get later on into the problem between your AID and your State Department duties, whether they conflicted. We'll get into the substance of that later. After how many years in the Philippines did you leave?

KINNEY: Five.

Q: Five years in the Philippines, that would be from approximately 1952–1957?

KINNEY: Well, it was the end of 1951— No, I left Washington before the first of 1952 and we got into— No, we left Washington in 195— I'm a little mixed up, either 1951 or 1952.

Q: It doesn't matter much. You serve five years.

KINNEY: Until September of 1957.

Q: That was roughly the same time that I was in the Paris office, 1952–1957. And then you went where?

KINNEY: I came back, and I was assigned to Djakarta to replace a guy named Bill Taylor, who was a tough, feisty guy out to the CIO in Kentucky or some such place.

Q: And there you had only embassy or only AID duty or both?

KINNEY: Both.

Q: Both again?

KINNEY: Yeah. There the AID director, as well as the ambassador, but primarily the AID director said that this formula seemed to have worked so well in Manila, and they had a hell of a fight between Bill Taylor and another wonderful guy who came out of the Railway Telegraphers—a Swedish name.

Q: Ulrichson?

KINNEY: Yeah, Vic Ulrichson.

Q: I had forgotten that he was—

KINNEY: Vic had just left and the AID director, who had seen this battle at first hand, asked if the same arrangement could be brought about and it was. John Muskaman, who was a son of a bitch. You may quote me on this.

Q: Poor guy, he died in terrible, terrible pain.

KINNEY: Did he? Well, I'm awfully sorry about that, but he was one mean bastard.

Q: He could be very mean, and he was mean, and he was mean to me. I worked for him when he was the head of the thing. On the other hand, he had the—it wasn't quite a redeeming facility—but he had one characteristic which was his urgency to become educated. After you knew him, and I knew him, he started going in to make up for his lack of formal education and became I think a PhD or something, if you can imagine that. He read a whole lot.

KINNEY: He tried every way he could to use the AID program in Manila. We set up what was called the American Labor Education Center at the University of the Philippines. That was part of my program to fulfill and we finally did it.

Q; Wasn't Tony Luchek there for a while?

KINNEY: Yeah, sure. It certainly was. Another fine man and very able. But anyway, John—

Q: Now John was the head of the office in Washington by that time?

KINNEY: OLAB [Office of Labor Affairs, AID] it was called.

Q: OLAB. When I was reporting to him and you were reporting to him—I was reporting from Paris and you were reporting from Manila, and he supervised your AID work in Indonesia. And if any experience of mine is duplicated in yours, you always had the problem of telling John that no matter how you feel about the AID aspects of the work, the embassy wants me to do such and such. You were able—

KINNEY: No, he came out to visit us. He strongly got the impression that I preferred to be a labor attaché to USAID as it was called then, and that my wife was socially ambitious and that I didn't like the AID director and it showed. Well I didn't particularly like the AID director and his wife was obnoxious, which bothered my wife extremely.

Q: Let's leave the substance again there for a while and go on to your next assignment. How long were you in Indonesia?

KINNEY: Four years.

Q: And then you went?

KINNEY: Jim Vall, who had been deputy chief of mission. Do you know Jim?

Q: No.

KINNEY: Well, he was a wonderful man. He had been a labor attaché once, sort of— Anyway, I got to know him very well in Indonesia, and we liked each other. He thought I was doing well there when he was deputy chief of mission, and he went back to Washington and was in the Far East Bureau. John Stiez had just come in as deputy assistant secretary there. Sokolove was offered Japan to become a USIA [United States Information Agency] guy. He had been the labor advisor to—

Q: To USIA or AID?

KINNEY: Henri had been labor advisor in the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs.

Q: At State?

KINNEY: At State. That was after he had been in India and he wanted to go to Japan. He wiggled some sort of a deal so that he became the USIA labor man in Japan. I was asked to come in then and take his place as labor advisor in the bureau. All these years I was a reserve officer. During my home leave in—this is all very complicated because I have forgotten a couple of steps in here—after two years in Indonesia I went home and was given an examination for lateral entry under Section 518. I didn't do particularly well before the board and decided that the board was somewhat hostile as it turned out later. They said no way, but the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs then sent me back to Djakarta again as a reserve officer, which I still was but strictly for the embassy. We then brought in sort of a wild character from the Operating Engineers in California who was the AID labor officer. I was totally in agreement at that point that there was just too much to do on both sides for one man to be able to do it. I'm rambling around—

Q: That's all right. I'm pointing you where I feel you have to be pointed. You're doing fine. So, you finished out your assignment with a second tour in Indonesia—

KINNEY: As a reserve officer.

Q: As a reserve officer and then went to Washington for another exam?

KINNEY: No, I took another exam a year later. I went in as a reserve officer, but as labor advisor to the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Jim Bell, who was then director of the regional subdivision of the bureau, it was called Southeast Asia and the Pacific, looked into what had happened during my examination the year before and he and several others in the Bureau of Examinations— What did they call it?

Q: BEX, Board of Examiners.

KINNEY: The Board of Examiners said that the other board had been somewhat biased against labor attachés at all and that they would give me another examination, which I did pass.

Q: They probably insisted on having a labor person on the examination.

KINNEY: Oh, sure.

Q: Later on, we had the experience of having— I know when I got into the Foreign Service before I went to India they had a committee of two. One was Phil Delaney, an old friend, the other was Harry Weiss, who was deputy assistant secretary for international affairs—

KINNEY: No relation?

Q: No relation, and another guy, and I had no trouble at all.

KINNEY: Was that a 518? Or was that—what do you call it?

Q: Lateral entry. And I was named the first labor counselor in history because this was a deal that they had negotiated.

KINNEY: I remember that as a great victory for us.

Q: Well, when we are off the record, I will tell you something about which is in my file, but I don't want to complicate it with yours. So, you were the Far East advisor for a couple of years?

KINNEY: Yes.

Q: Before you went out again?

KINNEY: Yes.

Q: And that?

KINNEY: Three years.

Q: Three years as FE [Far Eastern]?

KINNEY: That was when Harriman came in. A wonderful, wonderful guy.

Q: That was— Now we are talking about the beginning of the Kennedy administration.

KINNEY: That's right.

Q: And that would be 1961?

KINNEY: Yeah.

Q: And then you went where?

KINNEY: To Lagos, Nigeria. Somewhat against my desires but—

Q: You wanted to stay in the Far East?

KINNEY: I did, very much. I had kind of a love affair with the Far East, which I still have. Anyway, Nigeria turned out to be a hell of a lot of fun.

Q: How many years were you there?

KINNEY: In Nigeria? Two.

Q: As the labor attaché?

KINNEY: That's right.

Q: That would be 1961–1963 approximately and then?

KINNEY: No, it was 1964 when I went out there.

Q: Oh, I see. You were there in the FE Bureau. You were there with Harriman and company for a couple years of the Kennedy administration?

KINNEY: Yeah and one year with Roger Hillsman, who followed Harriman. I had been recommended to the ambassador who was going out in Nigeria—he turned out to be a good man—and he asked for me. He had called me in for an interview before he went out to his post. We got along very well.

Q: Who was this?

KINNEY: Oh gosh, now—Matthews, Burt Matthews.

Weiss: Oh, Burt Matthews.

KINNEY: A swell guy.

Q: Yeah, he was a wonderful guy.

KINNEY: And after the interview, he asked for me and a guy came down from the administrative office who heard that I wasn't jumping at this. Who was the big administrator in— He was the big hotshot.

Q: Yeah, the big heavy-set guy. I know who you mean.

KINNEY: Anyway, the word I got second hand from him was that if I wanted to progress in my career, I had better get my ass out there. So, I did, and I was happy out there. Very pleased.

Q: So, you stayed there from 1964 until about when?

KINNEY: Nineteen sixty-six. I left just after the—

Q: Biafra?

KINNEY: No, just before Biafra, but after the first coup. You remember the prime minister was murdered?

Q: Yeah.

KINNEY: And everything by the Ibos and army. Of course, the Ibos dominated the army at that point but if you know Nigeria it is— (end of side one, tape one)

Q: (beginning of side two, tape one) Go back on your career to cover. We will be going into the substance, but just the career progress. You stayed in Nigeria for two years as I recall?

KINNEY: Yes.

Q: And then you were attracted back to the Far East with a job available in Malaysia was that?

KINNEY: Yeah. Jim Bell, the ambassador, asked me to go. So, I was there for two years, and then went to Washington. Where— Wait a minute. Malaysia, I was there almost two years and was transferred to Manila again.

Q: Manila again, that's the second time in Manila.

KINNEY: Yeah. Some years gap.

Q: Without responsibility in the AID field?

KINNEY: Oh, no.

Q: Just the—

KINNEY: I haven't had one since I left the first tour in Indonesia.

Q: And you stayed there for a couple of years and went back on home leave. And then

came back to finish out a tour there, and then you went back to the FE Bureau by then called the EA [Bureau of East Asian Affairs].

KINNEY: Yeah.

Q: And after a year or so you were attracted back to the Philippines at the instigation of the ambassador. Things were heating up and he wanted you back. And you stayed there—

KINNEY: Yeah, I stayed there. Well, let's see. It was towards September or October of 1972, I think— Sorry, I'm lost.

Q: That's all right. And then until your retirement—

KINNEY: And then for reasons which we can discuss later I decided it was time to retire. I had felt this coming on—doing the same thing over and over again for years, and I was feeling a little burnt out. That came to a head when I was in Manila the last time and I proceeded to arrange for my retirement.

Q: And you did retire about 1974.

KINNEY: No, 1973. Actually, it was October, I guess.

Q: How old were you at retirement, 60? Oh no, less than that.

KINNEY: I was born in 1917.

Q: Okay. That makes you fifty-seven.

KINNEY: Fifty-seven, yeah.

Q: I retired at fifty-eight.

KINNEY: I know that's early.

Q: But just to review, and after that you did a little consulting work and moved down to Florida about when?

KINNEY: Yeah. I moved here in 1975.

Q: Done any professional work since then?

KINNEY: No.

Q: Well, I understand that. Now I would like to go into the second part of our outline on what you did, how you came to the labor movement, your education, and all that. Before

then though I put something in that I think I would like to get you to comment on, and that is during all these shifts back and forth your wife did. As you know the wife is an important person in the Foreign Service.

KINNEY: Sure, I agree with you.

Q: In some cases, they stayed out of all the activity, in some they cooperated, and some they were unhappy and made the husband unhappy and all that, but generally your wife went along with you. Did she have a professional attachment to a job that was interfered with by your career? Or was she willing to go along without any problems.

KINNEY: She was working for *The Washington [Post]*. She had always been a graphic artist. She went to school and graduated and worked at the news profession in New York. She worked for several advertising agencies, national agencies, in New York, and she became art editor of a national magazine called *This Month.* I don't know if you recall it. Sort of *Readers' Digest* format.

Q: Your work then interfered with her profession, did it not?

KINNEY: Yeah. When I went to Washington, she went to work for *The Washington Post* in their art department, but she was eager to go overseas. I did appeal to her. When we got to Manila, she got a little bored. So, she became a teacher. She taught art in the International School.

Q: That's interesting.

KINNEY: And the first couple of tours. Then when we went to Indonesia, she didn't do anything much except volunteer work and the usual sort of thing, [like being] active in the Women's International Club. She became very, very fascinated by Indonesian art.

Q: Oh, boy, is that why you noted this thing which is an example of that?

KINNEY: Well, anyone who has been in Indonesia as long as I have, knows about—

Q: The button holes don't work well; I'll tell you that.

KINNEY: The older they get the nicer they are.

Q: Okay, I just wanted to get into that because in each case the wife can contribute or interfere with the progress and happiness of the officer in his job by virtue of her own condition. We were talking about Esther Peterson, I'll tell you about that off the record, but that was not a problem to you. Children? Do you have children?

KINNEY: Yes, my son was with me. He was in grade school when we went to the Philippines. He went to the International School there until we were transferred to

Djakarta. Then he went the first year with me to Djakarta, and then his level of schooling was as far as the International School in Djakarta went. I forget what that is, junior high school or something of the sort. We put him in a prep school. First, he was going to the American School in Beirut, and then Beirut blew up, so we sent [him] to a school in the Philippines mountains near Baguio on the island of Luzon, which was run by the Episcopalians but was coeducational. A very old school and very well known. Not very luxurious, but a good school.

Q: So, his schooling was satisfactory in spite of your shifts from place to place?

KINNEY: Yes, and then when I was sent back to Indonesia in purely a labor attaché capacity, although still an "R," he was ready for college. No, he wasn't, excuse me. I'm jumping ahead of myself. He didn't want to go back to Brant, and we arranged to put him in a prep school in Connecticut near old family friends of my wife's, who had a son his age and that sort of thing. Although he was not a day student, he spent weekends with them and helped a little bit. He graduated there later.

Q: And went to college?

KINNEY: Then he went on to Cornell, which broke my heart. I wanted him to go to the University of North Carolina. Cornell, oh—

Q: Are you a North Carolina man?

KINNEY: No, I'm a Virginia man, but I have always admired the University of North Carolina, just a place where a progressive young man ought to go. Either there or Wisconsin and he wasn't interested in Wisconsin.

Q: Is North Carolina where Graham came from? I know he was from North Carolina. Senator Graham, who was president of a university there.

KINNEY: Yeah, I think it was the University of North Carolina.

Q: That's why you felt a liberal should go there, and now he's in private employment I suppose.

KINNEY: He's got a whole story to tell. He was in publishing for a while. He was associate editor of the serious paperback division of Doubleday and doing awfully well, and then he opted out.

Q: But he wasn't interested in the Foreign Service like the Lippys have two kids in the Foreign Service?

KINNEY: I thought I had him interested, and then he found out that we were going to be in Washington. And I think he was no longer interested in Georgetown particularly and—

Q: Yeah, I can imagine.

KINNEY: Anyway, he and his mother thought he should go to Cornell.

Q: But not the labor school there?

KINNEY: No.

Q: I would like to get into the record what impact it had on the children. In some cases, as you know, it was a disadvantage, in some cases advantages, in some cases they are interested in foreign work and went into it and in other cases not. Well now I would like to get to the second item which is—

KINNEY: Pity. He speaks fluent Indonesian though.

Q: My daughter speaks fluent French and she—

KINNEY: He's a French linguist too. He passed the State Department exam.

Q: Well now we want a brief biographical summary of your life, your education prior to your joining the labor movement, how you came into it? I gather it sounds like a middle-class background.

KINNEY: I guess. I don't know what a class is in relation to my own life. I was born in a small town in Missouri. My father and mother were divorced. I didn't know my father. He stayed in Europe after the war for a while. I was brought up by my grandmother and my mother. The three of us lived together. He had a small factory there. Nice old boy. At any rate he died when I was young.

Q: Who was that? Your grandfather?

KINNEY: Yes. We moved to Virginia where my mother had gone to school and where she had wanted to live all her life. I grew up near Charlottesville, Virginia, in Albemarle County. It was decreed that I should go to prep schools, and I went to three of them. Then came time for college and we went spectacularly broke. I mean really broke all of the sudden. The early depression hadn't really hit us, but mother wasn't used to handling money. She got involved in gambling on the stock market. So, there wasn't anything. I did various things, lived in New Orleans and back in Virginia. I decided I was a writer, and I was having minor success selling short stories and so forth. I finally got an agent and he told me I was going places. By that time a friend of mine interceded with a friend of his and I was given a job on the Virginia Writers' Project.

Q: Oh, you mean the WPA Writers Project [Works Progress Administration]?

KINNEY: Yeah. The director took an interest in me.

Q: You didn't go to college at this point?

KINNEY: No. I did not.

Q: You never did?

KINNEY: No, I never did.

Q: Boy, you are like me. You have no college background except that I did take an engineering degree, but I never used it at all.

KINNEY: I didn't have a degree in anything. I took courses a little later in industrial relations, labor relations, and history and that sort of thing but—

Q: In New York?

KINNEY: No, at the University of Alabama, but that's part of a later story.

Q: A later story when you got into the labor movement?

KINNEY: Yeah.

Q: Through the Writers' Project?

KINNEY: No, no, as a matter of fact I didn't. I was continuing to write. I was given access to the office at night and a typewriter and that sort of thing, and I spent half of my night writing there. Well, I wandered around in little unimportant jobs. I ended up in New York and got to know Amy Loveman, who was one of the greatest women who ever lived. She was sort of an executive secretary for the Book of the Month Club and for the *Saturday Review of Literature*. She started me off by making me a reader for the Book of the Month Club. I would read raw manuscripts before they were actually put into hardcover editions, read the galleys, and recommend that the board of the Book of the Month Club read this one as a possible selection for the month. I was an expert on New Orleans at that point, on Virginia theoretically, on the Civil War, which I took a great interest in when I was on the Writers' Project—

Q: I assume that you saw the series on the Civil War, did you?

KINNEY: —and on the West Indies, where I lived for a year. I can tell you about that, but that's not much to tell. And then I did a few reviews for the Book of the Month Club News. I got the magnificent sum of twenty-five dollars a crack. Anyway, I kept alive and met my wife Francis who was in New York as a young artist then. We decided to get married. I called a friend down in New Orleans who owned a house with apartments in it.

I said, "Look, I want to get married, and I want to come down there and look for another job and continue my writing, which seems to be doing better. And will you give me an apartment until I can get on my feet and spend my honeymoon?" We got on the train, went down, got married the same day we got there, and there I was in New Orleans. My wife got a job in a department store, in the cosmetics department. I scrounged around and I got job as a bartender, and I worked at that for some six months. I knew a lot of people who were reporters and a lot of people who were then in the labor movement. Franz Daniel, do you remember Franz?

Q: Oh, my, did I know him. He was a tenant of mine when—

KINNEY: Fred Piper, who was a CIO regional director, and Warren Woods, who was a regional attorney for the NLRB.

Q: Warren Woods. I knew him at the Labor Board. I worked with him at the Labor Board.

KINNEY: He was one of my best friends I ever had. Until his death.

Q: Oh really! He died. It was a sad thing. He was an alcoholic, you know.

KINNEY: Oh, yeah, I do know. Boy!

Q: What a sad story.

KINNEY: A brilliant guy.

Q: I knew him. He was regional attorney in Texas for a while.

KINNEY: That's right.

Q: I knew him there. We had a wonderful regional director. I didn't realize you knew Warren.

KINNEY: Oh, one of my best friends.

Q: What a sad story!

KINNEY: I shared an apartment with Warren when I first went to New Orleans. There were three of us: a newspaper man, Warren, and me.

Q: His law partner, Leonard Ackle lives near us in Bethesda. So, you got involved with—I can see with Warren you would be involved in the labor movement although he himself was an attorney for the government. He was definitely a pro-labor type.

KINNEY: His heart was right.

Q: I worked on many cases with him.

KINNEY: Anyway, these guys said old Kinney needs something better than bartending to do to express himself and obviously we were living from hand to mouth. The CIO was opening up a newspaper in Mobile, Alabama, a weekly. They had one in New Orleans. A good friend of mine edited it. So, I had a crash course in how to run a newspaper and—

Q: This would have been about when? Before the war?

KINNEY: Oh, yeah. This was 1941.

Q: Even at this point you were only twenty-four or twenty-five years old.

KINNEY: Yeah. I was twenty-four in 1941. So, they shipped me off to Mobile to start this newspaper, and Mobile at that time was much war impacted. The shipyards were really going full blast for three shifts and various other war related industries, aluminum and so on. This paper—we had a circulation, which was mainly a giveaway or distribution through the union offices and so forth. An operation of about twelve thousand weekly. I enjoyed it. I edited for a year and a half.

Q: Did you get involved in the AFL and CIO differences at that point in Alabama?

KINNEY: Well, sure, of course.

Q: By the way, did you know Bruce Millan in New Orleans at that time?

KINNEY: No, I didn't.

Q: Yeah, that's interesting.

KINNEY: I met him later. I met him for the first time I think in Rome.

Q: Yeah, that would have been during the Marshall Plan period in Rome. So, you were in Alabama working for the CIO. What was the name of that famous AFL guy they had in charge there?

KINNEY: In Alabama? In Mobile?

Q: No, at the capital. He was— There was a problem with him on racism later on.

KINNEY: Oh, he was terrible. Stanton Dan, wasn't it?

Q: I think so. Terrible. Anyhow you were working for them you say for about a year and a half?

KINNEY: Yeah and we were all interracial as hell. The shipyard workers, which was the largest contingent in town by far, had about ten thousand members. Our meetings were not segregated. We had occasional black officers and that sort of thing. All my life— Well, most of my life I had been interested in race relations and I thought that was great stuff. And I thought that— Oh, you asked about the AFL. The AFL was the prime enemy, because they were always trying to raid—

Q: The Boilermakers Union or—?

KINNEY: The Boilermakers, the Teamsters, the whole lot, the building trades, well not so much the building trades although the Teamsters were involved, but the Council of—

Q: The Machinists Union?

KINNEY: The Machinists. They were always alright. They never did give us much trouble. They had the welders pretty much signed up. You know, the Machinists Union has always been a damn good union.

Q: Except they had something in their constitution that only white people could join even during the war, but that was not during the war.

KINNEY: This was a problem with the Welders in particular.

Q: Were you there— Oh you stayed there a year and a half and then went—?

KINNEY: I was hired by the Shipyard Workers.

Q: In Alabama?

KINNEY: Yeah.

Q: You left your newspaper editing?

KINNEY: Yeah. What the hell. They made me an organizer and sent me to Texas and then New Orleans and then to North Carolina.

Q: Is that where you met Warren in Texas? Or in New Orleans?

KINNEY: In New Orleans. Long before that. I knew Warren in the late 1930s.

Q: I knew him in the mid-1930s in Texas.

KINNEY: Before I was even married.

Q: He moved from Texas to New Orleans.

KINNEY: Yes, I know he did.

Q: So, you went to work for a union as an organizer? So, you are one of the very few who actually was an organizer for a period?

KINNEY: I also was a PR [public relations] man for them. That was one of the reasons they hired me. Maybe because I got along so well with their union people, all of whom were friends of mine. But there was a hell of a big strike there, which was just after the war. Warren Woods by the way was secretary of the War Labor Board at that point.

Q: Oh, yeah, of the Regional Office of this War Labor Board?

KINNEY: No, the National Office.

Q: National? Really?

KINNEY: He worked for William H. Davis.

Q: Well, I didn't see him much in Washington, but occasionally I would see him, and I just loved him. Then you stayed as an organizer.

KINNEY: Well, I was primarily working on election campaigns either where we were challenged by the AFL unions before they went on.

Q: I have to clarify for the record that when you say election campaigns you don't mean the political side; you mean the NLRB elections. Trying to get people to sign up.

KINNEY: Yeah, right. Either we held the contract and they were trying to get membership and our contract through the NLRB process, or we were trying to get theirs. Or there were some cases where there were independent company unions as in North Carolina. Well, that's that.

Q: Did you do much travel? How long did you stay? Oh, were you in the army at all? Or you stayed as—

KINNEY: No, we'll come to that. I had a very high draft number and I got married just before the war, so although I felt guilty—one did—I didn't actually say to myself, "Well, I've got to go" until we got to North Carolina. And I had some terrible problems there with a fellow named Lyman Coverse, who I thought was a little bit left of me, shall we say.

Q: This happened in the CIO in those days.

KINNEY: I was uncomfortable, and I sent a telegram to Johnny Green saying I want to transfer out of here. He didn't answer me.

Q: He wanted you to stay there because—?

KINNEY: I had been talking to a marine recruiting officer and I said, "Look"— And he convinced me that it was about time anyway. "They hadn't called my number but before long I guess they will." He said, "Sure," and we went over what I did: my public relations, newspaper-writing background, and so forth. He said, "We'll fix you up," and we arranged that I could be inducted at Grand Central Station in New York because I wanted to get my wife back on her feet in a job and in an apartment. So, they gave me about six weeks to get back to New York, and to get her set up before I was inducted. I was supposed to go, according to him, into a job which would be essentially writing and doing public relations in the field with the First Marines Aviation, operating out of a home base. The basic training area would be in Massachusetts. Well, I took my wife back and got her set up, and she got a job. I went down to Grand Central Station to the Induction Office, and they stripped me and poked me and looked me all over and got my medical history. Then the doctor called me in and said, "We are going to have to give you a '4-F.' You would normally be 'limited service,' but they have just eliminated that category."

Q: What was the matter with you?

KINNEY: What?

Q: Did you have any inkling that you were a "4-F?"

KINNEY: No. Well, I had very bad hay fever. I didn't think that would bother me. I had something else—

Q: Well, it doesn't matter. You didn't have to go.

KINNEY: He didn't go into great detail. He just said, "You're not up to our stock." I felt horrible. I'd been dreading this. Well, Warren Woods was in town. He worked for the American Can Company at that time, but he was in town and took us all out to dinner and up to Harlem that night and got me so drunk. Oh, God, it was awful, but Warren thought I ought to be celebrating. Then I was looking for a job. I went to Sol Levitas. I went to people he suggested, the Paper, Toy and Novelty Workers, I had never heard of before. He sent me to see Jay Lovestone as I recall and Eugene Lyons, they were then at the American Mercury, because of my writing background. Well, the word was out and suddenly one day I got a phone call from a fellow I had never heard of before in Washington. (end of tape one, side two)

Q: (tape two, side one) Okay, now we are continuing with your invitation to meet Monroe Sweatland.

KINNEY: Monroe said, “Well, I think we may have something for you, and I want you to go see a man named Roy Utley.” So, I went to see Roy. I forget where his office was in New York, but anyway he was a black guy and awfully nice and quizzed me and I answered, and we seemed to size each other up favorably. Then he said, “I want you to see another man who will be in town shortly.” I don’t recall—

Anyway, I went down to Washington and went to work for the National CIO War Relief Committee, and after a briefing at headquarters by various people, I was sent out as a sort of intern to work with a fine gal who was covering the state of Indiana and part of the Midwest for them. I’m just trying to remember her name. It probably doesn’t matter. She took me around to see the various National War Fund offices, which were merged with Community Chest in most cases and with the trade unions and various centers such as Evansville, South Bend I think, and Terre Haute. And then that was that. Then I was assigned by the committee to the regional office in Atlanta, and I went down and opened that up and travelled throughout the Carolinas and Georgia and Florida helping to raise dough for the National War Fund. I don’t know if you realize how that operated and what labor was doing in it.

Q: Yeah, labor sort of felt it was its duty to have a relationship with raising money but understandably they wanted the labor movement to get some credit for it and also not suffer as a result of any anti-labor activities within the war effort.

KINNEY: Well, that’s right. And also, the National War Fund had a number of labor projects which were set up in recognition of the contribution of American workers, organized workers, to the National War Fund campaigns. There was one for the Norwegians, for example, and a guy named Haakan Lee.

Q: Who lives right across this state half the year. We see him very frequently. His wife, who used to work for me during that period on the War Production Board, and we got very much involved with—

KINNEY: He came over and made speeches to unions, which we arranged for and that sort of thing.

Q: I am going to go off the record for just a second because there is something important I want to tell you. (pause) You were saying something about meeting a whole lot of people and assisting people including a famous Norwegian: Haakan Lee. Did you get to know Lee, by the way? Well?

KINNEY: I wouldn’t say “well,” but I was charmed to death by the guy. I just thought he was wonderful.

Q: If you are ever on the West Coast of Florida, he’s in Fort Myers, right near Fort Myers. I can get you.

KINNEY: I'll be damned.

Q: He comes there for half a year. He is on the fifth volume of his work on Norwegian labor. Still turns out stuff. He's over eighty-five, vigorous as ever. My wife says as handsome as ever. Anyhow, if you have a chance—

KINNEY: He was a lady killer. There was no doubt about it.

Q: One of the ladies he killed was Bennie Doctorman, who was working for me at the time. Anyhow they married. Go ahead. You were involved in helping labor help the war effort.

KINNEY: Yelp. Well, they also gave a budget to the two committees—the AFL had one and we had the National CIO War Relief Committee—for a national staff and gave us entrée into the Community Chest and so forth. One of our objectives was, of course, getting labor representatives on the boards of the Chests, the fund-raising organizations, their committees, the social welfare bureaus where we could introducing trade union members through their unions to the services that were available to them, and then making sure those services were the kinds of things we ought to be supporting. For instance, in Atlanta, there was an agency that was given part of the annual Community Chest called the Eventide Home for Old Ladies. Well, the Eventide Home for Old Ladies, as we found out on going over their budget allotments and so forth, had a stipulation that only Episcopal ladies of good standing, good family should be given assistance. Well, we had them kicked the hell out. Fine, they were doing wonderful work, but let the Episcopalians—

Q: Was one of the Reuther brothers involved in this effort? I think Roy was for a while.

KINNEY: Really?

Q: Reuther? Roy Reuther?

KINNEY: I didn't meet Roy Reuther until some years later down in Washington at Vic's house. I liked him. I liked Roy more than any of the Reuthers including Walter.

Q: That's my feeling also. In fact—

KINNEY: Just a sweet guy. (pause)

Q: We are on again talking about the work of war aid. You stayed there until you were called to Washington? Oh no, it was Irv Abramson?

KINNEY: At the end of the war the National War Fund began to be, it took about a year, but they began to be dissolved. And the question was whether our committee would be an

independent, fully CIO-financed organization or what would happen. The Community Chests and Councils of America, which was the national organization of the private welfare groups, dickered with Leo back and forth but they wanted us to continue to raise dough for them. And, finally, they worked out what really was a screwy sort of an arrangement and I was to set up a labor division of the Community Chests and Councils, which would have a staff of three people who would be of assistance to Leo Perlis, who would remain on the CIO payroll. So, we had two bosses. It worked out very well, but it was sort of an odd arrangement. This was all open and above board.

Q: Oh, yeah. I know.

KINNEY: When Community Chests had severe problems or unions had severe problems with Community Chests, we were sent in to see what could be done about the situation. I guess we did some good. We tried to but—

Q: Well in effect it is the same thing that—

KINNEY: Still going on by the way.

Q: Yeah, there's one person on the AFL-CIO payroll in a large number of areas, and then they get projects which are funded by government or other agencies. That is another thing, by the way, that is not understood by the academic community. They feel as though by becoming an agent of the Community Chest and all these things—

KINNEY: (inaudible)

Q: Well, and then you got this call from Irv Abramson. By the way you referred to Irv before as having called you. This was Irv Abramson, because later on another Irv became important to the story but your reference to how you came to work for government. Well, we have now gone over as far as I know everything except your—some questions that I want to go over as to your reactions to problems that occurred. I gather— (pause)

Now, prior to your first assignment, what preparatory training, if any, did you have in terms of the government, AID, State or something like that? Now we have these courses that we give people because they come without any knowledge of labor. Did you have any? I would say that those of us who came in very early probably had less than we try to give now. On the other hand, it didn't hurt so much because we had this background. What was your training? You came there. They didn't give you a course?

KINNEY: Oh, no. No course. The assumption then on the part of people like Bob Oliver and Burt Juhl and Golden, who had retired before I got in there, was that you had through your experience in the labor movement the instincts and the entrée built in somehow. They were all that was needed. I think that is a faulty assumption but—

Q: In some cases.

KINNEY: Sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't.

Q: Sometimes it was negative.

KINNEY: Yeah, that's what I mean.

Q: I can think of many cases, but the important distinction for the researchers who will be examining this is that in those early days there was less formal education and more reliance upon instinct, background, and in some cases bias, whereas now we educate them by giving them courses, sending them to the Harvard Trade Union training. I hope at some time somebody will come to some tentative conclusions about what mix of experience, background, tradition, and education is required, because we are having greater difficulty nowadays in getting people to opt for the labor attaché course because of promotion possibilities. Oh, by the way, I didn't go over what we have done before your level at the time you entered the government. Was it the FSR-3, -2, -1 [Foreign Service Reserve Ranking]?

KINNEY: I was a 2. I was a GS-15 Civil Service Excepted.

Q: You were a 2. You came in as a 2. When were you promoted to the 1?

KINNEY: I was never an R-1.

Q: FS-01?

KINNEY: No, I became after my examination and my acceptance an 02, and I was promoted in 1969 to 1, which came as a great shattering surprise to me. "Shattering" is actually the word because I hadn't expected it and it was just one of those wonderful surprises.

Q: Why should it surprise you?

KINNEY: I cried like a baby. My wife and I were together.

Q: Really? Why should it surprise you? You were one of the senior people and you had good posts.

KINNEY: Well, I know—

Q: And it was after you.

KINNEY: Two years before I had had a warning letter. An inspector had come through Kuala Lumpur and said, "You know you're over classed for your job in this little post,"

and he wrote down in his report, as Dan Goott actually discovered for me, "Has no ambition." And I know why he wrote that because he tried to get me to take another guy's function over that would have just ruined his career. I talked to the deputy chief of mission about it, saying, "If I am told to do this I will, but I think it is unjust to our friend," and he agreed with me.

Q: Would you come to any conclusion about this field of background as to what type of background is, from your point of view, best for a labor officer? We have had successes from the labor movement, failures from the labor movement, successes from academia and failures, and successes and failures from a Labor Department background, et cetera. What type of thing if you had to construct the ideal labor attaché or labor officer?

KINNEY: Well, it is kind of hard and pretentious to describe this from a personal point of view. One thing, I don't think academic training as such is half as important as the individual aptitude, his capacity to understand other people, and to try to figure out what their problems are and what they want. That's not very well put.

Q: I think I get it.

KINNEY: Social consciousness, do you remember that old word?

Q: Right.

KINNEY: That's number one of course.

Q: Well, let's discuss that for a moment. If you have a continuum—

KINNEY: I am not talking about Democrat versus Republican.

Q: I know that. That is why I am asking you this question. If there is a continuum in subjectiveness on the part of an officer beginning with an anti-labor bias and ending with a pro-labor affliction to point where you know it's really an emotional thing with steps in between at various degrees of sympathy, advocacy, unwillingness to consider a pro-management or an anti-management point of view or pro-labor and anti, where does the ideal labor attaché fall? Should he be at one end a servant of the trade union movement?

KINNEY: No.

Q: Obviously not. And this is one of the difficulties we will be discussing later, and we all had that difficulty. I'll tell you just to ask you to bounce against it. My own feeling, that I have been trying to give to the people who have been trained,—I was training at the FSI—I tell them that I would not want a vigorously anti-labor guy to be there. He has a right to those opinions, but he can't— On the other hand, I also feel as though we don't want a guy who makes excuses for everything labor does, but we want somebody who has what I refer to as a sympathetic understanding of the objectives of the labor movement.

KINNEY: I would agree with that.

Q: And a willingness to be critical in your analysis for the government of labor no matter— I don't mind telling anybody that I am pro-labor—

KINNEY: Yeah.

Q: —but I also feel as though in my job in government I have to analyze the feelings of certain—

KINNEY: Sure.

Q: I am not asking you just to say you agree with me. What sort of a balance in these reactions do you have and what examples can you give of good and bad types of reactions?

KINNEY: Well, there are extremes. For example, I want to tell you what Mike Ross told me before I first went overseas. You remember Mike Ross?

Q: Very well.

KINNEY: All right. An extreme example. There was a guy named Tom Holleran—in his own way, but he kept telling me, when I first met him and in later years, when we were on opposite sides of a number of questions, he said, "Look I'm working for the AFL-CIO."

Q: And for the AFL side within the AFL-CIO.

KINNEY: Well, that follows—"I am working for the AFL; I am not working for the government." He said, "The AFL put me here and I report there." I didn't like that. I disagreed with him violently, but it was almost religion with him.

Q: Well, I will say that there are one or two examples of people who felt that way about the CIO, even though it was much more prevalent among the old AFLers—

KINNEY: I know.

Q: —because this stuff that I have mentioned off the record is in my files, but I do not want to complicate yours with that. But, anyhow, what you have said is that in effect—

KINNEY: Well, we didn't get to what Mike Ross said.

Q: Oh, yeah. Mike Ross. What did he say?

KINNEY: He said, "Look, you are going to be going overseas as a labor type fellow." He said, "You are going to find that there are a couple of things, and this is particularly true because you will be over there, and attitudes here in Washington, in the AFL, the AFL-CIO are going to be a little different. What the embassy sees as the right thing to do in a given situation or a right policy to have toward a certain country or its elements is going to be, you will find, very often quite different from what the AFL thinks should be done because the AFL has its own point of view. And your political officers, the ambassador and so forth, are going to have a broader point of view in which everything is much more balanced if they do their job right. It is going to be perplexing for you and what you do about it. You will learn as best you can what to do about it."

This gets down to something which is fairly basic. In the average embassy, unless you have some pretty sophisticated officers, senior officers, who have had a lot of experience with labor attachés and why they are there in the first place, they will tend to regard a labor attaché as someone sort of thrust upon them either with their consent or because it is politic for the government to do this. And if the labor officer seems to be doing whatever the AFL-CIO wants him to do, and that is his automatic impulse, it's going to make his position more difficult and it is going to make the position of all the—

Q: Okay. Will you continue now, Bob? This is on the way the labor attaché is looked at and what sort of a—

KINNEY: It's dangerous, of course, to generalize. I say there are these tendencies to look upon someone as a stranger from another outfit, and not even a government outfit at that, so therefore doubly suspicious. However, the political and the economic and the central officers in the embassy, who had a good experience with labor officers in situations where they proved their value, usually tend to be more encouraging to the new guy and more inclined to see his role as important to the embassy and its work. I think that certainly in the last ten years that I was in the business and in the trade that was more and more evident. There was a widening acceptance. On the other hand, Henri Sokolove used to say in the 1960s that there was a lot of disillusionment with the labor attaché program on the part of the State Department leadership in the field and in Washington. That there had been a sort of magic at first as though they were really going to open the gates for United States' acceptance in broader and broader areas of people in their organizations in various countries and that there was a tendency, and I think perhaps he's right. Among many of them to get a little more cynical about it and to think that this is just another sort of reward system for loyal friends of the AFL-CIO or various unions therein. In that, perhaps, he's right to a degree.

Q: But that could be dissipated in individual cases occurring in the embassy in which a positive contribution was made.

KINNEY: Exactly. By your deeds are you known.

Q: Or your contacts. The fact that I was a friend of the president of India because he

happened to be a trade unionist and thereby was able to get some things that might otherwise not have been available. Boy, that meant something. And what I found was in training labor attachés and responding at conferences that the guy who thought of his operation as a separate labor operation unrelated to the objectives of the post was less successful than the guy who said to the ambassador, "Now, what are you trying to do and what is the labor aspect of that that I can make a contribution to?" And that is a difficult thing to do. Let me ask you in that respect within the embassy at what point were you a member of the country team? What were the disadvantages of not being a member? What were the results of your membership in the country team? Were you a member of the country team? In some posts, I guess.

KINNEY: Well the country team is made up normally of the officers of AID, the principal officer of USIS, the Information Service [U.S. Information Service]—

Q: The military attaché, agricultural, et cetera.

KINNEY: —the military attaché, the agency that shall not be named, and the commercial attaché sometimes.

Q: The section heads, the agricultural—the sections heads.

KINNEY: Right.

Q: Where does the labor attaché fit in?

KINNEY: The labor attaché in most posts I've been in was allowed or rather asked to be a member of the country team or to sit in the meetings at the table. [They were given the] same status as somebody else, not sitting in the background, and that's been true.

Q: That's an interesting comment about sitting around the table and not in the background.

KINNEY: Oh, that's right.

Q: Status is based on that.

KINNEY: The head of JUSMAG. You know what JUSMAG is?

Q: Yeah, but the person listening to that might not. The Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group.

KINNEY: That is correct. In a place like the Philippines, where that is a very important thing, he was, of course, a very important member of the country team, but he had a young lieutenant, who sat immediately behind him and handed him cigarettes from time to time.

Q: Not memos? That's interesting.

KINNEY: No, cigarettes and lighted them. There were also occasionally more junior officers of the political section who sat in on a particular issue where they might be asked questions.

Q: Yeah, but you were generally a member of the country team?

KINNEY: This happened from the beginning in Manila, when Ambassador Spruance wanted me to be there and he wasn't particularly a pro-labor ambassador. He was a retired admiral.

Q: Did you have to fight your way into it?

KINNEY: No, I didn't. I was asked. I was just told I was going to be there.

Q: Because in some of the cases our officers tried to get the status there as a status symbol rather than as one who has contributed to the country team's understanding.

KINNEY: To make that an issue where the labor attaché is not, as a matter of course, expected to be in the country team meetings would seem to me to be a mistake.

Q: Right. I should tell you that in some cases an effort was made through the trade union movement in the United States to up the guy's status which, as you are indicating, is probably a mistake.

KINNEY: I think it is counterproductive.

Q: You got to earn your place. (end of side one, tape two)

Q: (beginning of side two, tape two) Of the labor attaché within the mission—what about in connection with the host country officials, the labor ministry officials and others, and the trade union and management officials? What difficulties did you encounter in that respect? What contributions could be made in that respect, et cetera? The labor ministry I guess first. That was your contact point with the government.

KINNEY: Oh, yeah. I never had any real problem with being on very good terms and in close touch with most of the important members of labor ministries.

Q: What happened in cases where the U.S. policy was in disagreement in important respects with the government policy? You must have had some cases like that. Did that affect your ability to deal with the labor ministries? Or didn't you have that take place at any time?

KINNEY: In Indonesia, President Sukarno at various times was very, very cold toward us, and toward the ambassador even at points, although I kind of liked him. In Indonesia one year, when I first went there, the labor minister saw me; I called on him. That was normal. It took about a week or so to set it up. He had an international relations officer and it was done through him. He was very cordial, but he didn't commit himself. Coming out of the meeting toward the entrance of the building the international guy, a guy named Majon, got me aside and he said, "You wonder why he is so quiet and doesn't talk very much?" I said, "No, I didn't wonder about that." And he said, "Well I want to tell you. The guy is stupid, and he thinks if he doesn't say anything, you will think he is wise."

Q: People won't catch on. That's an interesting comment.

KINNEY: This is a Sumatran talking about a Javanese.

Q: What about with managements? Both representatives of U.S. companies and of host country companies, indigenous companies? Did you have much to do with them?

KINNEY: Yeah, I had quite a bit to do with them. In the Philippines, at first, they had me tagged as a dangerous figure. Some of the old lords of American commerce had been there before the war, and their assumption was that in the case of the Labor Department if they got into any trouble, their lawyer would buy his way out of the situation by buying the courts, by buying the labor minister. And they didn't want anybody messing around with American ideas about labor relations. A couple of them were quite progressive, however. The head of American Harvester—

Q: International Harvester.

KINNEY: —International Harvester, Colgate-Palmolive Peet, was one of the guys who was quite advanced—

Q: What about a company like IBM [International Business Machines Corporation] which had a non-negotiating relationship with unions in the United States? Did they try to impose that in the countries?

KINNEY: I never did run into them, as a matter of fact, in my part of the world. I guess they were there in Nigeria and in Malaysia, but they were probably British in that event. And with the British you almost never had any problem. The British in the former British colonies had an employers federation.

Q: They did in India too.

KINNEY: The purpose of the employers federation is to deal with trade unions or any labor problem they had as a group. Usually, in my experience in Nigeria and Malaysia, this guy is quite sophisticated and knows how to work with you and really will seek your help on occasion. That happened to me twice.

Q: Yeah. Let's see. Any problems with U.S. businesses that were thrown on the table of the ambassador to solve when they had been dealing with it unsuccessfully for a while? U.S. businesses tend either to stay away from the embassy at all or just raise problems with them.

KINNEY: Well, usually those things came to me just automatically through the economic counselor, who would be most in touch with them or the commercial attaché. For instance, Pan American in Manila, the first few years I was there, had an all Filipino support staff on the Island of Wake. Was it Wake?

Q: Wake Island.

KINNEY: They had a stop there and a passenger restaurant and hotel and so forth. These babies went on strike. Well, Johnny Oppenheimer, who was the Manila manager, was a guy I had come to know and like very much, and he was afraid. They had a new labor minister under Magsaysay, who was a reformist, and he wanted to meet him and talk about the situation. He was afraid to try to do it directly, so I set up a luncheon meeting and excused myself and went away. Oppenheimer was delighted to find that the minister was a pretty nice guy and reasonable and the new minister liked Oppenheimer.

Q: I guess the next question to discuss is one that we have mentioned before and that is the relations with the U.S. unions. What were the difficulties? What was behind them? How did you fare as far as your career was concerned and as far as your work was concerned? Did the embassy take any position pro or con, et cetera? So, we are now into your relations with the AFL, the CIO, and the AFL-CIO.

KINNEY: Yeah. Well, before the AFL and the CIO got together more or less, there was one instance.

Q: Well, they were merged in 1955, and until then they were separate and fighting each other and afterwards—

KINNEY: As you know, Victor Reuther was the international guy for his brother and for the CIO when Reuther took it over and when I was first in Manila.

Q: Wasn't Ross, Michael Ross, the guy? He—

KINNEY: Michael stayed with the AFL as the international affairs director.

Q: The AFL-CIO as the international affairs director.

KINNEY: Yeah.

Q: So, he was representing the Auto Workers, that is, Victor was representing the Auto

Workers, not the AFL-CIO.

KINNEY: Well no, when the Tully and O'Brien thing came up the Lovestone people got themselves involved in that. Some weird character they had up in Tokyo came down to Manila to encourage Tully and O'Brien to fight the embassy and issue wild statements to the press and so forth and not go home as they were supposed to do. I got a call.

Q: If you can give a paragraph of background on the Tully-O'Brien problem I would appreciate it.

KINNEY: Well, it's pretty simple. Tony Luchek had worked very hard to set up a project with the University of the Philippines for a labor education center, which would train people nationally in Manila at the center's office but would send labor education specialists around the country at demand to help individual unions or union centers to train their people in labor relations and collective bargaining and that sort of thing. He did a wonderful job, and it was set up and it was funded by AID through funds given to the University of the Philippines to maintain it. But the project also called for an American staff who were workers' educators to set up the administration and help train the trainers and that sort of thing for a period of two years. And it came to be an issue about who was to be selected to come out there. George Guernsey and his counterpart in the AFL and so forth decided that this should be operated through a university. Preferably, a university that didn't have any real big deal about its American status as a workers' educator, not the University of Wisconsin or Rutgers or that, but they chose the University of Connecticut, which had one guy occasionally doing a workers education program. They made him the number one and they recruited three people to come with him. There was going to be one from the AFL, one from the CIO, and one from the Machinists. I think it had gone independent then.

Q: The Machinists was independent at that period.

KINNEY: They gave us the best guy we had of the whole bunch. Anyway, the CIO guy, through some contrivance on the part of Emil Levy, was a fellow he wanted to get rid of. He was causing a lot of trouble.

Q: How often that happens!

KINNEY: His name was Cy O'Brien, Cyril O'Brien from Boston. The AFL guy was a nice guy, but real dumb, called Tully. Tully, I think, somehow got recommended by the church, the Catholic Church, Monsignor Higgens or somebody. And out they came, and it was clearly understood they weren't supposed to get involved in union organizing or—

Q: Do you remember the name of the Machinists' guy who was so good?

KINNEY: I will in a minute. He was a damned good friend of mine and was for years.

Q: From the Machinists Union?

KINNEY: Yeah. He went to work eventually for the AFL-CIO.

Q: Well, we'll think of it later.

KINNEY: Burt Gottlieb.

Q: Oh, Burt Gottlieb! He too just died.

KINNEY: Damned good guy. I'm sorry to hear that.

Q: He was an engineer type. Out of Wisconsin, by the way.

KINNEY: He knew his business.

Q: Yeah.

KINNEY: He was able and level-headed and stable. Well, there was a bad strike going on which was led and organized not even behind the scenes but out in the open by a Catholic labor priest—kind of a charming guy but wild as hell—Father Hogan from Philadelphia. Walter Hogan had been there a couple of years and had been working with the—in Manila at Catholic University to train a chosen group of trade union leaders who would take over the movement and so on. They had received some encouragement from the American side particularly in the beginning, and they had some bright young people. The chosen leader, chosen by Father Hogan, was a guy named Johnny Tan, T-A-N.

Q: Oh, whom I got to know later.

KINNEY: An able guy, a nice guy, awfully hot tempered. Anyway, during this strike, which was on the waterfront, Father Hogan was trying to help his boys take over the waterfront unions, which were to some degree corrupt. No doubt about it. But a guy got killed and there were two Americans, three Americans, down there on the picket line about the same time. One of them was Father Hogan. Of course, that's unusual. The other two—

Q: Don't tell me.

KINNEY: —were Tully and O'Brien marching back and forth. O'Brien gave an interview, the next day I think it was. [He said,] "We're independent here. I called Jim Carey last night and Carey said, 'You guys are plenipotentiary ambassadors for the United States and the American labor movement and you don't have to answer to anything as long as it's pro-labor.'" That was Jim, too.

Q: That sounds like him.

KINNEY: And the University of Connecticut had an administrative representative of the president of the university who was supposed to ride herd on this project back in the States. Of course, it all hit the American side. He decreed that there should be an investigation. The ambassador was upset and called me in, finally. I told him what I thought about the thing and he said, "Do you think they were right?" I said, "No, I think they are wrong." And he said, "Good, that's what I thought too."

Q: "—and I'm going to quote you."

KINNEY: I explained that they had all been hired on the understanding, in writing, that they wouldn't take part in any actual union activities. That they were workers' educators. Tony had helped set that up too. Well, two days later the Papal Nuncio called on the ambassador. The ambassador called me in again and told me about it. He said, "Unless these guys are maintained in their position and aren't disciplined or reprimanded in any way, the church in the Philippines is going to declare war on the American embassy." Well that got the ambassador's ire up and he said, "I told him, Bob, I thought we could take it." And then Lovestone and Monsignor Higgens—

Q: You said that they sent somebody from Tokyo. Was this a guy named David Deveral?

KINNEY: Deveral.

Q: Wow. Okay. Go ahead. Did you know Deveral?

KINNEY: I got to see him once or twice. He was crazy. I saw what evidence of him there was in Indonesia too.

Q: Okay.

KINNEY: So then the guy from the University of Wisconsin, the president's administrative representative, came out and held a hearing. [He] talked to all kinds of people, talked to Burt Gottlieb, and to the number one Connecticut guy whose name escapes me at the moment, all of whom felt that obviously Tully and O'Brien were wrong and had outlived their usefulness, ought to be sent home. So that was arranged. Meanwhile I had called George Weaver, who was—Carey was out when I called—Carey's assistant at that point. I told him all about the situation and also told him about Carey being quoted. He said, "Well you know Jim," and so forth. Then they got to our friend back in AID, Muskaman. Muskaman got all in a sweat about it in response to 16th Street, and he is said to have gone to a meeting with the administrator of the agency at that time and said that it was his opinion that I should be recalled. There were also reports filed that I was a communist.

Q: Reports filed. Did you find out by who?

KINNEY: Yes, I did. Well one of them was Deveral. The other one was a guy named Flynn, Tom Flynn, who was a young labor Catholic, who was there with USIS for a while. I think he had just gone home at that time. Sol Oser apparently was very upset and thought I was getting a very raw deal and told Vic Reuther about this. And Vic called John Muskaman—John later told me about this—and said, "Listen, you don't speak for the AFL-CIO. You're nothing but a government nincompoop and Jim Carey doesn't speak for the AFL-CIO in the international field, I do. I think Kinney's getting a raw deal. Change your position and you tell your administrator you don't speak for me." According to Oser that pretty much saved my neck for the moment, but Oser had to cope also with security because there was this charge, I was a communist operator. And Oser said that he had one hell of a time.

Q: How do you deny a thing like that?

KINNEY: Heading it off.

Q: Yeah, the answer is that if you had been a communist, you would have denied being a communist anyhow. That's a terrible example.

KINNEY: It wasn't a very nice time.

Q: Did you ever— Was that ever straightened out in any way? Not in terms of the assignment. I take it you were not sent home. Was it straightened out in terms of your relationships with the labor movement, because once you got Victor on your side, it didn't help too much because that illustrated—

KINNEY: Whether he had been or whether he hadn't, Meany was now in the act and brought Monsignor Higgens in after him.

Q: I am frankly surprised at Higgens because I—I am again recording. Go ahead. I was telling you I was surprised at—

KINNEY: Well, I was surprised too.

Q: In a few cases we have found Higgens—

KINNEY: I liked the guy. I had met him before I went overseas.

Q: If he had taken the position [of] let's remove these guys quietly, these two Flynn and whatever their names were, and give them another job, that I would have thought was defensible. But to defend their staying there and continuing, which I think—

KINNEY: Well, let me tell you that when I went on home leave the next six months or so, a couple of friends of mine had arranged a luncheon meeting with me and Monsignor Higgens, and we talked about it very calmly and there wasn't any problem. He forgave

me in effect, and in fact, there was a church, a Jesuit order, investigation of Father Hogan. They sent a guy, a priest, out from New York who came to see me and I told them what I thought had happened. I told him what I thought was wrong with trying to have a chosen instrument for the church in the labor movement because these guys were all Catholic.

Q: What about the— What is that Opus Dei group? It was very active there too, weren't they?

KINNEY: Not at that time.

Q: No?

KINNEY: Well, maybe so, but I don't remember about that.

Q: Well, we are getting to the end of this and I do have to leave. I wonder if you are willing to spend a couple of minutes on this last paragraph about evaluating your personal experience as far as what do you feel you did well, and what if any were any failures, and the reasons for them, and how do these views affect your feeling about the sort of person who should be in the future in the labor field, in the foreign labor field in the State Department?

KINNEY: Well, that's a big order.

Q: Yes, it's a big order and we only have a few minutes. Oh, by the way, before we go any further, you said you do come to Washington every year or so.

KINNEY: Yeah.

Q: I'll leave you my card. Could you get in touch with me because coming out of these interviews there are supplemental questions, and I want to go into more detail, so I don't want to think that this is the end of our conversations.

KINNEY: Well I hope not.

Q: Good.

KINNEY: I have a lot of things I want to do. You'll be one of them. The other will be to see Stan Rippenburg, who is a very dear friend of mine.

Q: Well, Stan is a neighbor of ours, and his wife and he and I are very good friends. He has been having some health problems as Gertrude has also, and while you're in we will get together. He lives less than a mile from me.

KINNEY: They are sweet people. Stan came out by the way to look at that labor education Tully and O'Brien matter.

Q: Oh, really.

KINNEY: And he and my friend from the Machinists, Burt Gottlieb, became very fast friends. And, as a matter of fact, he hired Burt later on I believe.

Q: In connection with some work. Yeah. Well, let's— If I have your work that you will be getting in touch with me when you come in next, I'd like you to think of this and not answer it now, but either jot down some notes or again get on the tape recorder as to what you have concluded because you have had a variety of experiences that are different from those others we have interviewed so far in the European field, and it might lead to some different conclusions as to type of person who is to serve in developing countries, et cetera. And how we can get them.

KINNEY: Well, all right, I'll try to do that. In a nutshell— In summary, I think that I accomplished most in the Philippines in those first five years under what I think were damned difficult circumstances. And I am surprised I held together because I am a tense person and had been for years, and I lost a lot of sleep.

Q: Well, Bob, thanks so much for this, and, as I said, I hope we can continue because I want to give you some feeling for what else we have been finding out and what sort of things I would ask you to think about.

KINNEY: And if sometime you think of something you would like me to write and comment on, I'd be glad to.

Q: Oh, good. And I've got that on tape now, a promise. Okay. Wonderful and thanks.

KINNEY: I'm sorry I wandered around so much.

Q: Oh, no, no, that's going to be very valuable. Let me ask you this. Would you consider for people around who we find, who are willing to come here, interviewing others. There are so many others. Henri Sokolove is on the West Coast here. I interviewed last year when I was on the West Coast, I interviewed John Correll. I don't know whether you knew him or not. Let me take this thing off.

KINNEY: He was in Spain.

Q: Yeah, that's right.

End of interview